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Toward the United Front

*Proceedings of the Fourth Congress
of the Communist International, 1922*

Edited and translated by John Riddell

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Toward the United Front

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Editorial Introduction

At the close of the Communist International's Fourth Congress, held in Petrograd and Moscow between 5 November and 5 December 1922, the world movement's president, Grigorii Zinoviev, summed up the gathering's achievements in modest terms: it had made the decisions of the International's previous congresses 'more specific, more precise, more differentiated'.¹ In fact, Zinoviev understated the Congress's achievement. In a context of significant disagreements among delegates, the wide-ranging congress debates raised issues and adopted policies that broke significant new ground for the revolutionary Left, including on issues with strong resonance in the twenty-first century.

During 1921–2, the Communist International (Comintern) sought to modify its tactics in response to a new political situation – the ebbing of the post-1917 revolutionary upsurge in Europe and a general offensive by the capitalist class against gains won by working people during the initial postwar years. The Comintern was determined to carry out this shift in a manner that sharpened, rather than dulled, its strategic focus on preparing to lead a renewed offensive for socialist revolution – which, according to Zinoviev, would unfold in 'a matter not of decades, but of years'.² Initially, there were

1. See below, p. 1109.

2. See p. 1116. Compare Zinoviev's remarks on pp. 119 and 897. Summarising the Fourth Congress in December 1922, Trotsky wrote that the Comintern was striving 'to bring this issue [of European and world-revolution] to its consummation in the next few years'. Trotsky 1972b, 2, p. 327.

sharp disagreements in Comintern parties, including among leaders of the Russian Communist Party, regarding the form this adjustment should take. Discord, evident at the Third Congress in 1921, persisted in more muted form at the 1922 gathering.

The Fourth Congress also addressed other shifts in world politics: the Fascist takeover in Italy; signs that the postwar settlement imposed by the Versailles Treaty and related agreements was unravelling; and early indications of an approaching revolt by colonial peoples.

In July 1921, after protracted debate, the Third Congress had concluded with the call for Communist parties to ‘win the masses’ – that is, ‘win the majority of the working class to communism’ and ‘organise the more active section of the proletariat for the coming struggle for communism’.³ Five months later, the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) concretised this perspective with a call for Communist parties to struggle for a ‘united front’, that is, for the ‘greatest possible unity of all workers’ organisations in every *practical action against the united capitalists*’, while preserving their ‘absolute autonomy’ and ‘freedom in presenting their point of view’.⁴ This goal was to be pursued, when appropriate, through negotiations and agreements with the leaderships of non-Communist workers’ organisations.

This policy, known as the ‘united-front tactic’, was initially opposed by the French, Italian, and Spanish Communist parties, and by significant minorities in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and elsewhere. Despite continuing disagreements, the Fourth Congress confirmed this policy and shaped it into a coherent plan: to build a militant and united worker-led movement against capitalist and fascist attacks, to counter growing inter-imperialist conflicts with heightened working-class internationalism, and to promote an effective, united movement for colonial freedom.

The present introduction offers a road map to the multifaceted proceedings of the month-long Congress.

The split in world socialism

The Comintern’s united-front policy sought to address a profound and intractable split in the world socialist movement. When World War I broke out in August 1914, the majority leaderships of its main parties – in Britain, France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary – supported the war efforts of their respec-

3. ‘On Tactics’, Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 274.

4. See p. 1170. Here and elsewhere, all emphasis in quotations is taken from the original text.

tive capitalist ruling classes, thus bringing about the ignominious collapse of the Socialist or Second International. However, working-class resistance to the War, initially expressed only by the small socialist currents such as those represented at the 1915 Zimmerwald Conference, soon took shape in mass actions of resistance. As workers' resistance mounted, in demonstrations, mass strikes, mutinies, and insurrections, the contending currents from the prewar socialist movement took opposite sides in class conflict and civil war. Pro-war socialists ('social-chauvinists' or 'social-patriots') joined or supported governments that brutally repressed workers' and soldiers' protests. Most of these 'socialists' also opposed the October 1917 Revolution that established the Russian Soviet government, and many of them backed the counter-revolutionary armies in the Russian civil war. Revolutionary socialists took their places on the opposite side of the battle lines, supporting workers' and soldiers' resistance and anti-war protests and actively defending the Soviet republic.

In November 1918, a workers' and soldiers' uprising overturned the German government, bringing the World War to an abrupt end. The Social-Democratic Party (SPD) – now the dominant force in Germany's provisional government – helped organise the brutal repression that restabilised capitalist rule in Germany. SPD leaders were complicit in the January 1918 murder of the KPD's best-known leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. In the victorious Allied countries, right-wing 'socialists' – now commonly called Social Democrats – backed the draconian peace terms imposed by their governments, while revolutionary socialists sought to overturn these treaties. Right-wing Social Democrats backed continued colonial rule over subject peoples in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere, while revolutionary forces actively supported the rising colonial revolution.

The anti-war socialists consisted of two currents: one aimed to pressure governments toward a negotiated peace; the other sought to end imperialist war through socialist revolution. In Germany, these tendencies took shape in two parties: the revolutionary Spartacus League, which launched the Communist party of Germany (KPD) in December 1918; and the larger Independent SPD (USPD), which included many revolutionary-minded workers and also forces close in outlook to the SPD.

The divisions in the international workers' movement resulted in a similar three-way split. Right-wing forces, grouped around the SPD and the British Labour Party, organised the International Socialist Commission, which was generally called the Second International, even though it had, in fact, betrayed the central principles of its prewar namesake. Revolutionary socialists rallied in the Third or Communist International. Between these

poles, an array of intermediate or 'centrist' forces led by the USPD and Austrian Social Democracy formed the International Working Group of Socialist Parties, or Vienna Union, which revolutionaries derisively termed the 'Two-and-a-Half International'. Trade unions, too, were divided between the reformist-led International Federation of Trade Unions, or 'Amsterdam International', and the Comintern-affiliated Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), or 'Profintern'.

Toward the end of 1920, the postwar revolutionary upsurge in Europe began to ebb, and in 1921, Europe's capitalist rulers launched a concerted political and economic offensive against working people. Social-Democratic and labour leaders committed to defence of capitalism ('reformists' or 'opportunists') still enjoyed the support of a majority of workers, thus posing a massive obstacle not only to socialist revolution but to effective defence of wages and working conditions against the employers' onslaught.

Maturing of a revolutionary International

When the Comintern was founded in March 1919 in Moscow,⁵ capitalism was still reeling from the worldwide crisis triggered by the outbreak of war in 1914. In addition to massive physical destruction and human loss, the War caused a sharp fall in production across Europe. The end of hostilities did not halt the accompanying social crisis. Broad popular indignation launched a tumultuous movement for fundamental social change, expressed most powerfully in the Russian Revolutions of February and October 1917 and the German Revolution of November 1918. Millions of working people saw the promise of liberation and a better future in the Russian October Revolution of 1917, when workers and peasants had taken and held power for the first time in history.

Only nine delegates were able to break the Allied blockade and reach the Comintern's First Congress in 1919. Nonetheless, as V.I. Lenin wrote the following year, this gathering 'unfurled the banner of communism, around which the forces of the revolutionary proletariat were to rally'. The new International's fundamental task, Zinoviev told the Fourth Congress, was defined by the fact that 'all the objective preconditions have ripened for the victory of proletarian revolution in all the decisive countries.... All that is lacking for the

5. For recent editions of the First Congress proceedings, see Broué (ed.) 1974 (French), Comintern (ed.) 1975 (Spanish), Damjanović (ed.) 1981 (Serbo-Croatian), Riddell (ed.) 1987 (English), and Hedeler and Vatlin (eds.) 2008 (German).

working class is the so-called *subjective* factor – sufficient class organisation and consciousness’. The Comintern aimed to make good this deficiency.⁶

During its first year, the new International won mass support in socialist parties of France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Norway, and elsewhere. These gains were registered at the Second Congress, in July–August 1920, and at the subsequent Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, which together laid down the International’s programmatic, strategic, and organisational foundations. The Second Congress also adopted the ‘Twenty-One Conditions’ – a series of principles, binding on Comintern members, that aimed to draw a clear line between the new movement and leftward-leaning reformists and centrists.⁷

In August and September 1920, the defeat of the Soviet Red Army on the Vistula River in Poland, followed by the repulse of a massive factory-occupation movement in Italy, marked the onset of an ebb of revolutionary struggles in Europe. Employers launched a sustained offensive that aimed to reverse workers’ postwar gains and drive down labour costs. The change in political climate produced a contradictory reaction among socialist workers. Especially in Germany, a large minority of workers were frustrated and impatient to act, but the majority were pessimistic. As the German Communist leader Clara Zetkin wrote in 1921, workers were simultaneously ‘almost desperate’ and yet ‘unwilling to struggle’.⁸ These contradictory moods were also reflected in the Comintern and its Executive, including among the Executive’s Russian members.

The rocky road to the united front

The united-front policy, which aimed to overcome this division, was first formulated in Germany, arising not from theoretical considerations or from the many precedents in Russian revolutionary history but from experience in struggle. As Edwin Hoernle of the KPD explained during the Fourth Congress, united-front policy found initial expression in initiatives by German workers during 1920. Its most successful expression was the united action against a rightist putsch led by Wolfgang Kapp in March – an example

6. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 65 (Lenin); below, p. 69 (Zinoviev).

7. For proceedings of these congresses, see Riddell (ed.) 1991 and 1993. For the Twenty-One Conditions, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 765–71. These and most other resolutions of the First, Second, and Third Comintern Congresses are available, in another translation, at: <www.marxists.org>.

8. Zetkin 1922a, p. 1.

mentioned only once in the Fourth Congress, in remarks on China by ECCI member Karl Radek.⁹

The ongoing need for such a united front was posed by an assembly of Stuttgart's metalworkers in December 1920, acting on the initiative of local KPD activists who were strongly influenced by Zetkin. The metalworkers adopted a resolution calling on the leadership of their union, and of all unions, to launch a joint struggle for tangible improvements in workers' conditions. This campaign, the resolution stated, should raise simple demands shared by all workers, ranging from lower food prices to arming workers for defence against right-wing gangs.¹⁰ Although the Social-Democratic leaders rejected this appeal, the Communist campaign in its favour won wide support from union councils.

A month later, in January 1921, the KPD as a whole made a more comprehensive appeal for united action to all workers' organisations, including the Social Democrats. This 'Open Letter' reflected the views of party co-chair Paul Levi, working in collaboration with Radek. The appeal won wide rank-and-file support, to the point where the Social-Democratic leaders of the main national union confederation felt compelled to issue counterproposals.¹¹

The Stuttgart and Open-Letter initiatives marked a change in direction for the KPD. The Communists, instead of merely denouncing the Social Democrats' pro-capitalist course, were now proposing to test in action the latter's capacity and willingness to struggle for progressive demands consistent with their formal programme. This shift alarmed many Communists, who felt their party was playing down the goal of overthrowing the government and, instead, concentrating on moderate demands more acceptable to Social Democrats.

The initiatives of Levi, Zetkin, and their allies also encountered objections from Communists abroad. A current led by Hungarian Communists, including Béla Kun, called on Communists to sharpen their slogans and initiate minority actions that could sweep the hesitant workers into action – a policy later dubbed the 'theory of the offensive'. Although criticised by Lenin, this concept found support in the Moscow-based ECCI, including from Zinoviev and Nikolai Bukharin, leaders of the Comintern's strongest component, the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks). Influenced by these views, the ECCI

9. See Hoernle's remarks, p. 457, and the ECCI's December 1921 theses, Point 8, p. 1167. The united-front concept was also advanced in the Czechoslovak Party before its adoption by the ECCI; see Firsov 1980, pp. 406–7. For Radek on the Kapp Putsch, see p. 731.

10. Broué 2005, p. 469.

11. Broué 2005, pp. 468–72; Reisberg 1971, pp. 50–62.

initially criticised the German Party's Open Letter. Lenin supported it, however, and the matter was referred to the upcoming world congress.¹²

In February 1921, before that discussion could take place, 'left' forces in the KPD Central Committee, supported by representatives of the Comintern Executive, overturned the leadership headed by Levi that had issued the Open Letter, and effectively annulled the Party's promising united-front initiative. The following month, the KPD, strongly encouraged by ECCI envoys, attempted to initiate an insurrectional general strike that had little support beyond the Party's own forces. The so-called March Action was a costly failure, but party leaders held to their course. Levi, who criticised the Party's action publicly, was expelled for indiscipline and disloyalty.

When the International met in congress in Moscow in June, the five Bolshevik leaders assigned to the Comintern Executive were divided. Lenin and Leon Trotsky sought to repudiate the ultra-left course represented by the 'theory of the offensive' and the March Action, against opposition from Bukharin, Radek, and Zinoviev. In a compromise decision, the Congress adopted the essence of the political course that Lenin and Trotsky advocated, while muting criticism of the KPD leadership and passing over the ECCI's role in silence.¹³

This outcome opened the door to the International's adoption of the united-front policy in December 1921. The ECCI resolution introducing this policy called on Communist parties 'to strive everywhere to achieve unity of these masses, as broad and complete as possible, in practical action'. Communists should 'accept the discipline required for action', the resolution added, without relinquishing 'the right and the capacity to express...their opinion regarding the policies of all working-class organisations'. It also specified that the Comintern's national sections should seek agreements with 'parties and associations of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals'.¹⁴

12. Koch-Baumgarten 1986, p. 81; 'Kommunismus', in Lenin 1960–71, 31, pp. 165–7; Broué 2005, p. 473. An article by Bukharin published early in 1921, entitled 'Regarding the Tactic of the Offensive', dealt principally with revolutionary wars similar to that waged by Soviet Russia against the Polish bourgeois government in the summer of 1920. See *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, 15 (1921), pp. 67–71.

13. The dispute over the March Action still reverberated at the Fourth Congress. According to Zinoviev, 'the [March] action was therapeutic for the Party' (p. 104), but Bukharin, referring to the action, says the Comintern had to carry out a necessary struggle against 'putschism' (p. 212), the word used by Levi to describe the action. Zinoviev notes the disagreement among Bolshevik leaders on p. 272. See also Trotsky 1936, pp. 87–91; Trotsky 1972c, pp. 33–5. For Third Congress proceedings, see Comintern 1921b (German) and Comintern 1922d (Russian), as well as the more recent editions in Serbo-Croatian (Bosić (ed.) 1981) and Chinese (Comintern 1990).

14. The ECCI decision of December 1921 was annexed to the Fourth Congress Theses on Tactics; see pp. 1164–73.

The resolution also called a conference of the Executive, expanded to include delegates from member parties, to discuss how to implement this decision. At this meeting, held in February–March 1922, the French, Italian, and Spanish parties moved a minority resolution that opposed ‘any formal rapprochement with the political parties, which are all equally incapable of promoting the most urgent demands of the working class’. The conference majority, however, endorsed the united-front policy and decided the Comintern should take part in a world congress of workers’ parties that had been called by the Two-and-a-Half International.¹⁵

During 1922, the united front was put to the test. The Comintern’s positive response to the call for a world workers’ congress led to the convening of a ‘Conference of the Three Internationals’, which brought together representatives of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Communist Internationals in Berlin 2–5 April 1922.¹⁶ At the conference, Second-International delegates demanded ‘guarantees of mutual good faith’ – including modifications of Soviet Russia’s internal policies, which Comintern delegates rejected. The conference issued a communiqué and named a continuing committee, but the initiative broke down the following month, with little achieved.¹⁷ The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals then began negotiations that led to their merger in May 1923.

In Germany, the KPD undertook many united-front initiatives, with varying results. The most important took place following the murder of Walter Rathenau, a Jew and a central leader of Germany’s bourgeois republic, by extreme rightists on 24 June 1922. The assassination was symbolic of the reign of terror being mounted by proto-fascists against the workers’ movement and the democratic gains of Germany’s 1918 Revolution. Protests were massive,

15. Comintern 1922b, pp. 145–6.

16. For proceedings, see International Socialist Congress 1967.

17. Among the issues raised by the Second International delegates were the Soviet Red Army’s incursion into Georgia in 1921 and plans to try leaders of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party for terrorist actions against the Soviet government. See p. 78, n. 16.

The compromise agreement at the Berlin conference pleased neither side. For Lenin’s reaction, see ‘We Paid Too Much’, Lenin 1960–71, 33, pp. 330–4; for a Fourth Congress assessment, see pp. 1174–75.

The Red Army invasion of Georgia and its consequences were also controversial in the Russian CP leadership. Isaac Deutscher and Pierre Broué have presented evidence that this action took place without the approval of Lenin, Trotsky, and other central leaders of the Soviet government (see Deutscher 2003, pp. 392–3; Broué 1988, pp. 301–2). For Trotsky’s subsequent defence of the action, see Trotsky 1975. Lenin took several initiatives to resolve subsequent ill-feeling between Georgian working people and the Soviet Russian government; see Lenin 1995; Lewin 1975; Lenin 1960–71, 36, pp. 605–11.

and the KPD led efforts to achieve unity in these actions. The mixed results of this effort received much discussion in the Fourth Congress.¹⁸

Nowhere was a durable alliance achieved with the Social-Democratic Party and union leaders, but there was tangible progress toward unity at the rank-and-file level, accompanied by an encouraging rise in the KPD's membership and electoral support.¹⁹

In other countries implementation of the united front was uneven, and debate on its validity lingered on into the Fourth Congress, where reservations regarding the policy were raised by Emanuel Vajtauer (Czechoslovakia), Ruth Fischer (Germany), Jean Duret (France), Amadeo Bordiga (Italy), Henryk Domski (Poland), and others. The disagreements were often expressed as criticisms of implementation: Fischer, for example, complained of a tendency 'to place too much emphasis on these sacred negotiations at the top'.²⁰ Even among the united front's wholehearted supporters, there were significant differences in formulation.

Divergent interpretations

The delegates to the Fourth Congress agreed that the initial postwar upsurge, in which it seemed possible that workers' power could be established across most of Europe within one or two years, was now over. As a Third Congress resolution had noted, 'this mighty wave' did not 'succeed in overthrowing world capitalism, not even European capitalism'. The December 1921 ECCI theses anchored the united-front policy in new conditions of a 'systematic offensive against the workers in almost every country', combined with a 'striving for unity among the workers'.²¹

But, at the Fourth Congress, a variety of views were expressed on how this offensive related to the need for a united front. Zinoviev's ECCI report contended that the united front was required because workers had been placed on the defensive. Another reporter, Eugen Varga, went further, stating that

18. See especially p. 148 (Fischer), 164 (Radek), 273–4 (Zinoviev).

19. Dues-paying membership rose to 224,389 in September 1922, compared with 180,443 in the summer of 1921. However, it was still far below its pre-March Action level of about 350,000. In elections in the state of Saxony in November 1922, the KPD vote was 2.5 times higher than two years earlier. Angress 1963, p. 250. For surveys of the KPD's united-front experiences in 1922, see Broué 1997, pp. 585–625; Reisberg 1971, pp. 317–613; Thalheimer 1994.

20. See pp. 133–4 (Vajtauer), 145–8 (Fischer), 169–73 (Duret), 180–2 (Bordiga), 238–41 (Domski).

21. For earlier, more optimistic projections, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 27–9 and 485, n. 45. See also Trotsky 1972b, 1, pp. 238–61 (Third Congress resolution) and below, p. 1164 (December 1921 theses).

only this shift had made it 'necessary to draw in the broad masses as auxiliary troops to expand the Communist Party's attacking army'. Such statements suggested that united-front alliances were temporary, to be set aside when workers moved to the offensive. Yet Zinoviev also said that the united-front tactic 'will endure for an entire period, perhaps an entire epoch', and Trotsky called it a 'banal truism' that, wherever the proletariat is deeply divided, 'it is impossible to develop our activity in any way other than under the slogan of the united front'.²²

There was no mention in the formal sessions of the many imaginative tactics utilised by the Bolsheviks in the revolutionary year of 1917 in their effort to achieve workers' unity, such as their demand for ouster of capitalist ministers in Russia's Provisional Government; their call on reformist-led soviets to take governmental power; their appeal for a democratic peace without annexations or indemnities; their adoption of the peasant movement's agrarian programme, which had been drafted by the rival Socialist-Revolutionary Party; or their militant defence of Alexander Kerensky's pro-capitalist government against the attempted right-wing coup of General Lavr Kornilov. However, the Congress did reaffirm the ECCI's December 1921 resolution on the united front, which had included, on Lenin's insistence, a description of how the Bolsheviks applied this policy from 1903 through 1917, years that included times both of retreat and of revolutionary advance.²³

This more inclusive view of the united front's applicability was expressed in the suggestion that even a workers' government, an expression of a revolutionary bid for power, could take the form of a coalition between Communist and non-Communist parties. This proposition was heavily debated in the congress. The resulting Theses on Tactics viewed such a coalition as possible only in the period leading up to the final goal of 'a genuinely proletarian workers' government, which in its pure form can be embodied only in the Communist Party'.²⁴

Another difference of emphasis with vast practical implications concerned whether the Communists were proposing a united front only to expose the treachery of Social-Democratic policies or whether they believed that fruit-

22. See pp. 96–7 and 126 (Zinoviev), 739–40 (Varga), 966 (Trotsky). See also 'On the United Front', Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 91–109.

23. See p. 1171; Lenin 1960–71, 36, pp. 552–4 and 706 n. 615. Lenin's proposal included mention of the rightist revolt of General Lavr Kornilov in August 1917, just weeks before the October Revolution. The ECCI resolution did not touch on the united front against Kornilov, nor was it mentioned in the Fourth Congress. It was subsequently often cited as the model for united-front activity, as in 'For a Workers' United Front Against Fascism' (1931), Trotsky 1971, pp. 135–6.

24. See p. 1161.

ful alliances were possible. The former interpretation was implied by harsh dismissals of Social Democracy as a purely reactionary force. For example, Zinoviev's description of the Second International as 'the worst enemy, the accomplice of the international bourgeoisie' was not balanced by acknowledgment of its component parties' roots in the working class. Such one-sided and exaggerated characterisations, which occurred frequently in the congress discussion of fascism, encouraged provocative statements such as the notorious comment of French Communist Albert Treint that 'the united front is a way to pluck the chicken', that is, to pull members out of Social-Democratic organisations. Émile Vandervelde, a Belgian leader of the Second International, seized on such statements to compare the Comintern with the villainous Mime in Wagner's *Siegfried*, who betrays his intention 'to stifle us and poison us, after embracing us'.²⁵

Responding to the charge that 'you want to embrace us in order to crush us', Radek said in Session 11: 'That depends on you. Show that you want to fight, and then we will travel at least a part of the road with you'. Radek's reply was in the spirit of Lenin's comments on the draft ECCI united-front resolution adopted in December 1921, in which he called for removal of a reference to Social-Democratic leaders as 'evident accomplices of the world bourgeoisie', warning that they could use this statement as a pretext to refuse negotiations. Lenin argued that the text should concentrate, instead, on the workers' insistence on the need for unity in action, despite fundamental political differences.²⁶

No one at the Fourth Congress invoked Lenin's 1916 description of Social-Democratic organisations as examples of a 'bourgeois labour party', which is 'inevitable and typical in all imperialist countries'. Lenin's formula, derived from a statement by Engels, captured these parties' dual character: bourgeois in programme and orientation, yet working-class in composition and social roots – an appreciation not reflected in congress discussions.²⁷

Unease with the Comintern's record of united-front activity also found expression in a sceptical assessment of negotiations with Social-Democratic

25. See p. 70 (Zinoviev); Humbert-Droz 1971, p. 81; Rosmer 1971, p. 150; International Socialist Congress 1967, p. 23. Vandervelde's opinion is widely repeated in Comintern studies; see Claudin 1975, 1, 145–51; Firsov 1980b, p. 114, n. 3.

26. See p. 395 (Radek); Firsov 1980b, pp. 115–16; Lenin 1960–71, 42, pp. 400–1; also compare 'Theses on Workers' United Front' p. 1165.

27. 'Imperialism and the Split in Socialism', in Lenin 1960–71, 23, pp. 113, 116. Lenin explains that he took the formula 'bourgeois labour party' from a 14 September 1891 letter of Frederick Engels. The term used by Engels, 'bürgerliche Arbeiterpartei', is better translated as 'bourgeois workers' party'. See Marx and Engels 1961–8, 38, p. 155; Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 49, p. 238.

leaders, sometimes expressed as a need to forge unity 'from below'. Ruth Fischer, for example, warned against 'this exaggerated emphasis, this worship of negotiations and working together with the leaders', stressing that unity at the leadership level was by no means indispensable to the united front. The ECCI had addressed this issue in a letter of 10 January 1922 to the KPD, saying that the question whether unity should be achieved 'from above' or 'from below' is 'entirely doctrinaire'. Without unity in the ranks, no leadership agreement could last three weeks, the ECCI stated. 'But it is clear that this broad workers' front can be much more easily formed if the leadership bodies refrain from opposing and sabotaging it'. Communist readiness to negotiate with these leaders 'facilitates removing the barriers that they stand ready to place in the path' of workers' unity.²⁸

Trotsky returned to this theme in March 1922, in a report drafted for the ECCI. 'If we were able simply to unite the working masses around our own banner or around our practical immediate slogans, and skip over the reformist organisations, whether party or trade union, that would of course be the best thing in the world. But then the very question of the united front would not exist in its present form'. In fact, the majority of workers are not ready to 'break with reformist organisations and join us', Trotsky stated. In such conditions, 'we are...interested in dragging the reformists from their asylums and placing them alongside ourselves before the eyes of the struggling masses'.²⁹

Radek responded to the German opposition led by Fischer in a similar spirit, cautioning that their concerns about dealings with the reformist leaders were 'mechanical' and based on a 'schema'. Later in the Congress, he insisted that Communists not 'abandon our efforts to establish the united front not only from below but from above', and instead 'redouble our efforts to bring [this plan] to reality'. Zinoviev's closing words to the Congress, by contrast, offered little hope of agreement with reformist leaders, stressing instead the need to constantly keep 'whipping them in the eyes of the working class'.³⁰

The 'Theses on Tactics', which took up the united-front policy, underwent by far the most arduous process of rewriting of all the congress resolutions. Passages in the initial draft that labelled the Social Democrats as the main obstacle to workers' victory, whose exposure was the only goal of the united front, were removed. However, the final text downplayed the prospect of agreements on the leadership level. Noting that 'the real success of the united-front tactic arises from "below", from the depths of the working masses them-

28. See p. 146 (Fischer); Comintern 1922c, pp. 384–5.

29. Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 93–5.

30. See pp. 165 and 396–7 (Radek), 1117 (Zinoviev).

selves', the theses proposed merely that 'Communists cannot abstain from negotiating, under certain circumstances, with leaders of opponent workers' parties'.³¹

The rise of Italian Fascism

Despite such ambiguities, the congress debates reflected wide agreement among most delegates on united-front policy. By contrast, the discussion of Fascism in Italy lacked coherence. An abrupt shift, near the close of the Congress, produced a final decision that, while limited in scope, was rapidly and fruitfully elaborated after the Congress closed. Judging from the congress record, this shift resulted from insistent urging by front-line delegates.

Five days before the Congress began, Benito Mussolini took power in Italy, after a two-year Fascist campaign that shattered working-class organisations across the country. The great metalworkers' strike movement of September 1920 had ended in frustration and disarray, and subsequently the Italian workers' movement ebbed. Attacks by aggressive Fascist militias, encouraged by police and state authorities, served as the cutting edge of an employer counteroffensive. An economic slump brought massive layoffs, further weakening worker resistance. The Fascists' violent conquest of the workers' stronghold of Bologna on 21 November 1920 demonstrated their new-found power. Thereafter, Fascist 'punitive expeditions' systematically destroyed workers' institutions, unions, and political organisations in one region after another, starting in rural areas and advancing toward the industrial centres.³²

Meanwhile, the Italian Socialist Party, which was then the Comintern's Italian affiliate, was locked in internal struggle. The majority, led by Giacinto Serrati, refused to implement fully the Twenty-One Conditions for membership in the International. The sticking point was the ECCI's insistence that the Italian Party immediately expel its openly reformist minority. At the Party's January 1921 congress in Livorno, Serrati's forces refused to carry through this break, prompting a minority led by Amadeo Bordiga to leave the Congress and constitute itself as the Communist Party of Italy. The Comintern recognised this new party as its Italian section. Paul Levi, representing the German Party in Livorno, criticised the role of ECCI envoys in promoting this split in an over-hasty fashion that left so many Comintern supporters in the

31. Firsov 1980b, pp. 145, 147; pp. 1158–9 (Theses on Tactics).

32. Bordiga provided the congress with graphic description of the Fascist offensive, including the assault in Bologna; see pp. 408–9. For another account, see Tasca 1966, pp. 102–5.

Socialist Party and outside the International. The ensuing debate on this topic in the KPD contributed to the crisis that convulsed that Party in the first half of 1921.

The Fascist movement in Italy was historically unprecedented, and it took time for the Communist movement to understand that it represented a new kind of threat. A resolution of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) in mid-1921 contains a short description of Fascist attacks, and Fascism is listed as an agency of ruling-class violence in a Third Congress document, but neither document attempts an analysis. Prominent leaders of the Italian Communist Party (CP) denied any fundamental difference between Fascism and bourgeois democracy, viewing the Fascist drive for power as the internal business of the ruling class and of no special concern to working people.³³

Neither the CP nor the SP attempted to build a broad and effective defence against the Fascist rampage. The CP was focused on the contest with its Socialist rival, while the SP relied on the formal protections promised by a state apparatus that was, in fact, complicit in Fascist violence. In June 1921, in Rome, a fighting organisation for anti-Fascist defence, the Arditi del Popolo [People's Commandos], sprang up independently of the workers' parties. The Arditi won broad support among working people, including among Communists, Socialists, and anarchists. The movement grew into a national organisation with some 20,000 members and scored initial successes against the Fascists.³⁴

The Communist and Socialist parties responded to the Arditi with hostility. The CP leadership, which favoured self-defence against the Fascists only when conducted by organisations under Communist control, barred its members from joining the Arditi, on pain of expulsion. On 3 August 1921, the SP signed a 'peace' agreement with the Fascists that included a clause repudiating the Arditi. Nonetheless, even without significant CP or SP assistance, the Arditi and their allies were able to deal the Fascists a resounding defeat in November 1921, neutralising their first 'March on Rome'.

At first, the Comintern leadership was poorly informed about developments in Italy. Thus, when Lenin wrote on 14 August 1921 in praise of a successful anti-Fascist demonstration of fifty thousand in Rome the previous month, he described it as a united action in which 'the entire proletariat – the reformist

33. For the 1921 documents, see 'Appeal Against White Terror' in RILU 1921, p. 88 and *Bulletin des III. Kongresses der Komintern*, no. 1 (24 June 1921), pp. 18c–18g; and 'Theses on Tactics' in Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 276. For assessments of the Italian CP's conduct during the rise of fascism, see Spriano 1967, 1, pp. 135–8, 181–6; Luks 1985, p. 36; Behan 2003, pp. 91–9; Bellamy and Schecter 1993, pp. 60–1.

34. For accounts of the Arditi, see Balsamini 2002; Francescangeli 2000; Spriano 1967, 1, pp. 139–51; and Behan 2003.

proletariat of the trade unions and the centrists of Serrati's party – *followed* the Communists against the fascists'. In fact, the protest was spearheaded by the Arditi, while the Communist leadership abstained.³⁵

The ECCI held its first full discussion of the Italian situation on 24 January 1922, a month after it recommended a united-front policy for general application, including in Italy. Francesco Misiano, representing the Italian CP leadership, explained the party's aversion to this policy as due to its desire to avoid giving the Socialists 'the opportunity to blur the difference between them and the Communists' at a time when the SP was in rapid decline. The CP was therefore applying the united-front policy only in the trade-union arena, he said. Asked about the Arditi del Popolo, Misiano said that the Party had not taken part in this movement because it was 'sponsored by the bourgeoisie and led by an adventurer'. The Arditi were fading away, he said, but if they revived, the CP might reconsider its stance.³⁶

In response, Bukharin said the CP had 'made a great error in the Arditi del Popolo affair, which had offered the best chance of bringing broad masses under our leadership'. A commission of Bukharin, Misiano, and Mátyás Rákosi wrote the Italian Party along these lines.³⁷ Nonetheless, at the expanded conference of the ECCI held in February–March, the Italian delegates remained adamant. The ECCI then wrote a more sweeping letter criticising the Italian CP on many issues, including the united front, without posing the question of resistance to the Fascists. A subsequent ECCI appeal, written on 22 July, struck a different note, blaming the Socialists for Fascist gains and omitting the call for a united front.³⁸

On 1 August 1922, an alliance of reformist trade-union leaders launched a poorly prepared general strike against the Fascist danger. It was rapidly broken by Fascist and government repression. Where rank-and-file working-class forces achieved unity, as in Parma and Bari, they were able to hold off the Fascist assault.³⁹ The Communist Party took no official part in the August alliance or the spontaneous united fronts of anti-Fascist resistance. In balance, the August conflicts amounted to a devastating defeat for the working class that opened the road for the Fascist march to power.

35. Lenin 1960–71, 32, p. 522; Behan 2003, p. 106.

36. Comintern 1922c, p. 393.

37. Comintern 1922c, p. 394. The letter, apparently written by Bukharin, was not published until 1924. For excerpts, see Spriano 1967, 1, pp. 150–1; Behan 2003, pp. 107–8.

38. See 'Zum Programmwurf der Komm. Partei Italiens', *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, 23 (November 1922), pp. 142–5; 'ECCI Manifesto to the Workers of Italy', Degras 1971, 1, pp. 362–5.

39. For Bordiga's description of events in Bari, see p. 411.

On 3 October, the Socialist Party, which still had 74,000 dues-paying members, expelled its reformist right wing, called for unity with the Comintern and selected delegates to attend its world congress. The ECCI called on the SP and CP to form a joint action committee as the first step to fusion, but in vain: Bordiga declared the SP's left turn to be without significance.⁴⁰

Fourth Congress discussion of Italy focused on the proposed CP-SP fusion. The majority of Italian CP delegates were opposed, and the SP delegates were sceptical. The lengthy hearings of the commission and sub-commission established to study the Italian question talked of little else. After strenuous efforts, the Comintern leadership convinced 16 of the 21 Italian delegates to support a detailed fusion protocol, in which Comintern emissaries were to wield decisive power. After the Congress, with both parties reeling from Fascist repression, a majority of the SP rejected the deal. Only in 1924 did a minority of the SP, led by Serrati, join the Comintern.⁴¹

As the Fourth Congress opened, the pursuit of a united front in Italy was expressed solely in the effort to bring about an SP-CP fusion. The Comintern's longstanding disagreement with the Italian CP majority on the united front was again aired, but was not linked to the challenge of Fascism.⁴² Zinoviev's opening report from the ECCI denounced the errors and weaknesses of the Italian Socialist Party that had contributed to Fascism's rise, while referring to the CP's conduct there as worthy of 'the most important chapter' in a 'policy manual for Communist parties'. Radek avoided the topic, and even Bukharin made only a fleeting and enigmatic reference to the *Arditi del Popolo*.⁴³

According to Zinoviev, the situation in Italy from the start of the War in 1914 to 1919 was 'characterised by the counterrevolutionary role of the old Social-Democratic party'. Yet these were years in which the Italian SP opposed the War, took part in the Zimmerwald movement to build militant opposition to the War, and joined the Comintern.⁴⁴

More than once, Zinoviev coupled Mussolini and German Social Democrat Gustav Noske as agents of white terror against the working class. On one occasion he pointed to the similarity of 'Fascist syndicalism' to the reformist ideology of Social Democracy. His final word on Italy was to call for a united

40. Spriano 1967, 1, pp. 223–7.

41. See the commission proceedings, Comintern 1994, 491/1/303/1531–5 and 491/1/306/1535–9; Kunina 1980, p. 365; and the resolution on the Italian question, pp. 1138–42.

42. See especially speeches by Bordiga for the party majority and Graziadei for its pro-united-front minority, pp. 178–90.

43. See pp. 105–8 (Zinoviev), 388–9 (Radek), 213 (Bukharin).

44. See p. 1032.

struggle against reformism and Fascism.⁴⁵ Such formulations left little scope for united front initiatives toward reformist-led organisations. It is true that Noske had sent right-wing detachments against revolutionary workers, but he did this in order to secure the position of reformist union and political officials within a bourgeois democracy; in Italy, reformist union and political organisations had been demolished by Fascism. It was left to Radek to note that the reformist leaders are 'based on a party of millions' of working people. They often betray these workers, Radek said, but 'when it is necessary for their salvation, they can also betray the bourgeoisie'.⁴⁶

Fascism: the search for a response

Comintern leaders expressed a range of views on the meaning of the Fascist victory. Early in the Congress, Zinoviev said of the Fascist takeover in Italy that, 'viewed historically, it was a farce. A few months or years will pass and it will turn out favourably'. Yet the following day, Zinoviev predicted the Fascists would 'hold their own...during the coming period', which would probably see similar overturns in Central Europe. Bordiga predicted that the new régime would be 'liberal and democratic', reinforced by occasional Fascist violence. Others were more far-sighted and accurate. Antonio Gramsci described how the Fascists, equipped with a private army of 400,000 men backed by active or passive support of the majority of state officials, 'held in their hands the entire foundation of the state' even before taking office. Radek called their takeover 'the greatest defeat that socialism and communism have suffered' since 1917.⁴⁷

But none of the major reports discussed how Fascist attacks could be countered. That issue was raised, instead, by delegates from countries near Italy that were probable targets of fascist offensives. On November 3, two days before the opening session, the German KPD's Central Bureau (the Zentrale) – its day-to-day leadership – instructed the party's congress delegation to 'urge an international campaign against fascism, in its different forms'. During Session 12, Czechoslovak leader Bohumir Šmeral sketched out a plan for bringing together diverse forces in an anti-fascist alliance. The following day, Victor Stern of the Austrian Party struck a new note by describing efforts

45. See Zinoviev's remarks on pp. 69, 124, 1052, 1054.

46. See p. 467.

47. See pp. 106, 121 (Zinoviev), 420 (Bordiga), 386 (Radek). Gramsci, although a delegate, did not speak at the Congress; his analysis was printed in the congress newspaper, *Bolshevik*, no. 4 and no. 12 (November 1922). The first portion of this article is found in Gramsci 1974, pp. 528–30.

to challenge Social Democrats to join a united front in defence of Austrian independence and its 'much-vaunted democracy' against a League of Nations trusteeship. In the same session, Hoernle reported that the KPD had called for 'proletarian self-defence' against fascism the moment that 'the danger is evident and tangible for the masses'. Swiss delegate Franz Welti then expanded this concept into a defence strategy, calling for a 'coordinated effort on the basis of a proletarian united front, utilising both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary methods, in order to erect a wall against fascism'. The KPD's Karl Becker wrote in the congress newspaper, *Bolschewik*, that 'the KPD should organise the united front of the working class against the fascist mobilisation'. On 22 November, the Congress sent greetings to a Berlin conference of factory-committee delegates – doubtless drafted by the KPD's representatives in Moscow – calling for 'a united proletarian front of struggle to... resist German fascism through the formation of workers' defence contingents'.⁴⁸

No delegate spoke of Bulgaria, where Communists, applying the united-front policy, had helped in 1922 in achieving significant gains against the threat of a White-Guard coup. At the time of the Fourth Congress, however, the Bulgarian CP was shifting toward the sectarian path that contributed to devastating defeats the following year.⁴⁹

Despite these appeals, the bulk of Zinoviev's summary address on Italy, delivered the day before the Congress closed, was devoted to reviewing once more the failings of the Socialist Party and the reformist union officials. 'Reformism is our main enemy'; the 'first task' of a merged SP and CP must be to 'strike against reformism with our united forces'. Then, without explanation, seven minutes from the end of a ninety-minute speech, Zinoviev shifted course radically: 'We must succeed in becoming a vanguard of the entire anti-fascist struggle', he said.⁵⁰ Although still not mentioning the concept of united front, he did reassert the position the ECCI had taken nine months earlier regarding the need for the Italian CP to get involved with 'confused forces' such as the Arditi. The congress and commission proceedings give no indication why the Comintern leadership raised this vital issue so late in the Congress, after a month of silence and when all discussion was closed.

Just what was it that the Comintern sought to defend against Fascism? Physical defence of the working class, to be sure. But the Rathenau campaign protested the murder of a capitalist, anti-worker politician. United fronts

48. For November 3 decision, see Reisberg 1971, p. 654. See also pp. 427 (Šméral), 451 (Stern), 461 (Hoernle), 476 (Welti), 705–6 (Greetings to Berlin conference). Becker wrote in *Bolschewik* no. 10, published approximately 18 November 1922.

49. Rothschild 1959, pp. 103–6; Ponomarev 1984, pp. 649–51; Broué 1997, pp. 333–5.

50. See Zinoviev's remarks on pp. 1031ff., 1047, 1053.

against the Kapp and Kornilov putsch attempts had blocked efforts by the extreme Right to overthrow capitalist governments that were themselves repressing the working class. The Comintern's 1922 campaign on Austria defended, among other things, this bourgeois republic's sovereignty. Yet, in Germany, a brutal counterrevolution had been carried out under the banner of 'democracy'. Communists denounced this fake 'democracy' in terms similar to Zetkin's in the Fourth Congress, who termed it the 'naked class-rule of the bourgeoisie'. To be sure, the KPD's August Thalheimer spoke of 'defending the [German] republic against monarchist attacks'. Radek, however, endorsed criticisms by Fischer of the KPD's conduct during the Rathenau campaign, saying that Communists should 'not run after the corpse of Rathenau shouting "republic, republic"'. Zinoviev spoke in similar terms. No distinction was drawn in the Congress between defence of democratic rights and advocacy of specific forms of bourgeois rule. Unfortunately, the need for anti-fascist defence was raised too late in the Congress to explore its implications.⁵¹

Some years after the Congress, the Italian delegate Camilla Ravera recounted a comment by Lenin on this issue in a meeting with Italian delegates held on the eve of the Congress. 'The working class always struggles to win and defend democratic rights, even if they are limited by the bourgeois government', she recalls Lenin as saying. 'And when it loses them, it fights to win them back, and searches for allies for that struggle.' This account is consistent with Lenin's long-held views, but is not echoed by other reports from 1922. Gramsci wrote a parallel account in 1926 – probably based on his 25 October discussion with Lenin – which does not mention comments by Lenin on democratic rights, but does say that Lenin stressed how important it had been, after the Livorno split, to draw the SP into 'an alliance against reaction'. To the Italian CP leadership, Gramsci recalled, 'every attempt by the International to make us adopt this line appeared as an implicit disavowal of the Livorno split'.⁵²

The congress discussion on fascism was improvised under the pressure of Mussolini's coup in Italy. Both passages in the convention resolutions that mention fascism were inserted as amendments. The first of these, an addition to the resolution on Italy, is not found in the congress proceedings but is included in a separate edition of congress resolutions; it concerned only illegal work under Fascism. Otherwise, the resolution on Italy focused on criticism

51. See pp. 310 (Zetkin), 516 (Thalheimer), 164 (Radek), 273–4 (Zinoviev).

52. For Ravera, see Kunina 1980, pp. 359–60; Sekei 1980, p. 287. For Gramsci, see Fiori 1971, p. 153. Regarding Lenin's views on democratic rights under capitalism, see Lih 2006.

of the Socialist Party, in the same spirit as Zinoviev's opening report. A late addition to the Theses on Tactics defined the distinguishing feature of international fascism as its 'attempt through social demagogy to achieve a base among the masses – in the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and even certain sectors of the working class'. Communists were called on to be 'extremely active in setting up united fronts' on this question, the resolution stated, without elaboration.⁵³

Following the Congress, the Comintern moved swiftly to develop a broad international campaign against the fascist danger. Landmarks in this process included an ECCI appeal of 3 January 1923 for an international united front against fascism; the formation shortly thereafter of the International Provisional Committee against Fascism chaired by Zetkin and French author Henri Barbusse; an international 'week of struggle' against fascism organised 15–22 April; and the report by Zetkin, discussion, and resolution on fascism at the expanded ECCI conference held 12–23 June.⁵⁴

Workers' government – evolution of a concept

The most protracted debate on workers' unity at the Fourth Congress concerned the Comintern's call for a workers' government. Although the ECCI had first raised the slogan with respect to Germany a year earlier, Zinoviev conceded in his opening report that 'it has not been sufficiently clarified'. The segment of the Theses on Tactics on this topic went through more drafts than any other congress text, and even after its adoption, three different versions were circulated to Comintern parties.⁵⁵ Most subsequent English-language discussion of this question has focused on a version that differs substantially from the text that the Congress actually adopted.

The debate on this topic began in the days following the workers' defeat of the Kapp Putsch in March 1920. Kapp had fled by then, but workers were still on strike and in arms, demanding effective action against the rightist danger. Carl Legien, head of Germany's Social-Democratic unions, proposed a government of representatives of all workers' parties and trade unions. That proposal foundered on opposition from the USPD, but the KPD responded that formation of such a government would be desirable, subject to certain

53. The relevant passages of the resolutions are on pp. 1141–2, n. 19, and p. 1154. See also Firsov 1980b, p. 139.

54. Kunina 1980, p. 368; Puschnerat 2003, pp. 283–4; Comintern 1923d, pp. 204–32, 293–8. For Zetkin's role, see Riddell 2009.

55. See pp. 1167 (December 1921 ECCI resolution), 129 (Zinoviev), 1159–62 (Theses on Tactics).

conditions, a stand that unleashed a storm of controversy in the Party and Comintern.⁵⁶

The notion of a coalition régime of workers' parties reminded many Communists of the SPD-USPD provisional government established by Germany's November 1918 Revolution, which had suppressed the revolutionary workers' movement. But conditions had changed in Germany. When the Comintern was formed in March 1919, it set as its goal the transfer of power to the revolutionary workers' councils that then existed, or seemed likely to be formed, in several countries of Europe.⁵⁷ A year later, such councils no longer existed to any significant degree outside the Soviet republics.⁵⁸

It was in this context that some Communists proposed that the goal of workers' power be expressed in the call for a government of workers' organisations, committed to a fight to disarm the bourgeois counter-revolution and to strengthen the working class. This, they believed, could be a transitional stage that prepared the road for the republic of workers' councils that would embody the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' – a state in which the dictatorship of capitalism would be replaced by the rule of working people. Other Communists, denying that there could be any middle ground between the dictatorship of the proletariat and that of the bourgeoisie, objected that such a government would necessarily block a revolutionary transition. This viewpoint had been reflected in the ill-fated 'theory of the offensive', which had arisen in part as an alternative response to the challenge of posing the need for workers' power in the absence of workers' councils.⁵⁹

The Comintern debate on KPD tactics following the Kapp Putsch was brought to a close by Lenin's declaration, in an appendix to *'Left-Wing' Communism* (May 1920), that the KPD's conditional support to the workers'

56. Broué 2005, pp. 361–71.

57. This prospect underlies the First Congress Manifesto (Riddell (ed.) 1987, p. 229) and Lenin's comment on that occasion (Riddell (ed.) 1987, pp. 301–3; or Lenin 1960–71, 28, pp. 478–9).

58. When the Fourth Congress convened, there were nine Soviet republics, independent but closely linked by treaties: White Russia (Belarus), Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Bukhara, Khorezm (Khiva), and the Far Eastern Republic. The last of these merged into Soviet Russia during the Congress, on 15 November 1922. The others, except Bukhara and Khorezm, joined on 30 December 1922 in establishing the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

59. The differences between a workers' state and capitalist rule were discussed extensively in the Comintern's First Congress in 1919. Its 'Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' stated, for example, that 'proletarian dictatorship... provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism – the toiling classes.... [T]he people... are now drawn into constant and unending, moreover, decisive participation in the democratic administration of the state'. Riddell (ed.) 1987, p. 156; or Lenin 1960–71, 28, p. 465. On the origins of the 'theory of the offensive', see Koch-Baumgarten 1986, pp. 64–103.

government proposal had been 'quite correct both in its basic premises and in its practical conclusions', but the underlying differences remained unresolved.⁶⁰

As the KPD regained its footing after the March Action, the debate was renewed. In early November 1921, the Party's Central Bureau drafted theses that expressed scepticism toward 'socialist governments' – that is, coalition régimes of the SPD and USPD – while noting that the Party's attitude would depend on the actions of such a régime. In a response written on 7 November, Radek urged a more positive stance, terming the workers' government 'the only practical and real means of winning the majority of the working class to the idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat'.⁶¹ The KPD leadership declared on 8 December that, if there were guarantees that a workers' government would represent workers' interests, it would support and even enter such a régime. Ten days later, the ECCI approved this stand.

All these steps were opposed by the minority current within the KPD led by Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslow. There were different interpretations in the ECCI as well. In the June 1922 Expanded Executive conference, Zinoviev maintained that 'the workers' government is a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat', denying the possibility of a transitional governmental phase on the road to workers' power. His view was contested by Ernst Meyer and other German leaders, and the disagreement carried over into the Fourth Congress.⁶²

Fiction, pseudonym, or transition?

Zinoviev's opening report for the ECCI included a brief passage on the workers' government slogan. Warning against using the slogan 'in a general way', he restricted its use to situations where 'the relationship of forces brings to the fore the question of power'. The final text of the resolution on this question, by contrast, endorsed its use 'almost everywhere'. He described the workers' government both as a 'transitional stage' and as an 'application of the dictatorship of the proletariat'. He stressed that a workers' government would not eliminate the need for the seizure of power and civil war.⁶³

In the subsequent discussion, Bordiga spoke for many delegates who were sceptical of the concept, warning against its use to suggest that the work-

60. Lenin 1960–71, 31, p. 109.

61. Reisberg 1971, pp. 259–61; Broué 1997, pp. 261–2.

62. Comintern 1922a, p. 123.

63. See pp. 129–30, 1159.

ing class can take state power 'in some way other than through armed struggle for power'. Meyer, on the other hand, greeted the fact that Zinoviev had moved beyond his previous statement that 'workers' government' was merely a pseudonym for proletarian dictatorship. Achievement of a workers' government, Meyer said, 'will lead to a phase of sharpened class struggles, through which a proletarian dictatorship will ultimately emerge'. Radek was more explicit, defining the workers' government as 'one of the possible points of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat'. But it is 'worthless unless the workers stand behind it, taking up arms and building factory councils that push this government.... If that is done, the workers' government will be the starting point of a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.' The Russian delegates were initially divided on this issue, but Radek's viewpoint prevailed, leading to Zinoviev's withdrawal, in his summary, of the 'pseudonym' concept: 'I gladly concede the word to Comrade Meyer', he said.⁶⁴

The Comintern counterposed its call for a government of workers' parties and organisations to the orientation of Social-Democratic parties toward forming pro-capitalist coalitions with left-bourgeois forces like the German Centre Party or the French Radicals. In France, the Comintern suggested the formula of a government of Léon Blum and Louis-Oscar Frossard – central leaders, respectively, of the SP and CP – as an alternative to the SP's orientation to a 'Left Bloc' with bourgeois forces. The Comintern's approach aimed to draw a class line between bourgeois and workers' parties. Many Communists regarded this as a breach of Marxism's longstanding principle of refusing to accept governmental responsibility under capitalism. In his summary of the opening congress debate, Zinoviev concluded that the slogan, while not wrong, had been premature in France. 'Given the traditions of the Party there, this was understood to be a parliamentary alliance', he noted.⁶⁵ Supporters of the workers' government concept sought to demonstrate the opposite: that it was an element of revolutionary strategy, not camouflaged reformism.

This interpretation was undermined by the ECCI's use of the term 'workers' government' to describe rule by workers' parties that, while introducing some reforms, acted as loyal administrators of the capitalist order. In his summary, Zinoviev used the expression 'liberal workers' government' to describe the Labour governments that had administered the Australian capitalist state after 1904 and a future Labour Party government in Britain. Such a régime, he said, 'could be the jumping-off point for revolutionising the country', could take many steps 'objectively directed against the bourgeois state', and 'can

64. See pp. 182 (Bordiga), 140 (Meyer), 167 (Radek), 270 (Zinoviev); Reisberg 1971, p. 648 (debate in Russian delegation).

65. See p. 271.

finish in the hands of the left wing'. Surprisingly, Zinoviev saw a parallel here with the role of Russian Mensheviks in 1917. The notion of joining in efforts to bring Labour into office was rooted in Lenin's well-known 1920 polemic against 'left-wing' communism, but Lenin's thrust was quite different. Lenin had argued that a pro-capitalist Labour government would enable workers 'to be convinced by their own experience' that the Labour leadership was 'absolutely good for nothing'.⁶⁶

Meyer, by contrast, emphasised the contrast between 'liberal workers' governments' and a true workers' government, which 'does not merely carry the label of a socialist policy but actually implements a socialist-communist policy in life'. Such a government will be parliamentary 'only in a subordinate sense' and 'must be carried by the broad masses'. KPD leaders Meyer, Hoernle, and Walter Ulbricht, on behalf of the German delegation, submitted an amendment that explained the different types of workers' governments and distinguished between 'illusory' and 'genuine' variants. This was incorporated into the final resolution.⁶⁷

Another amendment resulted from the assertion by the senior Bulgarian delegate, Vasil Kolarov, that 'the workers' government is not posed in agrarian countries like the Balkans'. The final resolution referred to the possibility of a 'government of workers and the poorer peasants' in regions such as the Balkans and Czechoslovakia.⁶⁸

The workers' government debate, which wound through the entire Congress, was notable for the richness of the contributions by delegates who had grappled with its complexity in the work of member parties. Ruth Fischer gave voice to the reticence of many left-leaning delegates in warning that the concept of revolution was being watered down by 'styling its hair in "Western" fashion... creating democratic transitional stages between what we have now and what we aim for'. Speaking for the pro-united-front minority of the Italian CP, Antonio Graziadei called the workers' government 'the result of a united front' – that is, the logical extension of a united front to a governmental level. Adolf Warszawski of the Polish majority likened the workers' government slogan to the demand 'all power to the soviets', raised in Russia in mid-1917 and in Germany in late 1918 – examples of 'a great revolutionary movement at a time when we have not yet won the majority of the working class'. Trotsky drew a parallel with the workers' government formed by the

66. See pp. 266–7 (Zinoviev); Lenin 1960–71, 31, pp. 83–5.

67. See pp. 139 (Meyer); 1096, 1098–1100, and 1160–2 (amendments); and Reisberg 1971, p. 657.

68. See pp. 243 (Kolarov), 1161 (amendment).

Bolsheviks after the 1917 October Revolution, a coalition with the peasant-based Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party.⁶⁹

Zinoviev's summary, delivered in Session 7 (12 November), did not pick up on Meyer's and Radek's description of the workers' government as a transitional stage to soviet-power. While conceding on the word 'pseudonym', Zinoviev restated his point in another form, arguing that 'to establish a workers' government we must first overthrow the bourgeoisie'. The workers' government represented 'the least likely path' to workers' power. As for the variant of a 'liberal workers' government', perhaps in Britain, '[i]t is right to agitate for such a workers' government', while maintaining a revolutionary perspective.⁷⁰ On this ambiguous note, the discussion moved into the congress commissions.

Meanwhile, outside the plenary sessions, a sharp debate was under way regarding a proposal that the KPD join a coalition government in the German state of Saxony with the two Social-Democratic parties. A year earlier, elections in the neighbouring state of Thuringia had produced a narrow majority for the Social-Democratic and Communist Parties, taken together. The KPD had declined to join in a common government with the SPD and USPD, but its support enabled the two parties to form a state government independent of the bourgeois parties. When the Saxon elections in late 1922 produced a similar result, the now-united SPD invited the Communists to join the government. The KPD posed a number of conditions, of which two were rejected: the arming of the workers and the calling of a congress of factory councils. The KPD majority leadership then proposed to enter the government regardless. The Fischer-Maslow current protested. The question was debated in Moscow midway through the Congress, on 16 November, at a special meeting of the German delegation with leaders of the Russian Party, chaired by Lenin. Zinoviev, Trotsky, Radek, and Lenin were unanimously opposed to entry into the government, and the German leadership gave way.⁷¹

A month after this discussion, Trotsky summarised its outcome in a report on the Congress. The Comintern had been prepared to support participation in the government, Trotsky said, if the KPD was 'of the opinion that a revolution is possible in the next few months in Germany' and that ministerial posts

69. See pp. 147 (Fischer), 189 (Graziadei), 197 (Warszawski), 1003 (Trotsky).

70. See pp. 272, 269.

71. No minutes of the November 16 meeting are available. Reisberg 1971 provides an account based on archival records (pp. 670–2). Broué 2005 presents an account of the meeting by Zinoviev in 1924 (pp. 657–8). For a participant's account, see Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 325–6. The meeting also took up relations between the majority and minority factions of the German Party. For two widely divergent accounts, see Zetkin 1934, pp. 38–9; Fischer 1948, pp. 183–6.

in Saxony could be used 'for transforming Saxony...[into] a revolutionary stronghold' during this period of preparation. But, given the actual conditions in Germany, KPD ministers 'will of course play in Saxony the role of an appendage, an impotent appendage because the Saxon government is itself impotent before Berlin, and Berlin is – a bourgeois government'.⁷²

As noted above, Section 11 of the Theses on Tactics, which deals with the workers' government, was the most frequently and thoroughly rewritten text in the congress resolutions. The first and second drafts affirmed the workers' government to be identical with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and omitted the concept that it can be a fighting instrument to help dismantle the bourgeois state and prepare for insurrection. All this was altered in the much-revised text presented in Session 32 to congress delegates.⁷³

The completed resolution represented a workable synthesis, based on a transitional concept of a workers' government. It labelled a potential Labour régime in Britain as an 'illusory workers' government', stating that it will be supported 'only to the degree that it defends the workers' interests'. The final text described the tasks and character of a workers' government in these terms:⁷⁴

The most basic tasks of a workers' government must consist of arming the proletariat, disarming the bourgeois counter-revolutionary organisations, introducing [workers'] control of production, shifting the main burden of taxation to the shoulders of the rich, and breaking the resistance of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Such a workers' government is possible only if it is born from the struggles of the masses themselves and is supported by militant workers' organisations created by the most oppressed layers of the working masses.

However, the confusion attending this debate extended into publication of the resolution. The description of 'illusory' or 'false' workers' governments published in the congress proceedings and translated in the present work was elaborated and strengthened in the German-language edition of the congress resolutions. Unfortunately, the Soviet edition of the congress resolutions published in 1933 omitted the amendments adopted in Session 32 and subsequent changes, and that version has served as the basis of all published English-language translations.⁷⁵ As a result, much subsequent discussion of

72. Trotsky 1972b, 2, p. 325.

73. Comintern 1994, 491/1/278–81/1483–91 (first and second drafts); Session 32, pp. 1096–1100 (late amendments); Theses on Tactics, pp. 1159–62 (adopted text).

74. See pp. 1159–60, 1161.

75. For the version in the collection of resolutions, see p. 1162, n. 43 and Comintern 1923g, pp. 15–17. The Theses on Tactics are not found in the Russian abridged edi-

this congress text has focused on weaknesses that the Congress itself identified and sought to correct.

Labour disunited

The united-front discussion continued through sessions 11–13 on the capitalist offensive – where the main new point considered was the international threat of fascism – and a further three-day debate on trade unions. In the labour arena, the Comintern was campaigning to defend or restore unity on the national level, while the international union movement remained divided between the RILU, based in Moscow, and the rival Social-Democratic-led Amsterdam International. In the view of its Social-Democratic opponents, the RILU's refusal to consider fusion of the rival Internationals was proof that its stand for unity on the national level was insincere. They used the RILU's existence to justify the expulsion of Communists and the rejection of bids by RILU affiliates to join the international union secretariats organised in different branches of industry.

After the Third Congress, Paul Levi, the expelled former leader of the KPD, proposed that, in light of these difficulties, the RILU should be disbanded. 'The unions, as they are, offer a place for all humanity', he stated. Within the KPD, its general secretary, Friesland (Ernst Reuter), called for a more flexible approach to the Amsterdam International. For some, the united-front policy adopted at the end of 1921 pointed toward such an adjustment. However, the Expanded ECCI of February–March 1922 reaffirmed fully the Third Congress position for building the RILU in opposition to the Amsterdam International and condemned 'liquidationist tendencies' regarding the RILU. Aside from some brief remarks by trade-union reporter S.A. Lozovsky, this question was not addressed in the Fourth Congress.⁷⁶ Instead, discussion focused on the widespread expulsions of Communists and their supporters from unions affiliated to the Amsterdam International, and the need to campaign against expulsions while creating organisational structures for expelled members and union federations.

The RILU congress, meeting simultaneously with the Comintern gathering, faced an urgent decision: the CGTU, France's revolutionary trade-union confederation, had agreed to join the RILU if it abandoned its formal link

tion of the proceedings, Comintern 1923b. For the Russian version of this passage, see Kun 1933, pp. 301–2. It is translated in Comintern 1923f, pp. 31–4; Degras 1956, 1, pp. 425–7; Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 397–9; and at: <www.marxists.org>.

76. See Tosstorff 2004, pp. 383, 386–7, 396; Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 261–74; Comintern 1922b, pp. 149–51; and Lozovsky's remarks below, p. 627.

with the Comintern. In face of this challenge, Lozovsky, in his Fourth Congress report, strongly restated the Comintern's position against trade-union political 'neutrality',⁷⁷ but the Congress did not discuss the CGTU proposal. The RILU congress, for its part, decided to sever its formal link with the Comintern, while retaining close working relations, and the CGTU affiliated to the RILU on this basis.

The trade-union debate was notable above all for its concreteness and for the delegates' flexibility in grappling with the peculiarities of labour struggle in each country. A promising factory-council movement in Germany, in which the KPD had strong influence, came in for close scrutiny. Czechoslovak delegates Jan Pavlik and Julius Vercik debated the harsh choices posed by a reformist campaign to split the unions in their country. Henri Lauridan challenged the French party majority leadership for its failure to organise party work within the unions. Hertha Sturm highlighted the crucial role played by women in the great questions facing labour. The resulting resolution on trade-union work, resting on the more sweeping document of the Second Congress, focused on the syndicalist challenge and on resisting expulsions from Social-Democratic-led unions.⁷⁸

Unity against colonialism

The next discussion, on the 'Eastern question', sparkled with its freshness, displaying an assertiveness by delegates from colonial and semi-colonial countries that reflected the challenge of unprecedented events. The Congress convened at the moment of a decisive victory in Turkey's war of independence, which blew open the first great breach in the system of treaties imposed by the victorious Allied powers at the end of World War I. During the two months before the Congress, the national-revolutionary forces led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) drove the invading Greek army out of Turkey, faced down British threats of war, reoccupied the Straits region, and forced the Allied powers to abandon the Sèvres settlement with the Ottoman Empire and open negotiations with the national government for a new treaty. 'The struggle of the Turkish masses, to which we pledged our support, has torn up the Treaty of Sèvres', Radek commented. 'This struggle in Turkey shook the entire West European balance of power.' Communist groups in Turkey and elsewhere in non-Soviet Asia remained very small, but the rise of anti-

77. See pp. 534–42.

78. See pp. 600–2 (Pavlik), 602–5 (Vercik), 574–87 (Lauridan), 587–91 (Sturm), 1199–1206 (Fourth Congress resolution); and Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 625–34 (Second Congress resolution).

imperialist movements offered the Comintern new prospects for influence and growth. The Communist Youth International later noted that a 'marked decline' in the level of activity of many European affiliates in 1922 was offset by 'significant successes in the East'.⁷⁹

Although largely European in its membership and political focus, the Comintern, from its foundation, had broken with the prewar socialist movement's ambiguous record on colonialism, pledging that 'the hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will also be the hour of [their] liberation'. The Second Congress, held in 1920, promised the International's support for 'the revolutionary movement among the nations that are dependent and do not have equal rights (for example Ireland, the Negroes in America, and so forth), and in the colonies'. Point 8 in the Twenty-One Conditions for Admission to the Comintern specified each member party's obligation to lend active support to such movements 'not only in words but in deeds' and to 'demand that the imperialists of its country be driven out of these colonies'. This mandate was expressed in two subsequent congresses of the peoples of the East (Baku 1920) and toilers of the Far East (Moscow 1922). The Third World Congress (June–July 1921) held a day of debate on the four draft resolutions submitted by Asian delegates but took no decisions.⁸⁰

At the time of the Fourth Congress, the Communist movement in Asia and North Africa was just getting established. Communist groups were beginning to take root among peoples in Soviet Asia, where the anticolonial revolution was unfolding at a rapid pace. Small Communist parties had been formed in Iran and Turkey, and a revolutionary group in Egypt had applied for membership. The newly formed Communist Party of China was small but growing rapidly, and Communists in India, led by M.N. Roy, were taking their first steps. In the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), Communists among the settlers had led the transformation of their nucleus into a wholly indigenous movement. In contrast, the Communist Party in Algeria was composed of colonial settlers who were uninterested in recruiting native revolutionaries to their movement.

While only a beginning, this initial progress justified the statement by US black delegate Otto Huiswoud (Billings) that 'the Second International is an International of the white workers and the Communist International is an International of the workers of the world'.⁸¹

79. See p. 728 (Radek); Chitarow 1972, pp. 25–6.

80. Riddell (ed.) 1987, pp. 227–8; Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 286; 2, p. 768; Riddell (ed.) 1993 (Baku congress); Comintern 1970 (Far-East Congress).

81. See p. 800. Compare Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 696.

Building on the Second Congress's support of national-revolutionary movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the Fourth Congress called for an anti-imperialist united front. This concept, not mentioned in the lengthy opening report by the Dutch Communist, Willem van Ravesteyn, was introduced during the discussion by Roy as a means to 'organise all the available revolutionary forces... against imperialism'. Experience has shown that this cannot be done under bourgeois leadership, Roy said. The anti-imperialist united front, he said, will 'free the movement from the fearful and wavering bourgeoisie and bring the masses more actively into the vanguard, so that the revolutionary social forces can constitute the movement's foundation and thus secure its final victory'. G.I. Safarov, a leader of Comintern work in the East, commented on the barriers posed by feudalism and militarist support for imperialism and obstruction of national unity. 'Our first task is to unify all the efforts of the colonial revolutionary movement into an anti-imperialist united front', he said. The congress resolution stressed that this concept flowed 'from the perspective of an extended, lengthy struggle against world imperialism, demanding the mobilisation of all revolutionary forces'. Such formulations were given life by descriptions and discussions of specific struggles.⁸²

The Turkish experience stood out in significance. Orhan (Sadrettin Celal Antel) said that the Turkish CP, viewing the struggle against imperialism of 'overriding importance', had 'decided to support the government [of Mustafa Kemal] as long as it was combating imperialism', but the Party also 'continued to demand democratic reforms for the workers and peasants and endeavoured to organise them'. The government, however, was now seeking an accommodation with imperialism and arresting Communists and worker militants, actions sharply condemned in the congress resolution on Turkey. A subsequent speech by Orhan concluded with an appeal for a world congress embracing 'all revolutionary organisations engaged in anti-imperialist struggle'.⁸³

Tan Malaka's vivid portrayal of Communist struggle in the Dutch East Indies is among the most often cited passages of the congress proceedings. He argued that an unwise condemnation of pan-Islamism in a Second Congress resolution ('It is necessary to struggle against the pan-Islamic movements') was being utilised to obstruct anti-imperialist unity. Pan-Islamism had taken on a new meaning, he said; it 'now means the nationalist freedom struggle'. The importance of unity with Islamist anticolonial forces was proven, in his opinion, by his Party's experience working with Sarekat Islam, the pioneer

82. See pp. 694 (Roy), 721 (Safarov), 1187 (Fourth Congress resolution); and Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 212–13 (Second Congress).

83. See pp. 614, 724 (Orhan), 619–20 (resolution).

mass nationalist movement of the Dutch Indies. To the congress delegates' delight, he gave examples of Communist adroitness in parrying religious prejudices: 'Yes, your God is mighty, but... on this earth the railway workers are even mightier!... The railway workers are God's executive committee in this world.'⁸⁴

Tunisian delegate Tahar Boudengha was even blunter: 'Pan-Islamism means nothing other than the unification of all Muslims against their oppressor. It must therefore be supported.' Ravesteyn, the reporter, also discussed pan-Islamism sympathetically and at length. The congress resolution went some distance to encompass this viewpoint by describing pan-Islamism as an early stage of the liberation movement, although noting that it provides an opportunity for intrigue by imperialism.⁸⁵

Curiously, the Comintern's most significant engagement with national-revolutionary movements at that time, with the Kuomintang (the main bourgeois-nationalist movement in China), received only brief mention at the Congress. Earlier that year, the Congress of Toilers of the Far East (January–February 1922), which had included Kuomintang representatives, had laid out a basic policy toward this movement. 'We are supporting and will continue to support your struggle', Safarov told Kuomintang delegates, 'in so far as it is a matter of a nationalistic and democratic uprising for national emancipation. But at the same time we shall independently carry on our Communist work of organising the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses of China.' In August 1922, the Chinese CP leadership had decided, on the urging of Comintern envoy Henk Sneevliet (Maring), that CP members should join the Kuomintang. (Sneevliet had been among the architects of the entry by revolutionary socialists in the Dutch East Indies into Sarekat Islam.) Chen Duxiu, a delegate at the Fourth Congress, joined the Kuomintang in September, along with other leading Communists. This event, which looms large in Chinese history, was reported briefly by Liu Renjing at the end of his remarks in Session 20. It was otherwise not mentioned, including in the speeches of Comintern leaders Safarov and Radek. Safarov did say that soviet-revolution was not posed in countries like China. Radek went further, stating that 'in China, neither the victory of socialism nor the establishment of a Soviet republic is on the agenda'. Even national unity was not yet possible, he said, tacitly suggesting that the Kuomintang's chief goal was illusory.⁸⁶

84. See pp. 261–5 (Malaka); Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 288 (Second Congress resolution).

85. See pp. 704 (Boudengha), 662–85 (Ravesteyn), 1182 (resolution).

86. Comintern 1970, pp. 193–4; Pantsov 2000, p. 57; Carr 1966, 3, p. 527 (entry into KMT); and below, pp. 711–2 (Liu on KMT), 722 (Safarov), 733 (Radek).

The resolution on the East did not discuss tasks in China. The archives of the Comintern in Moscow, open for research since 1992, contain an unpublished document on tasks of the Chinese CP labelled 'Resolution of the Fourth Congress', but there is no reference to it in the congress proceedings. This document, drafted by Radek, dismisses the Kuomintang as a force allied with imperialism and does not propose that CP members join or support it. On 12 January 1923, however, the ECCI adopted a statement hailing the Kuomintang as 'the only serious national-revolutionary group in China' and advocating membership in it by Chinese Communists. This fragmentary record suggests that Chinese Communists and their Comintern advisors disagreed regarding policy toward the Kuomintang, and that the matter was resolved only after Sneevliet's arrival in Moscow in late December.⁸⁷

By contrast, the oppression of black people received close attention. The congress adopted an unprecedented statement on the world struggle of black people, based on reports and input by two black leaders of the US Communist movement, Huiswoud and Claude McKay. The resolution proclaimed the need for a world movement for black liberation, pledging the Comintern's support for 'every form of the black movement that either undermines or weakens capitalism or places barriers in the path of its future expansion'. It also called for immediate steps toward a world congress of blacks in Moscow.⁸⁸

Throughout these discussions, many delegates voiced concern that struggles in the East were not allocated appropriate time and attention. Despite the small size of parties in colonial countries, two days of debate seemed insufficient given the complexity of the issues. Appeals for more speaking time were common during the Congress, but the complaints regarding handling of the Eastern question were unique in frequency and vehemence. Both Ravesteyn and Roy pointed to the lack of speakers from the East during the Congress's main political discussions. Orhan found the Western parties' failure to devote attention to the colonial question 'inexplicable'. Tan Malaka appealed eloquently for adequate time: 'I come from the Indies; I have travelled forty days.' Karim Nikbin (Iran) and Harry Webb (Britain) noted the lack of atten-

87. See pp. 1180–90 (resolution on East); Titarenko 1994, pp. 149–51 (resolution by Radek on CPC tasks); Titarenko 1986, pp. 37–8 (ECCI resolution). Radek's resolution can also be found in German in Kuo and Titarenko 1996, pp. 192–4; and in English, with a slightly different text, in Saich, 1, pp. 377–8. Titarenko 1994 states that the Radek resolution reflected a 'fairly insistent tendency against aiding Sun Yat-Sen and the Kuomintang, favouring a line of developing the workers' and trade-union movement not dependent on the Kuomintang, especially in Northern and Central China', which 'gained the ascendancy...at the Fourth Congress' (p. 160). Thanks to Victor Granovsky for alerting me to this comment.

88. See pp. 800–7 (Billings), 807–10 (McKay), 947–50 (resolution on blacks).

dance at discussions on the East. Delegations from thirteen countries, including three in Europe, presented a collective protest. Even Safarov protested the 'passivity' displayed by 'a considerable sector' of the congress. Responses from the Presidium (responsible for organising the congress agenda) were dismissive: Kolarov said that, for Eastern issues, discussions in the Commission were enough, implying they were of no great import. Replying to Eastern delegates' complaints that their work did not meet with interest, Radek stated that 'interest in parties is tied to their deeds'.⁸⁹

The deeds of the major European parties attracted interest for quite a different reason: many delegates pointed out that they were failing to fulfil their duty of active support for colonial freedom. Orhan noted that, in Italy, a significant colonial power engaged in the dismemberment of Turkey, the CP had no policy for the colonies. Webb insisted that anticolonial work should be given greater priority. William Earsman posed the question of labour's complicity in the colour bar in Australia. Boudengha made a decisive intervention, exposing the actions of French CP members in Algeria, who were backing French colonial rule and resisting Algerians' strivings for independence. Safarov and Trotsky stressed the urgency of a sharp break with such attitudes, and this was codified in the resolution on France.⁹⁰ Less positively, the congress resolution on South Africa did not take up the fact that the general strike in Transvaal in March 1922 had been waged, in part, in defence of the colour bar against black workers.

Programme: the challenge of transition

A much anticipated congress discussion on programme was cut short unexpectedly after three reports that revealed a sharp disagreement, including among leading Russian delegates, on an issue related to united-front policy.

In the view of Communists, the collapse of the Second International at the outset of the First World War reflected, in part, a crisis of programme. Previously, socialists had taken their lead from the Erfurt programme, adopted by the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) in 1891. This programme, Luxemburg told the KPD's founding congress in December 1918, was marked by 'the separation of the immediate, so-called minimal demands formulated

89. See pp. 235–6 (Ravesteyn), 686 (Roy), 723 (Orhan), 264 (Tan Malaka), 726 (Nikbin), 711 (Webb), 707 (collective protest), 720 (Safarov), 650 (Kolarov), 735 (Radek).

90. See pp. 723 (Orhan), 709 (Webb), 716–17 (Earsman), 736 (South Africa), 700–4 (Boudengha), 719–20 (Safarov), 1000–1 (Trotsky), 1131–2 (resolution).

for the political and economic struggle from the socialist goal regarded as a maximal programme....For us there is no minimal and maximal program; socialism...is the minimum we have to realise today.’⁹¹ During the revolutionary upsurge that followed the First World War, Communists believed that achievement of workers’ power was posed as an immediate task. This was the central issue addressed by the two programmatic documents adopted by the Comintern’s founding congress, the ‘Platform of the Communist International’ and Lenin’s ‘Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat’.⁹²

As the revolutionary wave ebbed, it became increasingly urgent, as Trotsky later remarked, to find ways ‘to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution’. This challenge was addressed by Radek at the Third Comintern Congress. Referring to Luxemburg’s 1918 remarks on the KPD’s programme, he asked, ‘And what did Rosa Luxemburg propose as a minimum? All power to the workers’ councils, arm the proletariat, cancel state debts, seize the factories, and so forth.’ But now, ‘the first onslaught of the working class...has been beaten back’. Communists must offer ‘more than the bare programme of the dictatorship of the proletariat’. The Theses on Tactics adopted by the Third Congress sketched out the resulting programmatic challenge:

In place of the minimum programme of the centrists and reformists, the Communist International offers a struggle for the specific demands of the proletariat, as part of a system of demands that, in their totality, undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, organise the proletariat, and mark out the different stages of the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. Each of these demands gives expression to the needs of the broad masses, even when they do not yet consciously take a stand for proletarian dictatorship.⁹³

This ‘system of demands’ encompassed many that were considered to be ‘immediate’ or ‘partial’. Following on the usage of German Communists, the term ‘transitional demands’ came to be applied to the elements of this ‘system’ that could help the working masses, as they radicalised, to see the need to break from bourgeois influence and set out on the road to power. Prominent examples were the calls for a workers’ government and for work-

91. Luxemburg 2004, pp. 364–5. The Maximalist current led by Serrati in the Italian SP took its name from a similar insistence on the primacy of ‘maximum’ demands. An English translation of the Erfurt programme is available at: <www.marxists.org>.

92. See Riddell (ed.) 1987, pp. 149–59, 241–8; Lenin 1960–71, 28, pp. 457–74.

93. Trotsky 1973, p. 75; Comintern 1921b, pp. 475–6; Comintern 1921c, p. 47. See also Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 286.

ers' control of production. The programme adopted by the KPD in October 1922 included demands for confiscatory taxation of capitalist property; abolition of bank, technical, and commercial secrecy; a state monopoly of the food supply; rationing under workers' control; and a state monopoly of external trade and banking under workers' control.⁹⁴

On 11 June 1922, an expanded ECCI conference noted that its largest member parties had not yet adopted programmes. It established a commission with thirty-three members from fifteen countries to assist them in this task. Zinoviev projected that the Commission might submit a draft programme to the Fourth Congress. In any case, consideration of a programme for the Comintern and its main member parties would be 'among the most important' congress agenda items. When the Commission met on 28 June, differences emerged regarding the appropriate scope of a Comintern programme. Bukharin opposed including in the programme transitional demands such as the workers' government and united front, which he viewed as tactical matters. In response, Šmeral of the Czechoslovak CP argued that the programme needed to encompass the Communists' tactical course and line of action during a possibly lengthy transitional period preceding the revolution. Zetkin said that the programme had to be 'sufficiently broad to encompass everything necessary in the given situation'.⁹⁵

The pre-congress issue of the Comintern journal *Kommunistische Internationale* included the draft programmes of the Italian and German Parties, plus contributions to the discussion by Varga, Thalheimer, and Wera Kostrzewa of the Polish CP.⁹⁶

The Fourth Congress discussion on this point opened with reports by Bukharin and Thalheimer, presenting the two counterposed viewpoints voiced in the ECCI. Bukharin reported a decision, presumably by the Congress Presidium, that the Congress would hold only a preliminary discussion on programme, because most parties had not yet taken a position on this question. Bukharin noted that his own draft had not been discussed by the Russian delegation. He argued against including transitional demands in the programme, including in a jocular exchange with Radek. Thalheimer

94. See Broué 2005, pp. 648–50.

95. For the ECCI decision, see Comintern 1922a, pp. 134–5. The ECCI specified that the Fourth Congress would consider the programmes of parties in Germany, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, the US, and Japan, plus one party each in Scandinavia and the Balkans – presumably, those in Norway and Bulgaria. The programme commission included all five Russian CP leaders assigned to Comintern work (Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Radek) plus Zetkin, Thalheimer, and Meyer of the KPD. For a summary of the commission discussion, see Sokolov 1980.

96. *Kommunistische Internationale*, 23 (November 1922), pp. 114–55. For a fuller collection of relevant documents, see Comintern 1924a.

stressed the dangers of a 'separation of tactical principles from goals', a characteristic of the Second International 'that opened the door to their descent into opportunism'. He quoted extensively from an October 1917 article by Lenin arguing against Bukharin's proposal, at that time, that the Bolshevik Party abandon its 'minimum programme'. A third report, by Kabakchiev, summarising the Bulgarian CP's draft programme, argued that, under prevailing conditions, the minimum demands of the old programme had taken on transitional significance.⁹⁷

When Kabakchiev's speech concluded, the Presidium proposed and obtained adjournment of debate in order to grant a request of the Russian delegation for time to consider its position. Three days later, Bukharin read a short statement of the Russian delegation essentially endorsing the Thalheimer-Radek position. Delegates then adopted a presidium resolution written in the same spirit, with the Italian delegation dissenting.⁹⁸

The far-ranging exchange between Bukharin and Thalheimer included lengthy comments reviewing the evolution of Marxist views in the pre-1914 Socialist International. Both offered assessments of the revisionism controversy in the prewar SPD that differed from Lenin's views. Bukharin traced Karl Kautsky's 1914 capitulation to revisionism back to his conduct in the 1899 controversy with Eduard Bernstein in 1899, a failing that Bolsheviks, he said, had not noted at the time. Lenin, by contrast, had written in 1920 that Kautsky in that period 'was still a Marxist and not a renegade'. Thalheimer described the continuity of German Communism going back to the struggle after 1905 of the Marxist left current headed by Rosa Luxemburg against the current led by Kautsky, an outlook distinct from that of Lenin at that time. Thalheimer also criticised Lenin's early views on the prospects for capitalism in Russia. These disagreements illustrate the diversity of viewpoints and traditions that then coexisted and contended within the Comintern.⁹⁹

Balance sheet of Russian NEP

Midway through its extended opening discussion of the united front and related matters, the Congress paused for three days to hear reports by Lenin,

97. See pp. 479–80 (Bukharin); 497–8 (Bukharin/Radek); 510, 511–15 (Thalheimer); 522–3 (Kabakchiev). Bukharin's draft programme is not found among published congress materials.

98. See pp. 527 (adjournment of debate), 631–3 (statements by Russian and Italian delegations and resolution).

99. See pp. 481 (Bukharin on Kautsky), 503–4 (Thalheimer on Marxist Left), 509 (Thalheimer on Lenin), and Lenin 1960–71, 31, p. 22 (Lenin on Kautsky). For more on Lenin's views of Kautsky, see p. 481, n. 2.

Zetkin, Trotsky, and Béla Kun on the state of the Russian Revolution. The first three were then among the most authoritative international Communist leaders, while Kun's presence reflected his return to prominence after his much-criticised role as ECCI envoy in spurring the German Party into the March Action of 1921. Lenin's speech – his last public address – is widely known, but its relationship with the Fourth Congress debates deserves attention. Trotsky's address is also readily available, although in a considerably modified version, while Zetkin's is available in English for the first time in this volume. No discussion followed these speeches; Zetkin drafted a brief resolution that was adopted in the final session.¹⁰⁰

Kun's address focused on the indispensable role of the revolutionary party in the 1917 workers' victory in Russia, which he contrasted to the negative example of their defeat in Hungary a year and a half later. The other three speeches drew a balance sheet of the New Economic Policy (NEP), a series of measures, introduced in Soviet Russia in March 1921 and subsequently, which aimed to restore economic relations between the city and countryside. The NEP permitted peasants to freely market their grain, restored freedom of commerce, provided scope for small-scale capitalist enterprises, and subjected state-owned enterprises and administration to budgetary controls.

In their Fourth Congress reports, Lenin, Zetkin, and Trotsky all described the progress of the Soviet republics in the NEP's first year as the first stage of an economic and social recovery. The peasantry, disaffected only a year earlier, 'are satisfied with their present position', Lenin said. There had been a 'general revival in light industry', which had improved workers' living conditions, but the condition of heavy industry was still 'grave'. Trotsky noted that Russia was still 'poorer than the country was before the War and before the Revolution'. Moreover, these modest gains had been achieved through a partial reintroduction of capitalism. Lenin and Zetkin called the resulting conditions 'state capitalism'. In Trotsky's view, the term was not appropriate as a description of economic relations in a workers' state, but his analysis of economic conditions was similar. The grave continuing problems in Russia were depicted unsparingly, especially by Lenin ('backward and uneducated as we are'), who stressed that this was a period of retreat in which Communists must strive to study and learn.¹⁰¹

100. For the speeches, see Sessions 8 (Lenin), 8 and 9 (Zetkin), 9 (Kun), and 10 (Trotsky). See also Lenin 1960–71, 33, pp. 418–32; Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 185–216. Trotsky also wrote summary theses based on his speech (Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 264–74), which – although included in Adler (ed.) 1980 collection of congress documents – were not adopted by the Congress. Zetkin sent an outline of her speech to Lenin, who responded with encouragement: see Stoljarowa and Schmalfuss 1990, pp. 303–7.

101. See pp. 299–300 (Lenin); 364, 354 (Trotsky).

Both Lenin and Trotsky minimised the possibility of Soviet Russia's receiving significant aid through investment from or trade with the capitalist world. In the following month, Lenin led a successful struggle to reaffirm the Soviet government's monopoly of foreign trade, a bulwark against economic disruption by pressures of the world-capitalist market. Later in the Congress, Willi Münzenberg's report on economic assistance to the Soviet republics showed that significant investment funds were being raised for them by the workers' movement abroad. However, the Congress did not discuss either the Rapallo Treaty concluded earlier in 1922 between Russia and Germany, which set up a framework for economic cooperation between the two countries, or the German CP's call for Germany to develop close economic relations with Russia.¹⁰²

'Capitalism has come again', Zetkin said, 'although its power...seemed to have been banished from the sacred revolutionary soil of Soviet Russia once and for all'. It had come in the form not only of small peasant operations but 'those receiving leases and concessions', in the search for 'the largest profit possible'. This meant the return of 'the contradiction between capital and labour...in all its ruthlessness and severity'. Trotsky, using the railway as an example, described how the controlled reintroduction of market relations facilitated planning by providing a link between production and social needs. As for privately owned industry, Trotsky emphasised that it remained relatively small in scope. Zetkin, however, pointed out that capitalist pressures were also expressed through state enterprises – now subjected to strict accounting and forced to live mainly from market revenue – and from Russia's renewed insertion in the world capitalist market. These pressures could bring the workers' state into conflicts with the interests of some workers, she stated – conflicts that 'must be resolved...in the interests of the proletariat as a class, in its entirety'.¹⁰³

State capitalism in Russia is 'of a special kind', Lenin said, because 'we hold all the commanding positions'. However, exercising control was difficult because of the character of the state apparatus: 'very often this machinery operates against us'. At the top are 'no more than...at the outside several thousands of our own people. Down below, however, there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly deliberately and partly unwittingly, work against

102. See pp. 300 (Lenin), 359–64 (Trotsky), 495–6 (Bukharin), 634–47 (Münzenberg); Lenin 1995, pp. 155–76; Lenin 1961–70, 33, pp. 455–9; Broué 2005, pp. 599–606; Reisberg 1971, pp. 71–5. For discussion of Soviet investment policy in the Russian CP during that period, see Day 1973, pp. 47–104.

103. See pp. 329 (Zetkin), 355–6 (Trotsky), 330–1 (Zetkin).

us.' Affirming the urgency of 'thoroughly overhauling our state apparatus', he prefigured the main theme of his struggle against bureaucratism in the few months left to him before his final illness removed him from political activity.¹⁰⁴

Trotsky reviewed the attempts to eliminate capitalist economic relations under 'war communism' (1918–21), explaining the Bolsheviks' hopes at that time that revolution in the West would make possible the evolution of these emergency measures into a solid basis for building socialism. Zetkin also surveyed this period, defending the Bolsheviks' record against criticisms raised in a posthumous work by Rosa Luxemburg. Zetkin's endorsement of the Bolsheviks' course was unqualified but also unsparing. Referring to the government's severe actions against counter-revolution, she commented, 'By taking bad measures, they serve to prevent what is even worse.' But she echoed Luxemburg's argument by declining to accept such 'bad measures' as the last word in proletarian rule. Soviet Russia 'is the first form of proletarian state', she told delegates, but '[c]ertainly it is not the only form... for the historically given conditions for establishment of a proletarian state are varied'.¹⁰⁵

The discussion on Soviet Russia wound its way through the Congress, with notable contributions by Ivan Teodorovich on the agrarian question (Session 21), Arthur Henriët and L.M. Khinchuk on cooperatives (Session 23), Sofia Smidovich and Varsenika Kasparova on the struggles of women (Session 24), and Nadezhda Krupskaya on popular education (Session 25).

Among the issues discussed were the implications of the NEP experience for communists outside Russia. Bukharin explained that the NEP had 'general applicability' – that it is 'not only a strategic retreat but is also the correct solution of a broad organisational and social problem', namely the relationship between the portion of the economy organised directly by the state, on the one hand, and on the other the 'peasants and millions of small producers'. Zinoviev had previously explained that this was the collective view of the Bolshevik leadership. The perspective of a NEP outside Russia provided assurance to small farmers and other exploited independent producers that

104. See pp. 301–2 (Lenin). For documents of Lenin's final struggle against bureaucratism, see Lewin 1975; Lenin 1995.

105. See pp. 352–3 (Trotsky); 316, 336 (Zetkin). Zetkin was responding here to criticisms of Bolshevik policy during the Russian Revolution raised by Rosa Luxemburg in an article written in prison in September 1918 and published after her death by Paul Levi in 1921 (Luxemburg 2004, pp. 281–310). Defending the Bolshevik-led dictatorship, Luxemburg had written, 'The danger begins only when they make a virtue of necessity and want to freeze into a complete theoretical system all the tactics forced upon them by these fatal circumstances'. Luxemburg 2004, p. 309. Zetkin's viewpoint was developed more fully in book form in Zetkin 1922b; the book's thesis is summarised in van der Linden 2007, pp. 31–4.

they would be able, under workers' rule, to continue operations and dispose freely of their products.¹⁰⁶

The first year of the NEP had begun under conditions of widespread famine in Russia, during which the Soviet government initiated an international campaign to provide emergency relief to the hungry. Varga complained that this effort, in which the Soviet government had revealed the extent of its population's suffering, had had damaging effects. 'We must now put an end to this impression, promoted among the broad masses by the famine campaign and the Mensheviks, that things are going very badly for the Russian workers', Varga said. 'It is not true.' Soon, Russian workers would be living better than those of Austria, he added. In response, Zinoviev stressed the need to tell the truth, even if bitter: 'The hunger was quite genuine'. Moreover, 'in other countries the dictatorship of the proletariat may bring hunger in its wake', he said. 'We must say things to the workers as they are'. Later, Münzenberg reported on the massive Workers' Aid campaign organised by the Communist parties and their supporters to assist Soviet citizens – perhaps the Comintern's most successful united-front effort during that period. Workers' Aid cared directly for more than 200,000 Soviet citizens, employed 30,000 Soviet workers in its factories, and raised funds equivalent to half of what the Soviet government invested during that time in rebuilding heavy industry.¹⁰⁷

A comment by Bukharin on Soviet Russia has been held by some historians to prefigure the later subordination of the Comintern to Soviet foreign-policy interests, under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. In his report on the Comintern's programme, not adopted by the Congress, Bukharin claimed that, in the event of a military alliance between a proletarian state such as Soviet Russia and a bourgeois state, workers in the bourgeois state should 'contribute to the victory of such an alliance' – which could conceivably mean supporting their own capitalist government in a war. The Bolshevik leader probably had in mind the Rapallo Treaty and other agreements concluded by Russia and Germany that year, which included provisions for military collaboration. The existence of these agreements, however, did not lead the German Communists to lessen their efforts to overthrow the German state. In the Stalin era, by contrast, diplomatic shifts by the Soviet government led to immediate worldwide reversals in Comintern policy.¹⁰⁸

There was no suggestion during the Congress that defence of the national interests of Soviet Russia had priority for the Comintern. Soviet foreign policy and Comintern interests were regarded as identical, as Zinoviev pointed out

106. See pp. 493 (Bukharin), 71–2, 123 (Zinoviev).

107. See pp. 143 (Varga), 285 (Zinoviev), 634–47 (Münzenberg).

108. See pp. 496.

in his opening report. He cited Lenin's belief that the leading role of the Russian Party in the Comintern would soon be ended by the establishment of Soviet republics in advanced countries. Zetkin affirmed Marx's statement that 'the socialist revolution cannot be consummated within national limits' as a central theme of Bolshevik policy. Trotsky defined Soviet policy as 'sticking it out until the working class of Europe and the rest of the world has taken state power'. According to the congress resolution on Soviet Russia, 'Proletarian revolution can never fully triumph in a single country. Rather it must be victorious internationally, as a world-revolution'.¹⁰⁹

Centralism in the International

A congress agenda point on 'reorganising the Executive Committee' received little time and attention, and the resolution proposed few changes. However, the discussion touched on issues that weighed heavily in the International's later evolution.

The Comintern was founded with the goal of 'coordinating proletarian actions' through a world party that 'puts the interests of the international revolution ahead of so-called national interests'. Its statutes declared it to be a 'united Communist party of the whole world', whose affiliates in each country are 'only its individual sections'. Its Executive Committee, the statutes affirmed, issued directives 'binding on all [affiliated] organisations'. The Twenty-One Conditions, however, linked application of this principle to 'conditions of most acute civil war' and recognised that the Comintern and ECCI 'must take into account the diverse conditions under which each party has to struggle and work, adopting universally binding decisions only on questions in which such decisions are possible'.¹¹⁰

These concepts were applied to newly formed parties, uniting forces with very different backgrounds and levels of experience, by an Executive that bore the political authority of Bolshevik victory but was sometimes inclined, in 1920–1, to leftist impatience. The Executive's envoys came in for criticism for heavy-handed and ill-advised interventions in the affairs of national parties, particularly with regard to the launching of the 1921 March Action in Germany. In June–July 1921, the Third World Congress corrected the political errors that underlay this problem, but did not review the Executive's conduct toward the sections. Subsequently, such problems were less disruptive but

109. See pp. 95, 73–4 (Zinoviev); 320 (Zetkin); 361 (Trotsky); 1103–4 (resolution).

110. Riddell (ed.) 1987, pp. 247–8 (Comintern Platform); Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 696, 698 (Statutes), 770 (Conditions).

did not end: only a month after the Third Congress, Lenin publicly reproved Radek for meddling in the German Party. And, even while the Fourth Congress commission on the US Party was meeting, a person sent to that party as an ECCI envoy, József Pogány (John Pepper), was – unknown to commission members and probably the ECCI – organising a personal faction to take over the US party leadership.¹¹¹

But Pogány's intrigue ran counter to the spirit of the Congress. Appeals were voiced for caution in applying the Bolshevik organisational model to the International and its member parties. Lenin's address included a warning regarding the organisational resolution the Comintern had adopted the previous year. Although he was 'prepared to subscribe to every one of its fifty or more points', the resolution – which he had helped draft – was 'too Russian' and incomprehensible to non-Russian Communists. 'Everything in it is based on the Russian experience', Lenin said; non-Russians 'will not understand it' and 'cannot carry it out'. However, apart from a comment by Zetkin, Lenin's warning against arbitrarily imposing Russian organisational norms was not taken up in congress discussion.¹¹²

A few delegates did describe Communist parties in a spirit more flexible than that of the 1921 resolution. Münzenberg, in his report on Workers' Aid, explained that in the Comintern's mass parties, whose members numbered in the hundreds of thousands, members 'are not all simply political activists. The moment the Communist Party is organised as an open party, which anyone won by our agitation can join, it wins a large number of forces who may well not be politically active in the purely political daily work'. Many of these inactive members, he said, could be won to participate in the aid campaign for Russia.¹¹³

As for international discipline, Meyer described it as a situation where 'every sister party knows the others and, in its own activity, takes into account the reaction in the sister parties and the consequences for them'. Trotsky, sorting out the troubled affairs of the French Party, took care to reaffirm its autonomy, presenting the Congress's role as providing 'guidelines' and 'advice'.

111. See Lenin 1960–71, 32, pp. 515–16. On Pogány's role see Draper 1960, *passim*; Cannon 1973, pp. 74–84; Palmer 2007, pp. 175–95. Cannon, then a central leader of the US Party, explains that Pogány's authority as an ECCI representative 'was never completely clear'; in Moscow, Cannon heard that it was limited to working with the US party's Hungarian federation.

112. See pp. 303–4 (Lenin), 337 (Zetkin). For the Third Congress resolution, see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 234–61. For Lenin's involvement in drafting it, see Lenin 1960–71, 42, pp. 316–19; 45, pp. 185–6.

113. See p. 644.

In the many national disputes brought before the Congress (e.g. Denmark, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia), its commissions sought to avoid a partisan stance and to unify the Communist forces in each country.¹¹⁴

In Norway and France, however, a non-partisan approach to factional conflicts was beyond reach. The Comintern's Norwegian affiliate was the Labour Party, a mass federated organisation dating back to the prewar Second International. Despite many promises, its leadership had failed to re-organise the Party along the lines of the Twenty-One Conditions. Convinced that the majority leaders were prevaricating, the Congress passed a forceful resolution, insisting that the Party carry out Comintern decisions and acknowledge Comintern authority over its national sections.¹¹⁵

As for the French Party, the ECCI had been working for two years to promote a united leadership combining the majority Centre faction, which reflected the Party's roots in the Second International, with the Left, bent on transforming it along Communist lines. Among the disputed issues was the united-front policy, which the Centre considered to be inapplicable in France. Two weeks before the Fourth Congress convened, an agreement between these two factions collapsed, and a French CP congress ended in deadlock. Both sides agreed to ask the World Congress to mediate. The broad course of this dispute is known from the articles of Trotsky, the main Bolshevik leader assigned to this question. However, Trotsky's summary report to the Congress, with its vivid overview of the situation, now appears for the first time in English. Formal debate of the French question was consigned to the commission set up for this purpose, but the contending views were expressed in several speeches in plenary session. Rosmer and Lauridan, representing the Left, launched a political offensive on the disputed issues, backed by Zinoviev; Faure, of the Centre, was evasive; Duret, speaking for a third current, gave reasoned and candid arguments against applying the united-front policy in France.¹¹⁶

In the Commission, ECCI representatives argued, against stubborn resistance, for a united leadership, including all factions and implementing Comintern decisions. The situation was unblocked, in part, by an initiative by Trotsky to apply a Second Congress decision to bar Communist membership in freemasonry, a fraternal order that Communists viewed as a component

114. See pp. 141 (Meyer), 991 (Trotsky), and resolutions in Sessions 29, 30, and 31.

115. See 'Resolution on the Norwegian Labour Party', pp. 1091–2.

116. For Trotsky's contributions, see pp. 963–1004 and the Trotsky 1972b collection. See also pp. 101–5 (Zinoviev), 169–78 (Duret), 226–35 (Rosmer), 217–23 (Faure), 574–87 (Lauridan).

of the capitalist ruling class. 'There were Freemasons...in all three factions', commission member Jules Humbert-Droz later commented. 'Each of them would be equally affected by this decision.... Above all, the battle lines would shift: the freemasons of all factions would unite against this decision of the International.' The ban on freemasons was incorporated in the Commission's ultimate agreement, which proposed a leadership based on proportional representation of all factions, with members nominated by the faction caucuses present in Moscow. The proposed list was submitted to a subsequent French party congress for approval.¹¹⁷

The organisational debates were conducted in the spirit of encouraging member parties' autonomy, internal democracy, and self-reliance. In the broader discussion of organisational principle, however, the record was mixed. Bulgarian Communist Vasil Kolarov, for example, called for 'a common conception regarding all great questions', insisting that 'deviating viewpoints will necessarily lead to indiscipline' – a formula that suggested the need for a monolithic movement. Surprisingly, a resolution presented by Radek cited a 'Third Congress resolution forbidding the formation of factions' – apparently misinterpreting a statement in its Third Congress document on organisational structure. Trotsky, by contrast, called the formation of factions in France a 'necessary and healthy response' under the circumstances, while Zinoviev, in his closing summary, noted that 'minorities exist on this or that question (that is always the case)'.¹¹⁸

Autonomy of national parties was buttressed by the main theme of the Congress – united-front policy – which oriented parties toward creative engagement with national political reality, as opposed to reliance on Moscow directives. Another factor that, at least potentially, weighed against member parties' autonomy – the significant subsidies they received from the ECCI – was not mentioned in the Congress.

As for the International's structure, the report by Hugo Eberlein stressed the need 'for the Comintern to become, more and more, a truly centralised world party' in which the parties 'view the central leadership of the International as truly a leading body'. Bukharin, reporting on Norway, said of the

117. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 417; Humbert-Droz 1971, pp. 119–20; and Trotsky's comments on pp. 994–8. For background to the Freemasonry discussion, see p. 994, nn. 33, 34. In all, three resolutions on France were adopted; see pp. 1013–16, 1123–32, 1194–8.

118. See pp. 243–4 (Kolarov), 1062 (resolution), 989 (Trotsky), 1110 (Zinoviev). The Third Congress condemnation of 'power struggles or battles for the leadership within the party' did not bar formation of a politically constituted faction. See Comintern 1921c, p. 108; compare Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 235.

Comintern that 'we are on the way to a constantly increasing centralisation'. Josef Grün of Austria said the International was moving from a time of agitation to one of 'intensive organisational reconstruction'. Zinoviev echoed this call in his summary, calling for a time of 'rehabilitating the parties'.¹¹⁹

In contrast to these far-reaching pronouncements, the measures contained in the resolution reorganising the ECCI were modest. National conventions were 'as a rule' to take place after the World Congress, not before. However, national parties were also advised to meet in conference before a congress, in order to prepare proposals for it and enable the International to review its experience 'from bottom up'. ECCI members were to be elected by the Congress, not, as previously, appointed by national parties. Eberlein's report had proposed empowering ECCI envoys to exercise 'close supervision' of national sections; the resolution limited this to 'special cases'. Eberlein specified that the newly constituted organisational bureau was to supervise the organisation of the sections; this did not appear in the resolution.¹²⁰

The calls to increasingly centralise authority in the ECCI's hands failed to take into account the Comintern's political dynamics. As Zetkin pointed out in a 25 January 1921 letter to Lenin, the ECCI was 'far too cut-off' to do more than 'recognise the broad lines of development and deduce basic conclusions'. The ECCI 'cannot possibly survey all the concrete circumstances that must be considered in carrying out the guidelines'. This limitation 'is understandable, but it leads to errors'.¹²¹ The ECCI made costly ultra-leftist errors in 1920–1, followed by a rectification. At the Fourth Congress, on several key issues (programme, united front, workers' government, fascism), initial positions of ECCI reporters were vastly altered in the course of congress discussion, with key initiatives coming from member parties. Based on the record, the decisive factor in genuine centralisation was not the powers of the ECCI but thorough discussion and collaboration among authoritative national leaderships. This record also refutes the widespread view that the Comintern in this period was a subservient tool of Soviet foreign policy.

The yoke of Versailles

The Congress devoted an agenda item to the most urgent political issue in Europe at that time: the crisis of the Versailles system. (Delegates used the term 'Versailles' to refer to the entire world settlement imposed in 1919 by

119. See pp. 926 (Eberlein), 1083 (Bukharin), 941 (Grün), 1115 (Zinoviev).

120. See pp. 1134–6 (resolution on ECCI); pp. 932, 930 (Eberlein).

121. Stojanowa and Schmalfuss 1990, p. 215.

the victors of World War I.)¹²² Lenin, speaking at the Second Congress in 1920, said that the Versailles treaty system imposed terms on the defeated powers such that 'advanced peoples have been reduced to a state of colonial dependence, poverty, starvation, ruin and loss of rights', binding them 'for many generations'. The congress Manifesto commented, 'All the foundations of foreign and domestic relations have been overthrown or unhinged.' Postwar Europe 'resembles a madhouse', while 'the devastation of humanity proceeds apace'.¹²³

By the end of 1922, the Allies' postwar system was clearly in crisis. Germany's inability to pay the reparations imposed in Versailles had led to threats of military action by the French government. Austria had been driven to bankruptcy and forced to accept a League of Nations' trusteeship. Turkey had won its war of independence, overturning its treaty with the Allied powers. Soviet Russia, excluded in 1919 from the Paris negotiations, had defeated and expelled Allied armies aiming to overthrow it and, early in 1922, signed the Rapallo Treaty normalising its relations with Germany – another important breach in the Versailles treaty system.

The Turkish victory has been discussed above. The Rapallo accord, as noted, did not figure in the Congress. A special report and resolution on the Austrian crisis called for a Comintern campaign to defend Austrian workers, the prime targets of the League's shock therapy. The most urgent need, however, was for joint action by the German and French Parties to counter the warlike threats of the French government. To this end, conferences of German and French party representatives took place in Berlin on 19 January and Cologne on 24 August 1922. Joint manifestos were signed and published; Marcel Cachin, Fritz Heckert, and Zetkin addressed a rally of fifteen thousand workers in Berlin; French party representatives toured Germany, writing reports on conditions there for the Communist press in France. The Congress, after hearing eight speakers, adopted a resolution stressing the need for the Communist parties to 'carry out a common struggle against the Versailles Treaty', which 'shifts all the burdens, in both victorious and defeated countries... onto the shoulders of the proletariat'.¹²⁴

122. The Versailles Treaty between the Allied powers and Germany was accompanied by separate treaties with Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. See p. 887, n. 7.

123. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 109 (Lenin) and 2, pp. 806, 811 (Manifesto).

124. See pp. 28 (Turkey), 915–25 (Austria), 887–915 (Versailles discussion), 1143–8 (Versailles resolution); and Schröder 2008, pp. 140–5 (French CP-German CP relations).

Fields of work

Five agenda items addressed areas of Comintern work: cooperatives, education, youth, farmers, and women. Taken together, these discussions demonstrated the growing scope of the Comintern's activity and its practical experience in diverse areas.

The reports on cooperatives and workers' education highlighted aspects of working-class culture that today receive much less attention from the workers' movement. Cooperatives were then viewed as the third and broadest element of the workers' movement, alongside unions and political parties. Their international organisation had maintained its unity through war and revolution. The Third Comintern Congress had resolved to initiate systematic work in the co-ops. At the Fourth Congress, V.N. Meshcheriakov gave a progress report on the development of this work and proposed a detailed resolution. The brief discussion turned on the worth of producer cooperatives.¹²⁵

Hoernle's report on education took up not only the Communists' own programmes but also their intervention in workers' education institutions under reformist or independent leadership. Hoernle stressed the need for education that was revolutionary not only in content but in paedagogical method. His co-reporter, long-time Bolshevik leader Nadezhda Krupskaya, described her party's educational efforts under both tsarism and soviet-power. The resolution scaled down Hoernle's proposal for a training school in Moscow for socialist educators but was otherwise ambitious in its proposals, which included a questionnaire to be filled out separately for every Comintern member.¹²⁶

Richard Schüller's lengthy youth report described the harsh treatment of young workers in a time of capitalist offensive and the antagonism promoted by the employers between younger and older working-class generations. Interest in politics among youth was declining, he said, and with it, the membership of the Communist Youth International, which then claimed 760,000 members in 54 national leagues. The CYI's 1921 congress had decided to subordinate the youth movement politically to the Comintern and to move its seat from Berlin to Moscow. This had been carried out successfully, Schüller reported, but the parties were deficient in their support to youth organisations. The need to remedy that weakness was a major theme of the resolution, which was adopted without plenary discussion.¹²⁷

125. See Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 230 (Third Congress resolution); below, pp. 813–36 (Fourth Congress discussion). One of Lenin's five last articles concerned the importance of cooperatives in the Soviet republics; see Lenin 1960–71, 33, pp. 467–75.

126. See pp. 875–87, 1191–3.

127. See pp. 783–800, 1025–9. The CYI's own history, published in 1929–31, reports that by the official count, membership had dropped by 50,000 since 1921. Membership

Progress on the agrarian question

When Lenin first read the 'Outline of Agrarian Action Programme' prepared for the Fourth Congress, his reaction was quite negative. 'I very much hesitate to support it', he wrote. The draft 'gives virtually nothing new' and 'is of very doubtful value'. Lenin's concern was that the draft merely repeated the points made in the resolution on the agrarian question he had drafted in 1920 for the Second Congress. This, he believed, could give opponents a chance to misrepresent minor changes in formulation as a shift in line. The Second Congress theses had been an innovation for the world workers' movement, focusing on a topic about which socialists had previously said little. The theses generalised the lessons of the Russian Revolution regarding an alliance with 'the toiling and exploited masses of the countryside'. Analysing the different layers of the agrarian population – from landless labourers to owners of great estates – they called for defence of all exploited rural toilers, expropriation of large landowners, and, under certain conditions, distribution of expropriated land to rural smallholders.¹²⁸

In response to Lenin's objections, the Fourth Congress editing commission added an explanatory subhead presenting their text as 'Instructions on the Application' of the Second Congress theses and aligned the wording of the new resolution with that of the old. Varga, the reporter, noted that the novelty in the new text lay in its response 'to the need to link up with the daily needs... [of] all working layers in the countryside', as an application of the united-front tactic. Zinoviev termed this the need for workers 'to lead all oppressed layers in struggle against the bourgeoisie'.¹²⁹

Many speakers in the two-day discussion based their remarks on practical experience in this field of work. Some of the discussion focused on what could be gained by work among peasants. Renaud Jean, a peasants'-rights activist and director of the French CP's work in this area, insisted that 'proletarians in the countryside and small-scale landowners can be won for the revolution, even though for different reasons' than industrial workers. Roger Rieu, also of the French Party, responded that Renaud Jean was exaggerating the peasants' revolutionary spirit; the best that could be hoped for was 'to neutralise the smallholder'. Marcel Pauker of Romania agreed, saying that peasants

in the Soviet republics had also dropped, to 350,000. But this account also states that the total count was exaggerated, as was the number of national leagues. Chitarow 1972, p. 29.

128. Letter to Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Radek, in Lenin 1960–71, 45, pp. 593–4; Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 660–70 (Second Congress theses); Riddell (ed.) 1986, pp. 213–41 (pre-1917 socialist views).

129. See pp. 953–4 (Varga), 112 (Zinoviev).

with enough land to nourish their families 'will not take part actively either before or during the revolution'. Kostrzewa of the Polish CP responded that organising among wage workers is not enough: 'We must draw closer to the other oppressed layers.' Most parties have not done this, she said, with the result that the Second Congress theses 'have in a certain sense remained a dead letter for us'. Varga criticised Renaud Jean for exaggerating the importance of smallholding peasants compared to 'true landless proletarians' – a concern raised by Trotsky earlier that year. However, Varga also chided other comrades for their 'fear of the peasants' and attachment 'to the idea that only true proletarians... can be active fighters for revolution'.¹³⁰

Some of the speakers raised issues that were new to Marxist discussion of farming. Varga, for example, said that landholdings 'can be divided without causing any particular decline in production', and he was quoted by Pauker as questioning whether large rural enterprises were more productive than small peasant holdings. Scottish delegate William Joss advocated what is today called 'food sovereignty', calling for encouragement of local food production and provision of free land to English and Scottish industrial workers who wish to farm.¹³¹

In her report on Russia, Zetkin pointed to the 'old and deeply felt traditions of indigenous village communism' among the peasantry, saying that 'these beginnings of communist understanding are systematically encouraged and promoted' by the Soviet state. Trotsky recalled that Marx had envisaged such a possibility. On the other hand, Ivan Teodorovich, Soviet Commissar of Agriculture, hailed the efforts of peasants under the NEP to intensify cultivation by shifting authority over land use from the community to individuals. But Tahar Boudengha, a delegate from Tunisia, pointing to patriarchal communism in North Africa, said 'we can nonetheless develop it, reform it, and replace it by fully developed communism'.¹³²

The final resolution took a forthright stand of support for working farmers against capitalist profiteering, affirming that 'the working, poor peasants and small tenant farmers are the natural comrades in struggle of the agricultural

130. See pp. 755 (Renaud Jean), 767 (Rieu), 769 (Pauker), 775 (Kostrzewa), 745 (Varga); and 'The Communists and the French Peasantry', in Trotsky 1972b, 1, pp. 113–18.

131. See pp. 742 (Varga), 768 (Pauker), 763–5 (Joss).

132. See pp. 327 (Zetkin), 352 (Trotsky), 762 (Teodorovich), 705 (Boudengha). Zetkin's interest in this topic may have derived in part from Luxemburg's study on primitive communism, which formed part of her lectures on political economy at the SPD party school in Berlin and survive as a posthumous text. Luxemburg concluded, however, that primitive communism had collapsed totally and irredeemably under the impact of capitalist expansion. See Luxemburg 2004, pp. 71–110. Thanks to Kevin Anderson for this suggestion.

and industrial proletariat'. It advanced a series of demands for the struggle 'against all forms of exploitation of the poor and middle peasantry' by large landowners, commercial and industrial capital, and the capitalist state.¹³³

The Communist Women's Movement

A session of the Congress was devoted to reports from leaders of the Communist Women's Movement (CWM), an auxiliary organisation of the Comintern. A successor to the international socialist women's movement headed by Zetkin before and during the War, the CWM was planned at an international conference of Communist women in 1920 and formally launched by a second such gathering in 1921. The Third Comintern Congress, held the same year, adopted documents on Communist work among women. An International Women's Secretariat – based initially in Moscow and, from late 1921, in Berlin – reported to the ECCI, coordinated women's commissions leading the work among women in national parties, and guided the work of similar bodies on a local level. It held occasional international conferences, published a journal, *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale* [The Communist Women's International], and held periodic international conferences. Women's papers and supplements were also published nationally – no fashion news or recipes here, CWM-leader Hertha Sturm proudly noted.¹³⁴

The Fourth Congress allocated a day to hear four reports by leaders of the CWM. Women in Europe were then only beginning to exercise their newly won political rights. The workers' movement had helped lead the struggle for those rights, but, even so, the reports by Zetkin and Sturm showed that women were weakly represented in Communist parties. Indeed, in some parties (Italy, Norway, Netherlands), they were only now being integrated into the party ranks. The proportion of women in the membership ranged from 2 per cent (France and Italy) to a high of 20 per cent (in Czechoslovakia). Both Sturm and Zetkin commented on the prevalence in the parties of what is now termed male chauvinism, a judgment unwittingly confirmed by chairman Alois Neurath in his patronising remarks at the close of the discussion.¹³⁵

Long restricted to the margins of economic and social life, working-class women were then less likely than male workers to support socialist parties or

133. See pp. 954, 956–7.

134. See p. 862 (Sturm). For studies of the CWM, see Waters 1989; Bayerlein 2006. For Comintern documents on the CWM, see Riddell (ed.) 1987, pp. 250–1; Riddell (ed.) 1991, pp. 972–98; Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 211–29.

135. See pp. 842–3, 852–4, on women in the party, as well as pp. 842 (Zetkin), 854 (Sturm), 870–1 (Neurath), and 872 (resolution), on barriers to women's participation.

participate in socialist politics. Zetkin conceded that 'the soul of women is not as politically and socially defined as that of men', but reinterpreted this fact as an opportunity: 'It will therefore be relatively easier for us to pull... women directly into our struggle'. Zetkin also spoke of women's 'special psychology', referring to characteristics that would today be termed their oppression. Sturm spoke of the need to link up with the best instincts of motherhood, enabling these to find expression 'beyond the narrow limits of the individual household in the form of solidarity with the entire proletariat'. Varsenika Kasparova, the main leader of CWM work in Asia, advocated building 'an intelligentsia of revolutionary women'. Sofia Smidovich, head of the Zhenotdel, or women's division, which led work for women's rights in the Soviet republics, described the innovative programme of women's delegates, through which tens of thousands of elected women's representatives were trained and assigned to public administration.¹³⁶

Work among women, Zetkin explained, offered a chance to win to the anti-capitalist struggle large numbers of 'non-proletarian women, both employed and housewives'. The resolution on women underlined the opportunity for women producers to 'become pioneers of the proletarian united front and revolutionary mass movements'. The use of the word 'producers [*Schaffenden*]', characteristic of CWM leaders, pointed toward the challenge of broad anti-capitalist unity. Zetkin elsewhere defined the *Schaffenden* as 'all those whose labour, be it with hand or brain, increases the material and cultural heritage of humankind – without exploiting the labour of others' – a description that tacitly encompassed the labour of women in childbearing and in the home. The congress resolution on women was brief, reiterating the need for the International to give more effective support to the work of its women members. Its discussions, however, pointed toward the rise of women's struggles for liberation as well as their increasingly prominent role in all movements of working people in the decades that followed.¹³⁷

The legacy of the Fourth Congress

The Comintern considered itself to be in a preparatory, transitional period, during which it would win a majority of the working class through struggles that did not immediately pose a contest for power. Marching together with this majority, the Communist parties would have realistic hope for victory in

136. See pp. 848, 839 (Zetkin), 857 (Sturm), 870 (Kasparova), 864 (Smidovich).

137. See pp. 847 (Zetkin), 871–2 (resolution); Puschnerat 2003, p. 346 (meaning of 'producers').

the showdowns that they believed likely to occur in major European countries during the years to follow.

The Fourth Congress made major advances toward that goal in several arenas. It took steps toward the unification of Communist forces in many countries. It clarified the need for a workers' alliance with all oppressed layers and peoples. It ratified a flexible and unifying approach to the task of winning a working-class majority in struggle. It laid the basis for an effective response to the fascist threat. It also sketched out a viable approach to the task of struggling for governmental power in the absence of workers' councils.

Although sometimes marked by conflict and resentment, the discussions were cordial and confident in overall tone and sober in their projections. The positive mood often found expression in humour that was joyful rather than sarcastic: Lenin's self-deprecating joking about the Soviet rouble's instability; Trotsky's banter about the failings of Soviet leaders dragooned into interviews with foreign correspondents; Radek's portrayal of a German 'workers' government' at the Reich Chancellery in the person of Ernst Meyer, dressed in tails, alongside a resentful Ruth Fischer and SPD chieftain Gustav Scheidemann. At a moment when Henryk Domski threatened to disrupt proceedings with an inappropriately lengthy personal statement, delegates jovially brought him to a halt by singing the *Internationale*.¹³⁸

Many aspects of the congress discussion proved prophetic. The prediction by Zetkin and Sturm that women could take the lead in revolutionary struggles is confirmed by their predominant role in many twenty-first-century struggles. The views of Zetkin and Boudengha on the potential contribution of precapitalist collectivism prefigure those developed by the Peruvian Communist José Carlos Mariátegui later in the decade and proclaimed today by many Latin American revolutionaries. The agrarian resolution's defence of smallholding farmers against capitalist exploitation – and Varga's affirmation of their productive potential – anticipate the positions advanced eighty years later by anticapitalist farmers' movements. The congress resolution on blacks accurately foresaw the immense significance of black liberation and anti-racist struggles in the century to follow.¹³⁹

The Congress marked a stage in a process of political clarification through experience and discussion that had been under way since the Comintern's inception and continued into 1923. Congress decisions reflected only a moment in this process and were limited by the experience and understand-

138. See pp. 297 (Lenin), 367 (Trotsky), 400 (Radek), 392 (Domski).

139. See pp. 847 (Zetkin on women); 327, 705 (Zetkin and Boudengha); Mariátegui 1971; pp. 954–9 (Agrarian Action Programme); 742 (Varga); 947–50 (resolution on the black question).

ing of the delegates and their parties. Some resolutions, like that on workers' governments, needed subsequent elaboration. On the new challenge of fascism, the Congress took only the first preliminary steps in developing the policy that was elaborated at the June 1923 conference of the Expanded ECCI.¹⁴⁰ The congress did not apply its policy of an anti-imperialist united front to China, where it faced a decisive test. Still, on all these questions, the Congress decisions provided a solid foundation. Congress decisions on women, youth, cooperatives, farmers, blacks, and imperialism's colonial subjects mapped out a comprehensive policy of forging alliances with all social layers oppressed and exploited by capitalism – a vital precondition for revolutionary victory.

Many statements by delegates regarding international centralism were one-sided and out of line with the world movement's reality, but the Congress generally respected the autonomy of its member parties. There is some similarity between the more extreme claims made for ECCI-based centralism in the Fourth Congress and those that characterised the 'Bolshevisation'-period from 1924 on, when the Comintern was undergoing Stalinist bureaucratisation. The same is true of some statements by prominent delegates regarding the similarity of social democracy and fascism and the need to build the united front chiefly or exclusively 'from below'. These two concepts became the axis of the Stalinised Comintern's catastrophic rejection of a united-front policy during German fascism's rise to power. But, at the Fourth Congress, these opinions were not codified in resolutions. The Comintern's ultra-left policy of 1928–35 reversed the decisions of the Fourth Congress, as did its subsequent embrace of the 'Left Bloc' policy of alliance with left-capitalist parties – the 'Popular Front' – which had been so emphatically condemned in 1922.

In 1924, the year of the Fifth Congress, the Comintern began a retreat from Fourth Congress decisions on the workers' government and united front. The International entered a process of degeneration that ultimately overturned the revolutionary heritage of the first four Comintern congresses. This transformation reflected the pressure on the International of world capitalism, which achieved greater stability in the mid-1920s, and which, during 1923, dealt severe setbacks to Communist Parties in Germany and Bulgaria – two of the Comintern's strongest sections. The Bulgarian Party failed to apply united-front policy through defence of a peasant based government against a right-wing coup, then attempted a rising against the rightists on its own, and was defeated. In Germany, the French military occupation of the Ruhr district in January 1923 created new conditions of convulsive social and political crisis, verging on war. The German CP proved unable to find an effective

140. See Comintern 1923d, pp. 293–8.

road to revolutionary action and suffered a major defeat in October 1923.¹⁴¹ That defeat marked the end of the postwar labour upsurge in Europe. It was several years before another country of capitalist Europe entered a revolutionary crisis.

But unfavourable objective conditions do not by themselves explain the crisis that seized the International in 1924. Other, more immediate factors were decisive. Lenin and Trotsky, the most influential leaders of the early Comintern, had by then been removed from its leadership: Lenin was incapacitated by a stroke in March 1923 and died in January 1924, while Trotsky was isolated from 1923 by conflicts in the Russian party leadership. This outbreak of factionalism, which spread to the Comintern in 1924, reflected the rise of a bureaucratic layer whose rule later became known as 'Stalinism'. Other central figures in the Fourth Congress were thrust aside: Radek and the German majority leaders were made scapegoats for the German defeat in 1923; Rosmer and other leaders of the French Left were purged for their support of Trotsky. The so-called Bolshevisation campaign launched in the International in 1924–5 led to pervasive bureaucratisation and the sidelining of party democracy. For the first time, the Moscow-leadership began imposing hand-picked leaders on national sections. The Comintern's course during the Chinese upheaval of 1925–7 disastrously compromised the national Communist Party's independence, leading to a tragic defeat of Chinese workers. Above all, it was the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union that set in motion the Comintern's retreat from and abandonment of the policies adopted by the Comintern in its first five years.

The Comintern's degeneration is symbolised by the fate of its early leaders during the Stalin frame-up purges of the 1930s. Of the sixty Communists mentioned in the Fourth Congress who were within Stalin's reach and about whom information is available, thirty-nine were killed and four jailed during the purges.

Although its heritage was discarded by the Stalin-era Comintern, the Fourth Congress retains its relevance today. On many issues that have proven central to world social struggles, such as racism, colonialism, women's emancipation, and the struggles of small farmers, the Congress mapped out the road that the workers' movement followed during the subsequent century. The congress positions on transitional demands, the united front, the struggle for workers' government, and other issues remain, now as in 1922, central pillars of a viable working-class strategy for socialist revolution, in a world where the need to overturn capitalism is posed as never before.

141. Rothschild 1959, pp. 85–151; Broué 2005, pp. 755–816; Broué 1997, pp. 367–85.

About This Edition

The Fourth Congress was made up of a complex of plenary sessions, commissions, sub-commissions, side meetings, and corridor discussions, which began well before its official opening and lasted past its close. The event was organised and shaped by the Comintern's Executive Committee (ECCI), whose pre-congress membership was twenty-eight full and seventeen alternate members, many of whom were resident in Moscow. During the previous year, the ECCI had held two conferences, in February–March and June, expanded to include many delegates from member parties. Day-to-day business was directed by a presidium and a secretariat.¹ These leading bodies were assisted by a full-time administrative staff, headed by Osip Piatnitsky, which published a news-bulletin, *International Press Correspondence*, several times a week, plus a book-length monthly journal, all in four languages.

The Fourth Congress mandates commission recognised 350 full delegates from parties in sixty-one countries. Among these parties, three had more than 100,000 members (Czechoslovakia, Germany, Russia); nine other parties in Europe had memberships of 10,000–100,000. Most of the other European parties and a few parties in the Americas were in the

1. On the eve of the Fourth Congress, the ECCI Presidium was composed of Zinoviev (president), Bukharin, Radek, Shatskin (Youth International) from Russia, Iordan Iordanov (Bulgaria), Kuusinen (Finland), Souvarine (France), Brandler (Germany), Ersilio Ambrogi (Italy), and Katterfeld (US). The Secretariat included Kon (Poland), Aleksander Minkin (Russia), Kuusinen (Finland), Eberlein (Germany), and Rákosi (Hungary). See Kahan 1976, 161–2.

1,000–10,000 range, while most of the groups in Asia counted fewer than 1,000 members.²

Also present at the Congress were guests from Comintern-affiliated organisations, including the Communist Youth and Women's Internationals and the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern). There was a balcony in the meeting hall for visiting Russian Communists and working people. Delegates faced harassment at the border from foreign governments before entering Soviet Russia; thereafter, they shared in the hardships of Soviet life. Some delegates' accounts mention a long voyage in a train without windows and the poor quality of food served to delegates; however, Jules Humbert-Droz noted a marked improvement compared with previous visits.³

Delegations included representation from the different viewpoints found in the national parties, including quite small currents like that represented by US delegate Kucher. Commissions with representation from many countries were established for detailed discussion of major issues facing the Congress. Their sittings often stretched over many days; Zinoviev compared each of them to a 'mini-International congress'. Eighteen such commissions are mentioned in the Congress; for nine of them, transcripts can be found in the Comintern Archive.⁴

A presidium, elected in the first working session, directed the work of the Congress. It opened with a general political debate on reports by Grigorii Zinoviev and Karl Radek, which stretched across nine sessions. Discussions of Russia, the trade unions, and the 'Eastern question' occupied two or three sessions each. Toward the end of the Congress, many commission reports were adopted with little discussion. For hotly disputed questions, a system of roll-call voting was available, with weighted representation (the Russian Party received only 10 votes).⁵ However, it was not used in the Fourth Congress; instead, voting was by delegate cards.

Sources and previous editions

The Fourth Congress was conducted in four official languages: English, French, German, and Russian. German was used by delegates conversant in

2. See Eberlein's credentials report, pp. 435–42.

3. Leonhard 1981, p. 293, summarising recollections of Paul Thälmann; Leviné-Meyer 1977, p. 36; Humbert-Droz 1971, pp. 117–18, 113.

4. See pp. 605–9 (Kucher), p. 1110 (Zinoviev). *The Comintern Archive* (Comintern 1994) is a microfiche edition. It contains proceedings of the Czechoslovak, Educational, French, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, United States, Versailles Treaty, and Yugoslav commissions, as well as drafts of the congress proceedings and related material. For a list and membership of all commissions mentioned in the Congress, see pp. 92–3, including nn. 2–6.

5. Riddell (ed.) 1991, pp. 16, 839.

it, including Bolshevik leaders such as Bukharin, Lenin, Radek, and Zinoviev. French was used by most speakers of Latin languages; English and Russian were heard less often.

After each speech, there was a pause for translations into English, French, German, and Russian, delivered simultaneously to delegates seated in language groups.⁶ As a rule, draft resolutions were printed and distributed in the four languages to delegates before a vote. The proceedings of the entire congress and many of its commissions were transcribed by stenographers in the speaker's language; these drafts and initial translations are available in the Comintern archives.⁷ Transcripts were printed within six to ten days in a daily congress publication, *Bulletin des IV. Kongresses*. This rough-draft transcript was available for world circulation two weeks after the Congress closed, in the German edition of *International Press Correspondence*. A substantial portion of the proceedings appeared in this newsletter's three other language versions. There was also a congress daily newspaper, *Bolshevik*, providing both world news and delegate comment in four languages.

During the months following the Congress, its resolutions and appeals were printed in German and other languages. The complete proceedings were published in German in 1923. A volume containing about half the proceedings appeared that year in Russian. A summary was published in English.⁸

In 1933 and 1934, new editions of the First and Second Congress proceedings and of all congress resolutions were printed in Russian in the Soviet Union.⁹ Publication of early Comintern records was broken off, however, with the onset of the great Stalin frame-up purges, to which most of the early Comintern's Bolshevik leaders fell victim.

Beginning in the 1960s, proceedings of various Comintern congresses were published outside the USSR in many languages. Only two such projects, however, advanced far enough to encompass the Fourth Congress: the editions in Yugoslavia (Damjanović (ed.) 1981) and China (Comintern 1990). The present work draws on the annotation in the Yugoslav edition, particularly regarding references to Lenin-era publications.

Faced with the Stalinist Comintern's abandonment of the legacy of its early years, supporters of Leon Trotsky published in 1934 the decisions of the first four congresses, which they held to represent the foundation for rebuilding the Communist movement. Only a French edition was printed; it would be another forty-six years before an English version appeared.¹⁰ In 1984,

6. Leonhard 1981, p. 307.

7. See Comintern 1994.

8. Comintern 1923g, 1923f, 1923e, 1923b, and 1923c.

9. Kun 1933, Comintern 1933, and Comintern 1934b.

10. Comintern 1934a, Adler (ed.) 1980; the latter version is now available online at: <www.marxists.org>.

Pathfinder Press began publication of the proceedings and decisions of the first four congresses, along with related documents, with the series title, *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*, under my editorship. Proceedings of the First, Second, and Baku Congresses appeared; a manuscript of the Third Congress proceedings was completed but has not been published.¹¹

For technical reasons beyond our control, the proceedings of the Fourth Congress are appearing before those of the Third. This has created difficulties in referencing and in the creation of a narrative, in which the Third Congress is a key component. It should also be noted that references to the Second Congress (Riddell (ed.) 1991) relate to the original edition; a subsequent Pathfinder printing in 2004 has different pagination.

The present edition of the Fourth Congress aims to make possible publication in English of the complete record of Lenin-era congresses.

On this translation

The present work is a translation of the German edition of 1923,¹² which was the most authoritative and widely used version at that time. The translation has been compared with the Russian version published that year.¹³ The archival transcripts, the English version (1923), the German (1923) and Russian (1933) editions of the resolutions, and the Serbo-Croatian edition (Damjanović (ed.) 1981) of the Congress have all been consulted.

Few major discrepancies were found between the various source texts. The published German version contains light editing, compared to the archival typescript. The published Russian version often clarifies incoherencies in the German text, and many of these corrections have been carried over to the present translation. Major discrepancies among source texts are indicated in footnotes. The most important of these relate to Section 11 of the 'Theses on Tactics', on the workers' government, where three published versions differ significantly.¹⁴

Because of the stenographic origin of the German text, many names were misconstrued in the 1923 edition; these errors have been corrected. Paragraphing, erratic and inconsistent in the original, has been modified. Italics in the original text, added during post-congress editing to indicate emphasis or as a layout feature, have for the most part been retained. Dates of events in Russia

11. Riddell (ed.) 1987, 1991, and 1993. The bibliography lists relevant editions of the Fourth Congress and related Comintern materials.

12. Comintern 1923e.

13. Comintern 1923b.

14. See Session 28, pp. 1096–1100, and Appendix 7, pp. 1159–62.

before 1 February 1918 follow the Julian ('Old Style') calendar then in use in that country.

Quotations have been sourced where possible, but many were paraphrases for which no original text could be located. Explanatory interpolations by the editor of this work have been placed in square brackets. Some of these concern delegates' use of the term *Diktatur* as a short-form for 'proletarian dictatorship', a usage often ambiguous for today's reader.

References in footnotes to the German, Russian, English, and Serbo-Croatian text refer to Comintern 1923e, Comintern 1923b, Comintern 1923c, and Damjanović (ed.) 1981, respectively.

The translation aims to use the terminology of today's English, even when English-speaking Communists of 1922 may have used a different term. Thus, *Amerika* is rendered 'United States'; *England*, most often, as 'Britain'; *Neger* as 'black'; *Taktik*, often, as 'policy' or 'policies'.

Many delegates use the salutation, *Genossinnen und Genossen*, literally 'female and male comrades'. This has been rendered as 'comrades, sisters and brothers'. 'Producers' translates the German word *die Schaffenden*, which spans the meaning of 'producers' and 'creators'.¹⁵

The chronology chiefly includes events mentioned in the Congress. Acronyms and unfamiliar terms are explained in the glossary. The bibliography consists of major recent works related to aspects of the Fourth Congress, plus books utilised in compiling this work. The listing does not attempt to encompass journal literature or writings on the Comintern's Russian affiliate, the Bolshevik Party.

Biographical notes are provided for persons mentioned in the Congress or its resolutions, with greater attention to less-well-known figures in the Communist movement. Major sources for the biographical notes are listed in the bibliography.

15. See p. 838, n. 1.

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Session 1 – Sunday, 5 November 1922

Opening Session

The People's House, Petrograd

Opening. Election of the Presidium. Welcoming address. Telegrams of welcome. Greetings to political prisoners. Appeal to the workers and peasants of Italy. Appeal to the working people of Russia. Appeal to the Red Army and the Red Fleet. Appeal to the workers and Red Army soldiers of Petrograd [Saint Petersburg].

Speakers: Clara Zetkin, Zinoviev, Feliks Kon, Béron, Azzario, Katayama, Kolarov

Convened: 9 p.m.

Clara Zetkin: Comrades, sisters and brothers:¹ On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, I declare this Fourth World Congress to be in session. We are convening on the day of the fifth annual celebration of the greatest world-historical event of our time, when the proletarian world-revolution arose bold, determined, and victorious, in the form of the Russian Revolution, and dealt the world bourgeoisie its first decisive defeat.² The Fourth Congress of the Communist International is now in session. (*Applause*)

1. Here and elsewhere, 'Comrades, sisters and brothers' translates the German words, 'Genossinnen und Genossen', literally 'female and male comrades', as in *compañeras y compañeros*.

2. The 1917 revolution that established the Russian Soviet Republic took place on 7 November by the Gregorian calendar adopted in Russia on February 1918, or on 25 October by the Julian calendar used in prerevolutionary Russia.

Comrades, on behalf of the Expanded Executive of the Communist International, I propose Comrade Zinoviev as chair of this congress. (*Applause*) I call on Comrade Zinoviev to take the chair. (*Loud applause*)

Zinoviev: The Congress will now elect its presidium. In accordance with the decision of the expanded plenary session of the Executive and by special agreement with all delegations to the World Congress, we propose the following list of members of the Presidium:

Béron and Henriët (France); Carr (USA); Katayama (Japan); Kolarov (Bulgaria); Leckie (Great Britain); Lenin and Trotsky (Russia); Marabini (Italy); Neurath (Czechoslovakia); Scheflo (Scandinavia); Warski (Poland);³ Zetkin (Germany).

We will proceed to a vote on this motion. Those against, please raise your hands. The Presidium is elected unanimously. I ask all its members here present to take their places.

Comrades, I have been given the honourable task of delivering the opening address. So many events and memories crowd in on us today that truly one does not know where to begin. Certainly, we want to give an account of what has happened in the land conquered by the Russian working class, and of what is happening in the Soviet Republic that has withstood enemy fire for five years. We are opening the Fourth World Congress of the advanced proletarians of fifty-two countries. Comrades, I believe that we can truly say that seldom do we have the occasion to experience events of such great and historic significance.

It goes without saying that our first words must be dedicated to those who during the past five years fell in the struggle, to ensure that the banner of the Communist Party would not be wrested from the hands of the vanguard in different countries, who for the moment in a great many states make up only a heroic minority. The number of our fallen comrades is beyond reckoning. In our country alone, they must be reckoned in the thousands.

By chance, I received today a small handbook dedicated to a contingent that fell in the defence of a single Soviet city – in defence of our Petrograd. This handbook is dedicated to a contingent of Schlüsselburg [Shlisselburg] workers, who fell along with other contingents in defence of our beautiful Petrograd. What weight does Schlüsselburg have compared to all Soviet Russia – let alone the territory of the entire world, where our comrades live and struggle? It is only a little corner, a little factory town, a single large factory. And an entire handbook is devoted to the contingent of this large factory, which, in 1919, stood before the walls of Petrograd. It lists the dozens

3. Warski was replaced on the Presidium by Marchlewski (Poland) in Session 2.

and dozens of Schlüsselburg workers who fell, gun in hand, defending a city of Soviet Russia. Comrades, imagine how many, how countless are those who have fallen in the proletarian struggle, if we consider the 'collective Schlüsselburg' – when we take into account the workers of all Russia, the communists of the entire world.

I recently saw another book. One of our Moscow comrades tried to lay the basis for a collection of biographies of outstanding comrades who fell during these years. Simply listing the names in small type would take up an entire book of hundreds of pages. And that includes only the names of comrades of whom our party and the Soviet government had knowledge. Yet we know that many thousand nameless heroes, whose names are still unknown to history, perished in battle under the Soviet banner.

In Germany during these years, there was not a single city, not even a single major square in the large cities, that was not covered with the blood of workers that fought for the banner of communism. In the initial attempts at a workers' uprising in Hungary, countless thousands of brothers perished, and many of them still languish in prison. Only two weeks ago, 170 communists were arrested in Budapest. In Finland, so close to us, where the workers made an initial attempt to rise up, many thousands died, and even now many thousands are in prison.

In the Balkans, in Romania, our entire party was taken from its congress directly to prison, and, on the way, many were shot. In Greece, the bourgeois revolution sent a large number of communist fighters to prison, and only a part of them were freed by rebel soldiers – the same soldiers who, let it be known, disarmed their own bourgeois officers with the cry 'Long Live Lenin!' on their lips.⁴ In America, during these years, many of our best workers landed in prison. Even now, the American bourgeoisie can hand out sentences of twenty years in jail for membership in the Communist International. In Italy, our comrades have been conducting a civil war for several years, with varying success. And you must surely know that, at the very moment when our Fourth World Congress opens, the Italian working class is literally at the mercy of the Fascist bands, whose leaders, it must be noted, come from the ranks of the former socialists. As we have seen throughout this revolution, these renegades from socialism are particularly embittered and pitiless hangmen of the working class, agents of the bourgeoisie, settling accounts with the proletariat in the most atrocious manner.

4. The triumph of Turkish nationalist forces in September 1922 over the Greek army occupying Western Anatolia sparked a widespread revolt among Greek soldiers, compelling Constantine I, king of Greece, to abdicate on 30 September. The crown passed to his son, George II, but power was held by a repressive military junta.

Comrades, let us turn our thoughts back to the beginning of our revolution and draw the balance sheet of the first five years of great and noble struggle by the working class of the world for the victory of proletarian revolution. In so doing, our thoughts turn above all to our best comrades, our best leaders and brothers, who are no longer among us, who fell in the cause of communism in Soviet Russia and the entire world. We hold in eternal memory the first fighters for proletarian world-revolution. (*All rise. The orchestra plays the funeral march.*)

Comrades, five years have passed since the day when the workers of this city, where the Fourth World Congress has just opened, overthrew the bourgeoisie and took the government into their own hands. During these five years, every day was a lesson for the proletariat of our country and the entire world. The last year was, in many respects, decisive for the Communist International. Fifteen months passed between the Third and Fourth Congresses. And, during these fifteen months, the destiny of the Communist International in the coming period was, in a certain sense, decided. Obviously, from a historical point of view, the victory of the Communist International is assured. Even if our organisation of struggle were to vanish from the earth under the blows of reaction, as happened to the Paris Commune and the First International, the Communist International would be born again and would ultimately lead the proletariat to victory. But the question before us is whether the Communist International as it now exists, our generation of fighters, will succeed in carrying out the historical mission that the Communist International has set for itself.

It is during the period between the Third and Fourth Congresses that this question has been answered. The Third Congress ended its work at a moment when the offensive of worldwide capitalism and reaction began to display unprecedented and resolute strength. It became clear to us at the Third Congress that a number of unreliable sympathisers were beginning to leave us. As the Third Congress ended, the enemies of the Communist International predicted, if yet not its death, then its weakening and downfall. It was under the fire launched against us during these fifteen months by the capitalist offensive that it became clear whether our young and in part still weak international Communist Party could stand firm at its post.

More than fifty-six parties belong to the Communist International. Among them are parties whose membership is larger than was that of the Communist Party of Russia before the overturn five years ago. But there are also many parties that have not yet gained strength, have not taken on their final form, and have still to surmount their initial difficult times.

For fifteen months, the forces of international capitalism and Menshevism, united in the Second International, have been attacking the different parties

of the Communist International. All efforts of the bourgeois world and its accomplices – the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals – aimed during this time to get at our parties, break individual detachments out of our ranks, and destroy the Communist International. These were critical months for the Communist International.

Even in the most difficult moments, we are not given to self-deception or exaggeration regarding our strength. Communism's great strength is that it can always speak the truth, even if that truth is a bitter one. If the condition of the Communist International did indeed correspond today to the hopes of our opponents, it would be unworthy of us to hide our weakness from the Fourth Congress. We must say what is. And so we shall. And, when we look back on the road we have travelled and count up the forces on which the Fourth Congress can rely, we are fully justified in saying that the Communist International has survived its most difficult times and gained such strength that it need fear no attack of world reaction. For this year – a year of systematic offensive by capitalists internationally, a year in which the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals fused,⁵ a year of hunger in Soviet Russia, a year of endless privation, in which the working class absorbed almost unrelenting defeats – showed that the Communist International has laid a firm foundation. It is alive and, to the horror of its enemies, it will live on. (*Applause*)

During this year, other decisive events took place. The platform of the Communist International's programme and tactics, as formulated by our most important congresses, our highest authoritative bodies, has also stood the test and been proven correct.

You recall the recent events in Germany. Not so very long ago, the speeches at the celebrated Halle Congress faded away.⁶ After the famous vote at Halle, we said, in the name of the Communist International, that for the right-wing Independents who had rejected the Twenty-One Points, only one path lay open – that leading to Social Democracy and to Noske.⁷ When we made that

5. The Bureau of the Two-and-a-Half (Vienna) International declared on 3 September 1922 that the goal of a world labour congress, including the Comintern, had been proven impossible, and entered into unity negotiations with the London-based Second International. A joint meeting of the two international executives took place on 10 December, and a fusion congress followed in May 1923.

6. At the Halle Congress of the USPD in October 1920, a majority of delegates accepted the Twenty-One Conditions for affiliation that the Comintern had adopted earlier that year and voted to join the Moscow-based International. Zinoviev gave a major report to this congress. For the Twenty-One Conditions, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 765–71.

7. As the Social-Democratic minister responsible for Germany's armed forces, Gustav Noske organised the violent suppression of workers' uprisings in the early months of 1919.

statement, there was a great commotion among the right-wing Independents. They said that our statement was a malicious fiction. Now the deed is done. The Communist International's prophecy has been fulfilled. The right-wing Independents stand in Noske's ranks, the ranks of the hangman of the working class.

The Communist International had a similar and highly significant experience in the testing of its policies in Italy, the focus, so to speak, of world events today. When the split took place in Livorno,⁸ we said to those who did not wish to go with the Communist International: 'Two roads are open to you: either go with the reformists and the Second International and take your place in the bourgeois camp, or acknowledge your error and return to the ranks of the Communist International'. I do not know what individual leaders of the Italian Socialist Party think regarding the lessons of the Italian events. But I am quite familiar with the stand of the immense majority of Italy's Socialist workers. In their overwhelming majority, they recognised their error and the correctness of the Communist International's viewpoint.⁹ They are coming back into our ranks. Needless to say, we welcome them as brothers. (*Applause*)

Comrades, these two examples from the international workers' movement provide all honest class-conscious proletarians of the world with clear proof that the Twenty-One Conditions adopted by the Second Congress are no invention, no subterfuge, no dogma, but, rather, represent the overall consciousness of the proletariat fighting to break free of the chains of capitalism. The tactics of the Communist International are correct and have been tested in life. We follow a defined, clear path. We know where we are headed and where we are leading the international proletariat. And so – despite losses, large or small (for that is not entirely ours to determine) – we will, over a period of time, be it long or short, lead the international proletariat – and we guarantee it – to a conclusive victory over the bourgeoisie. (*Applause*)

One of the most important developments of the recent period is the unification of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. The Communist International's prophecy has been fulfilled. The workers' revolutionary struggle

8. The Livorno Congress of the Italian SP took place in January 1921. See p. 1039–40, n. 8.

9. At the Italian SP congress in Rome, 1–3 October 1922, the rightist faction led by Turati demanded a break with 'violent and dictatorial communism' and an affirmation of 'democratic, evolutionary socialism'. A motion by the leftist faction called for expulsion of all supporters of the current trying to 'lead the party into collaboration with the bourgeoisie'. The Left's motion received 32,106 votes, against 29,119 for that of the Right. The Turati forces withdrew and formed the Unitary Socialist Party; the SP began an attempt to fuse with the Comintern. Galli 1993, pp. 44–5.

can only gain from this unification. The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are as alike as two peas in a pod. Both organisations are counter-revolutionary. For the revolutionary proletariat, it is always advantageous for there to be fewer disguises and fictions. We can only gain when our struggle unfolds in a simple and defined framework.

Two camps – two terrains. On one side, the Second International, the International of the Noskes, the International of the social traitors; on the other side, our fraternal alliance of the entire world, our association of workers of all countries, which bears the name Communist International.

We must state plainly that the fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals is, among other things, a preparation for white terror against the workers fighting for their freedom. Perhaps these words of ours will evoke the same animosity as was the case with regard to our statements in Halle and Livorno. Before the workers of the world, we take responsibility for our statement: the unification of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals merely draws up the artillery of a new and desperate offensive of the world bourgeoisie against revolutionary workers. The fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals prepares the ground for new Galliffets, Noskes, Mussolinis, and other hangmen of the working class. In this way, the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are objectively carrying out a new task of the world bourgeoisie.

The question of our attitude to the fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals relates not only to internal party policies and tactics but to world politics.

All the objective preconditions have ripened for the victory of proletarian revolution in all the decisive countries. All that is lacking for the working class is the so-called *subjective* factor – sufficient class organisation and consciousness. That is why Social Democracy plays a very great role in the present period.

We can say without any exaggeration that the most urgent task of our time, and perhaps of our entire epoch, is to *defeat Social Democracy*, which is the most important factor in international counter-revolution and a barrier to the victorious advance of the international working class. It is on this task that our Communist parties, newly appeared on the stage, must focus their attention above all. Our struggle against international Menshevism, against the united Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, is no factional battle within socialism, as some imagine. It is not a tussle among different currents of the socialist movement. Not at all. In fact, it is the final, decisive struggle of the international working class that is freeing itself from the bourgeois yoke, a struggle directed against the latest exponents, the latest agents of international capitalism; against Menshevism. (*Applause*)

I believe that we must urgently say this to the working class the world over, all the more on this our fifth anniversary celebration of the Russian Revolution's five years' existence.

Permit me to say a few words of a personal character.

In my view, this is something that must especially be said on the fifth anniversary of the Revolution. You know, comrades, that, five years ago, I and some other comrades made a big mistake, the biggest mistake of my life.¹⁰ At that time, I had not succeeded in fully understanding the wholly counter-revolutionary character of Menshevism. That was the heart of our error of October 1917. After I had struggled for more than ten years alongside the Mensheviks, I – like many of our comrades – was then unable to grasp at the decisive moment that the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries were not part of the working class, not even its rightist faction, its right wing, but were in truth the 'left' wing – highly skilled and agile and therefore also dangerous – of the international bourgeoisie. And it therefore seems to me that we must tell our comrades, who, in part, are only now beginning their decisive struggle with international Menshevism, and who are now under fire in this struggle from all sides – we must make the lessons of revolution today clear to them. We must tell them: Beware above all of going wrong on this point, of not recognising the great danger that threatens us from the camp of Menshevism and that is rooted in the Second International, the malice and cunning of this enemy, and the damage caused by the policies of its leaders. Beware of viewing Menshevism as the right wing of our own movement. Recognise in it the worst enemy, the accomplice of the international bourgeoisie, whose assistance is crucial to the bourgeoisie's salvation. That's what is at stake here. Capitalism owes its existence solely to the compassion of the social traitors of the Second International. The working class is presently numerous enough to overthrow international capitalism with a single shove, if only the Social Democrats do not hold it back.

On the anniversary of the October Revolution, we must tell the international proletariat: the Mensheviks claimed that the October Revolution was an error on our part and that we would not survive more than a few months. First, they declared that the Entente would crush us in a few months, that the armed might of Kolchak and Yudenich would strike us down. Then they

10. In October 1917, Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev voted in the Bolshevik Central Committee against the proposal to organise an insurrection for soviet power. After the motion had been adopted, they continued to express their opposition in the Party at large and the non-Bolshevik press. In the first days after establishment of the Soviet government, they were among a minority of Bolshevik leaders arguing that it should encompass Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary representatives, and they resigned from the Central Committee over this issue.

foretold that hunger would destroy us, saying that our policies were entirely wrong. Events have now shown that our error consisted at most of making the Revolution in a month that is distinguished chiefly for inclement weather and rain. (*Applause*) But it seems to me that by coming forward so powerfully, despite the ‘Menshevik’ rain, the Petrograd workers demolished this Menshevik argument as well. (*Applause*)¹¹

Now, a few words about the international meaning of the NEP (New Economic Policy).

Comrades, last year, at the Third Congress, as the NEP was first introduced, we were able to give you only a rather approximate theoretical conception of the NEP’s role in the first workers’ republic.¹² Now we have much greater clarity on this point. Comrades from all countries, we have a duty to tell you this: many of you were dismayed by the rebirth of capitalism in Soviet Russia. With the best of intentions, you told us, ‘Yes, we understand that you have been forced to introduce the New Economic Policy because we workers in other countries are still too weak to come to your aid’. That is obviously true, but this argument is insufficient.

We have come to the conclusion, comrades, that the New Economic Policy is not only a result of the fact that communists in a number of capitalist countries are too weak. No, there is an additional cause. We feel compelled to tell you – and an opening address is not the place to substantiate this – that the NEP is a period that will probably be traversed by many countries, even those with the strongest industrial base, where the industrial proletariat forms the vast majority of the population. Only exceptionally will some countries be able to avoid this stage. The Russian delegation will develop this thought at the Congress. We must say this plainly, because we hope that the entire strategy of the Fourth Congress, along with our battle plan for future years, will build on this thinking. We believe that the NEP is not merely an expression of the weakness of communism in some capitalist countries, but that it also shows us that the proletariat in every country must weigh its strength against that of the peasantry and clearly establish a relationship between the industrial proletariat and a large part of the rural population.

We did not take this into account at the start, because we did not yet have a good eye for these things. That is not at all surprising. Our revolution’s greatness consists precisely in the fact that, from the start, it approached this

11. The German text of the proceedings contains the note: ‘On the opening day of the Fourth Congress, strong rain fell in Petrograd, which did not prevent thousands of working people from taking part in the demonstration in honour of the fifth anniversary and the Fourth Congress.’

12. For the Third Congress resolution taking up the New Economic Policy (NEP), see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 203–10.

question practically. The NEP is no mere episode and is not an expression of the weakness of our sister parties in the capitalist countries. No, it represents tactical wisdom, which was acquired in a peasant country by the great proletarian revolution at painful cost. It is the result of the working-class struggle in the first victorious republic. This working class, which, at first, sought to drive forward at a rapid tempo, then had to recognise that, in order not to lose touch with the great mass of the peasantry, which, in these conditions, is *decisive* for the outcome of the Revolution, it had to take the measures that later received the name of New Economic Policy. And now, comrades, when we speak in this congress about the *agrarian question* and put forward a programme for agrarian countries, when we deliberate over a programme of our Communist International and speak of many other current issues, we will also have in mind the thought that I have just expressed. This thought requires further explanation, and we will pursue it further and more intensively in the course of the work of the Congress.¹³

In our opinion, to the degree that this can be foreseen, Central Europe, the Balkans, and a number of other countries will have to go through a 'new economic policy'. They will have to do this in order to neutralise the peasantry, or at least some of its layers – of course, with this or that modification, depending on the situation.

Soviet Russia is proud to come to the help of the international proletariat. Five years have gone by since our revolution. And we can present you with the results of our rule during these five years. One thing is clear: five years of intensive struggle, countless victims, an immensity of difficulties, famine, an unprecedented blockade, intervention, and all the rest, have not broken the strength of Russia's working class. On the fifth anniversary of the Revolution, the masses, however tired they may be, are not leaving our party. We tell you this in full awareness that we have no right before the international communist congress to paint up our situation in any way. We say this because it is a fact.

Not only have the working masses not streamed away from the Russian Communist Party, but, on the contrary, we feel how these masses are coming to our party more and more, just as intensively as in the best days of the revolutionary upheaval five years ago. What we saw today in Petrograd can be seen in any city of the Soviet Republic, any town, any factory, any mine, wherever there are working masses. They could well have been worn down by five years of terrible struggle and they had the full right to catch their

13. See also Zinoviev's remarks in Session 3, p. 123, and discussion of the Russian Revolution in Sessions 8–10.

breath, but in fact they stand with us more firmly than ever. These working masses believe today more than ever in the victory of the Soviet Republic. This is felt by every one of us who has the good fortune to stand in the thick ranks of Russia's working masses, here among the workers of such wonderful cities as Red Petrograd.

Earlier, there were still groups among the workers that doubted, wavered, and still believed that we would perhaps be defeated. But precisely these working-class circles have found their way back to us and are no longer wavering. Never has our party felt so strongly as now that it is on the right path, that the working masses fully trust it and are advancing together with it. The Russian Communist Party presents to the Fourth Congress, on the fifth anniversary of the great October Revolution, a united, living, vigorous working class, confident in its power. (*Applause*)

That's why, on this fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, we can laugh in the face of the shadows of the past: the Social Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, and the Russian patriots of the Second International. We are on the right path. During these five years, there were moments when the Communist Party, fully convinced of the justice of its cause, was in a minority among the working masses. There were times when, under the pressure of unprecedented sacrifices, the working-class ranks wavered. But the great merit of the ruling Communist Party consists precisely in the fact that it is proud to be a component of the Communist International and that, in these moments of wavering, it never let its banner fall.

For we knew that we would work our way through the unheard-of sacrifices and difficulties and would *lead the working class* to victory. On the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, we say that the hardest part is behind us. We have brought the working class of our country onto the open road. Our party – which has travelled an extremely difficult but great and glorious road since the October Revolution and is only a detachment of the Communist International – has imbued the working class of the largest country in the world with its ideas. It has built a bridge to the most remote village. It leads the entirety of Soviet Russia. Comrades, we are proud to be backed up by a party that, even if difficult times come upon us, will not let its banner fall. We take the greatest pride in the fact that, in the most difficult moments of the Revolution, we knew that we were showing the way to the workers of the entire world and their organisations.

We know well that, in a few years, many countries where industry is more developed, after carrying out their own proletarian revolution, will surpass us and take the leading position in the Communist International. As Comrade Lenin has said, we will become a backward soviet country among the

advanced soviet countries.¹⁴ We know this and we look forward to that day as the greatest victory of those who began the Revolution. We know just as well as you how many difficulties await you on your road. You must confront an organised and greedy bourgeoisie. You will cross swords with the as yet unconquered betrayers of the Second International.

The Petrograd workers that you met yesterday in the factories and workplaces of Petrograd await with impatience the celebration of a victorious world-revolution. But they too are aware of the difficulties that await you on this road. The Communist International is *against* any premature action, against unprepared uprisings, which are drowned in the blood of the workers and crush the proletariat's precious asset, the organised international Communist party. We are following in the footsteps of the Paris Commune, but we want a *victorious* commune. The Communist International will not permit the bourgeoisie to crush our forces in isolated encounters and drown the movement in the workers' blood.

In the East, our movement expanded during this year. Not only has it progressed, but also there is now hardly an Eastern country where we do not have the nucleus of a Communist party, even if this nucleus is still not large. Yes, our parties in the East are still numerically small, but our Emancipation of Labour Group in Russia in 1883 was also not large. Nonetheless, its emergence meant that a new era had begun in Russia, that a revolution had begun.

These lands represent an inexhaustible reserve of proletarian revolution. Thus the building of Communist parties in these countries is a historic event. It signifies that, here too, forces of advanced workers are accumulating that will lead the oppressed nations to the victory of international revolution. During this year, the national movements of oppressed peoples gained greatly in scope – movements that objectively are dealing blows to international capitalism. The growing rebellions in India, China, and Egypt undermine the existence of the bourgeois governments. Comrades, if it is granted to many of us present here today to live another five years – and for now we ask nothing more – if we live to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, we will see that what we have achieved thus far is mere child's play. We will see the world shake under countless uprisings, as many hundreds of millions

14. Lenin stated, for example, '[S]oon after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries... Russia will cease to be the model and will once again become a backward country (in the "Soviet" and the socialist sense)'. See *'Left-Wing' Communism – An Infantile Disorder*, Lenin 1960–71, 31, p. 21.

of oppressed people rise up against imperialism. We will see how the red banner of communism is grasped by the hands not only of a small although heroic minority, but also of hundreds and hundreds of millions of the world's oppressed people and toilers.

Long live the international revolution!

Long live the Russian proletariat, which has laid the foundation for this revolution. It endures the enemy's relentless crossfire and fights on, well knowing that it is struggling not only for its own country but for the cause of the international proletariat.

The Russian workers are internationalists in the best sense of the word. During five years, the Russian workers, especially those of Petrograd, have not dared wish for any better payment than that which they are receiving today.

Petrograd comrades, you are the advanced post of our forces, the first fighters for the Soviet government. Five years ago, you grasped a rifle, formed the first weak detachments of the Red Guards, and advanced into such heroic struggle. How many of you then hoped to see the fifth anniversary? To see a Fourth Congress of the Communist International housed within the walls of your own soviet? Now we have witnessed it, and we cannot hope for any better reward. The Congress will bring new strength to the workers of Petrograd and of all Russia. We will stride forward to the economic construction of our great republic. We will provide an example of heroism in the arena not only of civil war but also of the actual restoration of a socialist economy. We will help our brothers organise and give them the opportunity to hold firm until they are ready to lay hands on the bourgeoisie and thrust their knee into its chest. (*Applause*)

Down with the international bourgeoisie! (*Applause*)

Down with its agents – the Second International!

Long live the communists of the entire world!

Long live the workers arising in new struggles who take the path of communism!

Long live the Communist International! (*Singing of the 'Internationale'.*)

Comrades, I must read you the following telegram of Comrade Lenin, addressed to the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. I can assure you, comrades, that Vladimir Ilyich absolutely wanted to be with you today in Petrograd. We must accept that although he is not here now, he will be soon. It will not be long before we can welcome Vladimir Ilyich here among us. (*Applause*) For now, we must be satisfied with listening to the following telegram:

Comrade Lenin to the Comintern Congress and the Petrograd Soviet

To (1) Comrade Zinoviev, Petrograd, for the Fourth Congress of the Communist International and (2) the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Red Army Deputies:

I am extremely sorry that I cannot be present at the first session of the Congress and that I must confine myself to written greetings. Despite the enormous obstacles confronting the Communist parties, the Communist International is growing and becoming ever stronger. The main goal is still to win over the majority of the workers. We shall attain this goal despite all obstacles.

The fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals has brought benefit to the proletarian-revolutionary movement. It signifies less fiction and less fraud, and this is always to the benefit of the working class.

To the Petrograd workers and their newly elected Soviet, to the workers who are now welcoming the Fourth Congress of the Communist International to their city, I send my best wishes and most heartfelt greetings. The Petrograd workers must be in the foremost ranks on the economic front as well.

I rejoice to hear of the beginning of the economic rebirth of Petrograd. I hope, in the near future, to be able to accept your invitation to visit Petrograd.

Soviet-rule in Russia is celebrating its fifth anniversary. It is now sounder than ever. The Civil War is over. The first successes in the economic field are already visible. Soviet Russia considers it a matter of pride to help the workers of the whole world in their difficult struggle to overthrow capitalism. Victory will surely be ours.

Long live the Communist International!

V. Ulyanov (Lenin), Moscow, November 4, 1922

Zinoviev (*continuing*): In my view, comrades, we may reply in the name of all those present and all the workers of Petrograd. Vladimir Ilyich writes us: 'Long live the Communist International.' We respond: 'Long live the wisest and best of all the Comintern's leaders, Comrade Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.' (*Loud applause. Cries from the audience: 'Three cheers for Comrade Lenin.'*)

Comrades, I will now read another telegram addressed to the Petrograd Soviet – from Comrade Trotsky. (*Applause*)

Dear comrades,

I deeply regret that unforeseen responsibilities, mostly relating to the work of the international congress, prevent me from celebrating this festive occasion in the midst of the Petrograd proletariat, as I did five years ago. With all my heart, I greet Red Petrograd and the first Soviet of proletarian dictatorship.

Yours, Trotsky.

(*Cries: 'Long live the leader of the Red Army!' Applause, shouts of 'Hurrah!'*)

Zinoviev: Comrades, the Congress wishes to express its admiration for the many communist comrades and revolutionary workers who are languishing in countless prisons of Europe and America. We send them our fraternal greetings. Comrade Zetkin will tell us more about this. Comrade Zetkin has the floor.

Clara Zetkin: When the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist International, gathers to review results and prospects, it always honours the memory of those who have fallen on the battlefield. Already, with sadness and pride, we have paid tribute to the dead, dear to our memory. It is no less our duty to honour the untold thousands that suffer in prisons and penitentiaries because they dared to resist the bonds that tie the proletariat.

In *Romania*, *Yugoslavia*, and *Greece*, the prisons are overflowing. Proletarians and communists are harassed, persecuted, and tormented.

The same is happening in *Hungary*, where the Horthy dictatorship still has the upper hand. And in *Poland*? Comrade *Dombal*, elected by small peasants to the Sejm, was condemned to many years of forced labour, despite his parliamentary immunity and on the basis of laws of now-destroyed tsarism, which stand in contradiction to the laws now in force. During the election campaign, more than five hundred communists were thrown in jail. In Poland's borderlands the proletariat is shamefully repressed, and those accused of political crimes are judged by military courts on the basis of martial law. And Poland calls itself a democracy!

Consider the states bordering on the Baltic Sea. In the jails of *Finland* languish brave men and women from the time of the revolution that was brutally overthrown by Mannerheim in alliance with von der Goltz, leader of the German mercenaries.

In *Estonia*, our unforgettable comrade *Kingissepp* breathed his last, a victim of bourgeois revenge. Victims of political prosecution fill the jails to overflowing.

In *Latvia*, Comrade Klavs-Klavins has been condemned to death, and many jailed comrades await their judgement by white courts.

Let us look at *Germany*, headed by a president [Ebert] who still calls himself a Social Democrat, even though there is hardly a principle of the old Social-Democratic programme that he has not betrayed and trampled underfoot. Look at Germany, where, even today, communists, revolutionary fighters from the time of the *Munich council-republic* three years ago, still sit in the fortresses and prisons of Bavaria.¹⁵ The anguished cries for help of these victims of white terror continually break through the prison walls, yet the leaders

15. A government of workers' councils was established in Bavaria on 7 April 1918; German Communists held its leadership 13–27 April. Counter-revolutionary forces

of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals show no sympathy and express no support – they who had so much to say about the trial of the Social Revolutionaries, who are outposts of counter-revolution in Soviet Russia.¹⁶

Not all the victims of last year's March struggles, by any means, have been released from prison. The brave revolutionary fighter Max Hoelz is behind bars, and the broad proletarian masses demand his freedom.¹⁷ And all this despite the fact that the bourgeois-Social-Democratic coalition government has decreed an amnesty – which, to be sure, is being exposed more and more as insolent mockery of the revolutionary proletariat. Recently, proletarian blood flowed once again in the streets of Berlin – the blood of those fighting not for their own ultimate goal but to protect the bourgeois republic from military-monarchist reaction.¹⁸ Abominable deeds of violence are met by neither punishment nor atonement. The Leipzig trial of those who killed Rathenau simply rewards political murder.¹⁹ And Germany has a Social-Democratic minister of justice!

In *France*, the heroic sailors of the Black Sea Fleet are still behind bars – they who refused to fight against Soviet Russia, the workers' and peasants' republic. During the great strike in *Le Havre*, conducted with such self-sacrifice, workers' blood flowed, and many revolutionary workers landed in prison.²⁰

overthrew the councils on 3 May, executing hundreds of workers and imprisoning many more.

16. In February 1922, Soviet authorities announced the forthcoming trial of forty-seven leading members of the Socialist-Revolutionary (SR) Party for terrorist conspiracy against the Soviet state. At the conference of executives of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Communist Internationals in April, Social-Democratic leaders insisted on clemency for the accused SRs, and Bolshevik delegates gave an undertaking that SR-defendants would not be executed. This concession was sharply criticised by Lenin. The trial (June–August 1922) ended in death-sentences against fourteen accused, but these sentences were later revoked or suspended. See Lenin 1960–71, 33, pp. 330–4.

17. The March Action in 1921 began as a defensive response to police occupation of workers' strongholds in central Germany; the KPD tried unsuccessfully to broaden it into a national anti-government general strike. Max Hoelz was the leader of a workers' fighting contingent. Many leaders of the KPD, including Zetkin and Levi, considered the Party's tactics during this action to have been adventurist and ultra-left. (See Levi 2009.) The dispute was taken to the Third Congress, which endorsed many of the criticisms. For the Third Congress positions in defence of Hoelz and on the March Action, see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 181, 229, 290–1. See also below, p. 123, n. 26.

18. On 15 October 1922, the ultra-right Bund für Freiheit und Ordnung [League for Freedom and Order] called a demonstration at the 4,000-seat Circus Busch in Berlin. Police rejected calls for the action to be banned. The rightists attacked a workers' counterdemonstration, wounding a considerable number.

19. German Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau was assassinated by members of the extreme-right Organisation Consul on 24 June 1922, an act that provoked massive protests. Two assassins committed suicide when found by police. The third was tried and let off with fifteen years in prison, of which he served five.

20. In April 1919, sailors of the French Black Sea Fleet, which had been dispatched to support France's war against the Soviet republic, mutinied and raised the red

In *Italy*, the Fascists destroy trade-union and cooperative centres, murder revolutionary workers, and scourge all believers in freedom. But, for the counter-revolution, that is not enough: bourgeois class justice, the infamy of bourgeois injustice, completes what Fascism has begun.

Britain, democracy's motherland and paragon, imposes judicial terror across Ireland and throughout its overseas territories and colonies. In *South Africa*, hundreds of workers who defended their essential rights in this year's great strikes languish in jail. In *India*, in *Egypt*, the ruling British bourgeoisie's judiciary exerts its authority brutally against national revolutionaries who defend the freedom and independence of their homeland against the rapacity of British imperialism; against proletarian-revolutionary fighters who seek freedom for the exploited from every form of servitude, including to the bourgeoisie of their own nation.²¹

In the *United States*, revolutionary proletarians and communists are persecuted, mistreated, deprived of their rights, and exposed to the worst knavery and violence, with a sophisticated barbarity that knows no equal.

The bourgeois states' judicial terror and their persecution and imprisonment of proletarian fighters has become a widespread international phenomenon. What does that show us? It shows us that proletarians are increasingly weary of exploitation and servitude, that they increasingly demand and struggle for their human rights. What is more, it shows us that the ruling class is deathly afraid, and from this fear is born their thirst for revenge. True, the bourgeoisie seems strong and yet, despite everything, it feels the foundations of its class-rule swaying and trembling under the blows and pressures of irresistible revolutionary historical forces. Thus, it brings to bear all its cunning and might to defend its rule through the fraud of democracy and the scorpions of its class justice.

And yet – despite everything, this bourgeoisie would be unable in the present historical moment to defend its power with its own means. Only too clearly, the decay of the capitalist economy and the dissolution of the bourgeois order announce the approaching end of a world ruled and exploited by

flag. The fleet was quickly sent home, the sailors repressed, and their leaders jailed. The French CP secured the election to parliament of two prominent leaders of the mutiny, André Marty and Charles Tillon, while they were still incarcerated. For the June–October 1922 strike movement in Le Havre, see p. 581, n. 15.

21. Britain's war against Irish independence ended in 1921; the Irish Free State was established in December 1922, without the six counties of Northern Ireland. In India, a mass protest movement in 1919 against British imposition of the repressive Rowlatt Act was met by repression, notably in the Amritsar massacre, in which British troops killed hundreds of peaceful protesters. Britain also suppressed a national revolution in Egypt in 1919, leaving 800 Egyptians dead. Britain declared Egypt 'independent' in 1922, but retained effective control. For South African strikes, see p. 736, n. 29.

the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie would be finished as a ruling class, had it not found allies in the reformist leaders of workers in each country. It is they who erect a wall protecting bourgeois class-rule, and it is they who carry the full measure of responsibility for the fact that thousands and thousands of the best sons and daughters of the proletariat are convicts and prisoners, unable to apply their energies to the struggle to overcome capitalism.

Comrades, we have the honour and duty of sending our most cordial fraternal greetings to all those – whoever they may be, in whatever so-called homeland they may be suffering (*Applause*) – who were upright and strong enough to struggle, and who are surely in no way responsible for their failure to triumph. We send them our passionate good wishes, believing that they who had the courage to take up the struggle against a world of foes will also be strong enough to hold their head high, despite their enemies' thirst for vengeance. We greet them in the firm conviction that their liberation will result not from compassion, justice, or other fine things to which the bourgeoisie gives lip service, but simply and only from the deeds of the revolutionary masses, who drive forward with irresistible impetus, sufficient over time to break down the gates of any dungeon.

We express our conviction that such a struggle for the liberation of revolutionary fighters will not be merely an act of solidarity but will also pay a debt owed to the vanguard fighters, because we left them alone in struggle with the enemy. We greet our imprisoned brothers and sisters in the conviction that they will stand firm in thought and will, even if the day of their liberation should come only when the victorious banner of proletarian revolution with the soviet star waves over each country and the entire world.

We will now read the draft of an appeal to the imprisoned comrades, written in Russian. The Presidium asked that this document be read by a comrade that, in his time, had ample opportunity to get acquainted with many tsarist jails and prisons. Comrade Feliks Kon has the floor.

Feliks Kon (*reads*):

Greetings to Prisoners of Capitalism²²

Prisoners of capitalism! Fighters for working-class liberation, locked in chains by the capitalist governments! To you we send the first greetings of representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the entire world, gathered in the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.

22. A somewhat different Russian text of this statement is translated in Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 309–10.

Comrades, year after year the world congresses of the revolutionary-proletarian vanguard, in reviewing the victories of the working class, also honour victims of this struggle, who have fallen at the hands of the executioner or have been thrown into prison. This time, however, at a moment when capitalism has gone over to the attack in a unified front, its cruelty comes sharply to the fore. Once again, the blood of proletarians is flowing across the entire capitalist world, where the proletariat is fighting out its 'last struggle' with the class enemy. The best forces go to waste in the jails, as the waves of white terror wash over all capitalist countries.

In Italy, the Fascists threaten the proletariat with fire and sword. They are destroying the offices of unions, cooperatives, and party publications. Indeed, they do not shrink from the destruction of the residences of fighters for working-class liberation.

In France, the heroic sailors who refused to fight against workers' and peasants' Russia still languish in prison. And, during the uprising in Le Havre, the defenders of capitalism once again reaped their bloody harvest.

The leaders of Soviet Bavaria still languish in prison, even though three years have passed since its fall. Many participants in the March Action remain in jail, despite the amnesty.

In Finland, the jails are overflowing, while arrests and mistreatment continues without end.

In Estonia, now as before the execution of Comrade Kingissepp, the jails are filled with representatives of the revolutionary proletariat.

In Latvia, the gallows are again in use. Comrade Klavs-Klavins has been condemned to death, and the fate of hundreds of arrested workers remains unresolved.

In 'democratic' Poland, fighters for communism are sentenced to hard labour in accordance with tsarist laws. The bourgeois courts trample on their own laws. Comrade Dombal, despite his 'immunity' as a parliamentary deputy, has been condemned and is serving his term. Electoral committees are continually arrested. More than five hundred persons are confined to prison for having taken part in the election campaign. In the border districts, the state of siege has been proclaimed and martial law introduced.

In Romania, comrades are murdered on the familiar pretext of 'attempting to escape'. The use of torture during interrogation calls forth protest and resistance even among the bourgeois.

In Yugoslavia, workers are routinely subjected to arrests, to torture in the dungeons, and to humiliations and torments.

In Greece, following the so-called revolution, the leaders of the proletariat are still held in jail.

In Hungary, the bloody Horthy government continues with its executions and torture.

In South Africa, the British bourgeoisie rages against the rebellious workers.

Democratic America, so proud of its freedoms, metes out the heaviest penalties against all those suspected of belonging to the Communist Party. The police of the American bourgeoisie destroys the trade unions, arrests workers by the hundreds, and routs strikers with bayonets and clubs.

In India, Egypt, and all the colonies, the slightest expression of dissatisfaction, the merest attempt at resistance is repressed by unrestrained use of firearms.

Comrades, in all these bloody actions, the Social Democrats act as accomplices of the bourgeoisie. It is their misleadership that has held back workers from battle and promised them reforms gained without struggle. It is they who divert the attention of the masses in one country from the cruel acts of the bourgeoisie against workers in other countries. It is they who destroy the workers' united front.

Comrades! Workers! The Communist International has grown accustomed to losses. Every achievement of the revolution has been bought with the blood of fighters and is conquered through blood. The sharper the struggle, the more numerous the victims. Yet, even though individuals fall, the idea cannot die.

Comrades imprisoned in capitalist jails! Today, on the occasion of our great festival, the fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, we share with you our belief and firm conviction that the hour is close in which the revolutionary proletariat will throw aside the yoke of capitalism and free itself from servitude and exploitation, the hour when it will free you, break the locks of your prisons, and bring you with honour back into its ranks – you who are its pride, its best comrades.

Down with the capitalist executioners!

Long live the freedom struggle of the working class!

Long live the social revolution, which will liberate working people of all countries!

Zinoviev: Comrades, the Congress convenes at a moment in which the Italian proletariat is living through a harsh and critical time, which will doubtless hasten its revolutionary development. At present, the Italian proletarians are in a difficult situation. The Presidium therefore believes that the Congress should begin its work with a corresponding statement on the Italian question. For this I give the floor to Comrade Béron, representative of the French delegation.

Béron (*reads*):

To the Workers and Peasants of Italy

Dear brothers, comrades, workers, and peasants of Italy! As the Fourth World Congress of the Third International solemnly opens, on the same day as the fifth anniversary of the Russian proletarian revolution, the Communist International turns to you, for recent events in your country place in the foreground your struggle against the rise of naked reaction.

Two years ago, the Communist International insistently advised the then-unified Italian Party to take the offensive. The Communist International strongly proposed that it shake off the supporters of compromise, the opportunist wing, and that it utilise the rise of revolutionary sentiment among the working masses after the trials of war and the disappointments of peace to deliver a decisive blow to the old order.

But the views of those given to half-measures and caution prevailed. They shrank back from the dictatorship of the proletariat, making reference to the habits of democracy and legality supposedly rooted in the population.

And, now, what the Communist International foretold has taken place: While the centrists negotiated with the right wing, the bourgeoisie recovered, reaction took the offensive, and power passed into the hands of bandits who personified your class enemies' most unbridled hatred of you and your ideals.

The Fascists became masters of the situation. They have erected a dictatorship. Democracy and legality, these deceptive adornments to which the weak leaders of Italian socialism naively addressed their prayers, were trampled underfoot. The Fascists are completing with fire and blood the demolition of the workers' organisations, which they had previously attacked with the support of a state that is now fully in their hands.

But do not despair!

All has not been lost. Indeed, your victory is certain, if you follow a determined and correct course.

The proletarian forces in the most important industrial cities – Turin, Milan, Venice, and Trieste – are still unbroken and can ready themselves for defence relatively quickly.

The Communist Party of Italy broke at the right moment with the wavering elements, who, in the guise of Maximalism, followed a course of weakness and compromise, including even a peace treaty concluded a year ago with the Fascist bands. Holding high the red banner, the Communist Party calls not only on all Socialists who are still capable of revolutionary action, not only on all the working masses and conscious peasants, but also on all honest

people, who view with horror the approaching black cloud of reaction, to gather round this banner.

It must be borne in mind that the revolutionary forces in Italy are not so weak as presented by the panic-mongers and, moreover, the Fascist bands are much weaker than their friends and admirers claim. A significant part of the radical-democratic forces will turn away from them. What is more, even in the camp of your direct class enemy, there is no unity.

The Fascists are principally a tool in the hands of the agrarians. The industrial-commercial bourgeoisie observe with fear the experiment in unbridled reaction, which they consider to be a black form of Bolshevism.²³

Moreover, alongside elements that are politically uncertain, even if energetic in the immediate struggle, such as reactionary students, demobilised officers, and simple hooligans, the Fascists also consist of battalions made up of working people, rural proletarians, and a portion of the peasantry. These elements will soon recognise how treacherous were the promises through which they were lured into the counter-revolutionary adventure, which pits them as a landlords' army against their own blood relatives.

Finally, Fascism signifies a policy of international adventures. Fascism, which dispenses with any programme, ideals, or firm, unified class foundation, will soon provoke an opposition, a movement of public indignation. Our task is to steer this movement along our path and enable Italian workers, with the Communist Party at their head, to lead this protest movement against reaction as far as possible.

The entire Communist International stands with you, dear comrades. It follows attentively the different stages of your difficult and momentous struggle. It alerts the proletarians of all countries to the Italian events as an example of what results from the severe tactical mistakes of opportunism, both partial and full-blown. It will be happy to point to the future history of your movement as an example of how such failures can be made good. The Communist International will stand by you in this struggle and take every possible measure to come to your aid.

Long live the unity of the workers of Italy in struggle against reaction!

Long live the unity of the workers around the world in struggle against capitalism!

Long live the Third International and the approaching victory of proletarian revolution!

23. The Italian Fascist movement's repressive militia were known, after their uniform, as the 'blackshirts'.

Zinoviev: On the suggestion of a number of delegations, the Congress resolves on the occasion of the fifth anniversary to address an appeal of the Communist International to the Soviet republics.²⁴ For this purpose, a representative of the Italian delegation has asked for the floor. This gives us the occasion to express our relationship to the Italian proletariat. I give the floor to our veteran fighter, the railway worker Comrade Azzario.

Azzario: Comrades, you require our help and support. Yet, at the decisive moment in our struggle against capitalism, we will have much greater need for the help of the world's first proletarian state. Defend our common acquisition, soviet-power – yours and ours! Keep a firm hold on the portion of the proletarian front where you, five years ago, broke through the capitalist trenches and conquered the land that will in the future form the foundation of our proletarian fatherland. Thanks to our common victory, this fatherland will include the entire world.

Long live the great October Revolution and its heroes!

Long live the Russian working class!

Long live Red Petrograd, homeland of soviet-power!

Death to world capitalism and its most important mainstay, the treacherous Social Democrats and reformists!

Long live the proletarian world-revolution!

Long live the federation of Soviet republics of the world! (*Applause*)

To the Working People of Russia!

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International, assembled for its first session in Petrograd – where the world proletarian revolution began and where soviet-power was born – sends its warmest greetings to the workers, Red Army soldiers, and peasants of Soviet Russia, now celebrating the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution.

Comrades, five years ago, your heroic assault on the fortresses of the old world overturned the rule of the landlords and bourgeoisie of your country, tearing out of the hands of world capitalism a sixth of the globe. In harsh civil war with world capitalism, you were able to defend your Soviet land, an acquisition of the world proletariat as a whole. With every day, you are able to advance further on the road of peaceful socialist construction.

Victory did not come to you easily. Hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants fell in the cause of communism. The working class had to endure great suffering and poverty for many years. But the workers, forced to listen day and night to the whimpering of their hungry children, did not let the red

24. Regarding the structure of the Soviet republics, see p. 21, n. 58.

banner fall. Led by their iron vanguard, the Russian Communist Party, they have valiantly and with firm step travelled the most difficult part of their road of suffering. The Fourth World Congress, which encompasses most of the delegates present at previous congresses, bows together with you before the countless graves of proletarians and Red soldiers, who fell for our common cause in the wide plains of Soviet Russia. However, we note with pleasure that, already on the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, and after the second year of peaceful construction in Soviet Russia, your battle wounds have healed rapidly. The industry and agriculture of Soviet Russia are in evident recovery; the material conditions of the working class are improving; a new generation of worker youth is growing that is mastering science and technical knowledge; the forces of the Red workers' and peasants' army are gaining strength; and the Russian working class holds state power as firmly as ever.

The Fourth World Congress gathers on Soviet territory at a time when the black clouds of capitalist reaction are gathering increasingly around the working class of the entire world. A capitalist offensive against the economic gains of the working class is under way on a broad front. Everywhere, wages are cut, the eight-hour day abolished, the rights of trade unions restricted.

Reaction has also gained strength in the political field. In Italy, state power has been taken by the Fascist robber bands, the bourgeoisie's last reserve in its struggle for survival. In Germany, monarchist forces are organising and preparing an offensive. In England, even the Lloyd-George government was found to be too liberal and was replaced by that of the Conservatives. Class contradictions are sharpening, and there is every indication that Europe is becoming entangled in a fierce clash between proletariat and bourgeoisie. But, the darker the night in Europe, the brighter shines the star from the Soviet North, that of the proletarian dictatorship that is yours and also ours, where the hammer and sickle rule the country under the protection of the Red Army's five-pointed star. The greater the suffering of workers of other countries under the yoke of the capitalist offensive, the stronger grows the hope with which the working class of the entire world views that portion of the globe where a workers' government has been at the helm for five years.

Comrades, you need our help in your difficult struggle. But we will possibly lay claim to the help of the world's first proletarian state at the decisive moment of our struggle with capitalism. Defend, therefore, our common achievement, the soviet-power that is yours and ours. Defend bravely that segment of the proletarian front where you, five years ago, broke through the capitalist trenches and conquered the territory in which to create the

foundation of our proletarian homeland. This homeland will expand, through our common struggle, to embrace the entire world.

Long live the great October Revolution and its heroes!

Long live the Russian working class!

Long live proletarian Petrograd, the homeland of soviet-power!

Down with world capitalism and its main support – the treacherous Social Democrats and reformists!

Long live the proletarian world-revolution!

Long live the world federal republic of soviets!

Zinoviev: At the request of several organisations, the Presidium has decided to direct a special appeal to the Red Army. It is certainly not without a certain historical significance that the speaker chosen by the Presidium is the senior leader of Japanese workers, Comrade Katayama.²⁵ He now has the floor.

Sen Katayama: Comrades, I am proud and grateful to be able to address this gathering and pass on my greetings to the Red Army and Fleet of Soviet Russia. We are glad of the Russian Revolution's success. We know what Soviet Russia has had to live through, both on its battlefields and in the interior of the country. We know how world capitalism tried to break the Russian Revolution. But we also know that the Red Army and the Red Fleet defend it and have achieved victory. We are glad to be able to congratulate the Russian Revolution on its success – the revolution that has held firm against imperialism and world capitalism.

We, who gather here on the fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, give thanks to the Russian soldiers and sailors, not only because they have carried through their own revolution to a victorious conclusion, but because they inspire hope among the proletariat of other countries. Soviet Russia's Red Army is the hope of the world proletariat.

Comrades, it is a great event in world history for us to gather together here for the fourth time to set the guidelines for the international socialist revolution. We are happy and full of hope in the knowledge that we here in the workers' republic are confident in the protection of the same Red Army and the same Red Fleet that achieved victory for the Russian people.

25. Zinoviev is probably thinking of the Second International congress of 1904, where Katayama ceremoniously shook hands with Georgy Plekhanov, symbolising the unity of Japanese and Russian workers during the Russo-Japanese War. At the time of the Fourth Comintern Congress, Japanese troops were the only occupation forces still challenging the Red Army within Soviet Russia.

We also assume that the Russian fleet and army are looking to the future. For you who have defended the Russian Revolution and secured its victory, for you who have fought for yourselves and your comrades, greater things lie ahead. We expect of you that you will work for the victory of revolution in other countries. The future must bring us the victory of revolution not only in Russia but in all countries.

Comrades, we expect – indeed, we demand of Soviet Russia's Red Army and Red Fleet that they prepare for the struggle for world-revolution. Just as you have organised and defended the Communist International in the past, so must you do also in the future. We admit that we have been working in too individual a fashion in the different countries. In the future, Soviet Russia's Red Army will be international. You must fight not only for the Soviet republic, but for world-revolution. We, in the Communist International, are organising the struggle for world-revolution on an international scale. We need your collaboration in order to make this international character a reality.

I will now read the resolution adopted by the Communist International.

To the Red Army and Red Fleet of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International, gathered in the capital of Russia's workers and peasants, extends its thanks and its greetings to the heroes of the Red Army and Red Fleet. Soviet Russia is the only place in the world where representatives of the world's revolutionary workers can – free from fear of any disturbance – organise the liberation of working humanity from the yoke of capitalism. Thanks to the victory of the Red Army and under its protection, the delegates can for the fourth time come together in their world congress.

Red soldiers and sailors! Revolutionary workers in every land have shared with you the celebration of your victories and the bitterness of your defeats. The enlightened workers of all countries understood that your struggle was conducted in the interests not only of Russian workers but of the working masses of the entire world. Already at our earlier congresses, we recognised you as new fellow warriors of the Communist International, as heroes of humanity's struggle.

Comrades, Red soldiers and sailors! We regret that, in past struggles, the revolutionary workers were too weak to bring help to you at the critical moments. This made it hard for you to conduct your struggle against the united forces of capitalism. But communists of all countries used the time well and worked diligently to educate and unify the masses and prepare for capitalism's overthrow. The Fourth Congress will dedicate all its energy to this, the prime task of the world proletariat.

Red soldiers and sailors, congratulations on your recent great victory in the Far East.²⁶ The Fourth Congress of the Communist International must however draw your attention to the fact that the time of peace and general disarmament, the time free of wars, has not yet arrived, because, where the capitalists still hold power, they utilise armies for their murderous purposes, and sacrifice millions of workers and peasants on the altar of capitalism. As long as such conditions continue, there will be continual wars, and all peoples – including those of the Soviet republics – will live under the shadow of war.

Heroes of the Red Army and Red Fleet, be on your guard! The danger has not yet passed. The Fourth Congress greets with joy the efforts of the Soviet republics to reorganise the Red Fleet and to bring it into readiness for the defence of the revolution!

Long live the Red Army and the Red Fleet!

Zinoviev: Comrades, the Congress pays tribute to the Petrograd workers by addressing greetings of the Communist International to our Petrograd. I give the floor to a leader of the Communist International and a veteran fighter of the Balkan Communist Federation, Comrade Kolarov.

Kolarov (*reads*):

To the Working Men and Women and Red Army Soldiers of Red Petrograd

On its opening day, the holiday of the October Revolution, the Fourth Congress of the Communist International extends its greetings to the heroic proletariat of Red Petrograd.

By your courageous action in the February and March days of 1917, working men and women of Petrograd, and with the fraternal support of soldiers of the garrison, you brought down hated tsarism from its bloody pedestal. In the form of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' deputies, you laid the foundation stone for the organisation destined soon thereafter to complete the work of the revolution and begin an era of construction of the proletarian state.

In the memorable October days of 1917, the Petrograd proletariat took a giant step that opened a new era in world history.

Following the example of the immortal Paris Commune of 1871, the workers of Petrograd shook off the yoke of the bourgeoisie, proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat, and thus ushered in the epoch of social revolution not only in Russia, but the world over.

26. The Japanese occupation forces, which had supported white armies in revolt against Soviet rule in the Far Eastern Republic, completed their withdrawal from Vladivostok in late October 1922.

Throughout the many years of external and internal struggles that then ensued, the Petrograd proletariat stood in the front ranks, sent its sons to every front, and contributed incalculable sacrifices in blood and toil.

Its example fired the hearts of the broad masses of working people of Russia. Today, after five years, the Russian working class can congratulate itself on its complete victory on all external and internal fronts.

Now, as peaceful reconstruction gets under way, the Petrograd proletariat occupies as always a place of honour in the battlefield of labour. Thanks to its efforts, Petrograd's wounds have begun to heal, and it is once again becoming an industrial and proletarian centre.

Great are the virtues of Red Petrograd with regard not only to workers' and peasants' Russia but also to the entire world proletariat. If Soviet Russia has become the backbone of the world workers' movement, if the Russian Revolution now inspires the enthusiasm of all workers and provides a powerful impetus to the international struggle for social revolution, this is above all thanks to Red Petrograd. The example of pure and inexhaustible heroism provided by Petrograd workers inspires workers around the world to untiring struggle for their final liberation, for the creation of a federation of soviet republics that embraces the entire world.

That is why the world proletariat views proletarian Red Petrograd as one of its chief fortresses. That is why the hearts of all workers throb with sympathy and love for the working population of the Northern Commune.

That is why today, on the anniversary of the glorious October Revolution and on the solemn opening day of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, the first thought of delegates to this world congress of working people turns to Red Petrograd, within whose hospitable walls we celebrate this world proletarian festival.

Undying glory to the heroic proletarians of Red Petrograd!

Long live the Petrograd workers, the pioneers of social revolution and the shining example for the entire world proletariat!

Kolarov (*continuing in Russian*): Working men and women! You were the first to raise the banner of revolution. Hold it firm in your hands. The hour is approaching in which this banner will wave over the entire world. (*Applause*)

Zinoviev: The first session of the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International is adjourned. I propose the singing of the 'Internationale'. (*The 'Internationale' is sung.*)

Session 2 – Thursday, 9 November 1922

Report of the Executive Committee

Opening. Election of commissions. Report of the ECCI.

Speakers: Humbert-Droz, Zinoviev

Convened: 7 p.m. in the Congress Hall of the Kremlin, Moscow.

Chairperson: Kolarov

Chair: The first point before us in this session is the adoption of the agenda drawn up by the Executive Committee. This was published in *Inprekorr* as well as in the entire communist press. It is therefore unnecessary to read it again. We can assume that all comrades are familiar with it.¹

Does anyone propose any change in this agenda? I put it to a vote. (*Adopted*)

Now we must vote on the rules of order for our congress that have been proposed by a meeting of the Expanded Executive. Is there any objection? (*Adopted*)

Thirdly, we must establish commissions that are to carry out detailed study of special questions. Comrade Humbert-Droz has the floor.

Humbert-Droz: The Presidium has proposed to the various delegations a number of commissions. The delegations have met to consider this and have made some changes to the Presidium's proposals.

1. The agenda adopted 11 June 1922 by the Expanded ECCI was: 1. ECCI report. 2. Tactics. 3. Programme. 4. Agrarian question. 5. Red International of Labour Unions. 6. Educational work. 7. Youth question. 8. Eastern question. Comintern 1922a, p. 134.

All the delegations' requests have been accepted. The different commissions established by the Presidium are as follows:²

*Commission on Spain:*³ Spain: Nin; Switzerland: Humbert-Droz; Italy: Graziadei; Germany: Schreiner; France: Paquereaux; Youth: Doriot; Convener: Humbert-Droz,

*Commission on blacks:*⁴ America: Billings, Sasha, Johnstone; Russia: Safarov; Japan: Katayama; France: Tahar Boudengha; Netherlands: Jansen; Britain: Joss; Dutch Indies: Malaka; South Africa: Bunting; Conveners: The American members.

2. In addition to the commissions announced by Humbert-Droz, the following commissions were set up during congress proceedings:

Resolution on the ECCI report: Established in Session 6; functions expanded and redefined in Session 13. Members: Bordiga (Italy), Ruth Fischer (Germany), Renaud Jean (France), Roy (India), Welti (Switzerland), Grepp (Norway), Stern (Norway), Penelón (South America), Acevedo (Spain), Ravesteyn (Netherlands), and Michalkowski (Poland).

Mandates: Established by the Expanded ECCI prior to the Congress. Members: Trilisser, Piatnitsky (Russia), Eberlein, Thalheimer (Germany), Kabakchiev (Bulgaria), Scheflo (Norway), and Gramsci (Italy). See p. 435.

Egypt: Established in Session 13. Members: Béron (France), Gramsci (Italy), Katayama (Japan), Orhan (Turkey), Ravesteyn (Holland), and Webb (Britain).

Trade unions: Established in Session 18. Members: Lozovsky (Russia), Rosmer (France), Heckert (Germany), Lansing (United States), Tasca (Italy), Pavlik (Czechoslovakia), Clarke (Britain), and Kolarov (Bulgaria).

Workers' aid: Established in Session 19. Made up of representatives from France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Britain, Russia, the Balkan countries, Scandinavia, the United States, Canada, the RILU, the cooperative division, and the Youth International. Convener: Münzenberg. A separate commission on this question was later established by the Presidium.

Eastern question: Established in Session 20. Members: Roy (India), Radek (Russia), Safarov (Russia), Ravesteyn (Netherlands), Webb (Great Britain), Salih (Turkey), Sen Katayama (Japan), Tan Malaka (Java), Chen Duxiu (China), Isakov (Bulgaria), Cachin (France), plus an unspecified delegate from each of Iran and Yugoslavia.

Agrarian question: An editing commission was established in Session 22. Members: Varga, Renaud Jean, Teodorovich, Marchlewski, Rieu, Preobrazhensky, M. Pauker, Hoernle (or Unfried), Katayama, Joss, and an unspecified delegate from China.

Austria: A commission of Radek, Stern, and Šmeral established by the Presidium drafted the appeal presented in Session 26.

Korea: Established in Session 27. Members: Kon, Katayama, Chen Duxiu, Manner, Próchniak, Kuusinen, Voitinsky, and Zetkin.

Mention is also made of commissions on programme, education, election of the ECCI, Ireland, Austria, reorganising the International, the Youth International, and the resolution on tactics. In his summary speech, Zinoviev mentions commissions on Poland and Denmark.

3. Pintos (South America) was added to the Spanish commission during Session 3.

4. Overstraeten (Belgium) was added to the commission on blacks during Session 3.

*Commission on France:*⁵ Russia: Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev; Germany: Zetkin, Thalheimer, Becker; Bulgaria: Kolarov; Czechoslovakia: Neurath; Italy: Bordiga; Norway: [Rachel] Grepp; Poland: Walecki, Kostrzewa; America: Carr; Switzerland: Welti; Japan: Katayama; Britain: Minnie Birch; Hungary: Béla Kun; Belgium: Overstraeten; Austria: Stern; Spain: González; Youth: Schüller; Profintern: Lozovsky; ECCI Delegates in France: Manuilsky and Humbert-Droz; Chair: Trotsky. Secretary: Humbert-Droz.

Commission on Italy: Russia: Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek; Germany: Zetkin, Schumann, Ruth Fischer; France: Souvarine, Faure; Britain: Murphy; Czechoslovakia: Seiden; Bulgaria: Kabakchiev; Norway: Meyer; Poland: Michalkowski; Austria: Stern; America: Sullivan; Yugoslavia: Radovanović; Hungary: Rákosi; Switzerland: Humbert-Droz; Youth: Vujović; Profintern: Nin; Secretary of the Commission: Rákosi.

Little Commission for Discussion with Representatives of the Socialist Party of Italy: Kabakchiev, Radek, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Zetkin.

Question of Norway: Russia: Bukharin, Radek, Kobetsky; Finland: Kuusinen; Germany: Urbahns; Sweden: Samuelson; Czechoslovakia: Šmeral; Youth International: Shatskin; Secretary: Kobetsky.

Question of Czechoslovakia: Germany: Ruth Fischer, Heckert, Ulbricht; France: Rosmer, Duret; Austria: Friedländer; Italy: Tresso; Russia: Radek, Zinoviev; Poland: Keller; Bulgaria: Isakov; Youth: Vujović; Profintern: Melnichansky; Secretary: Heckert.

*American Commission:*⁶ Russia: Bukharin, Lozovsky, Radek; Germany: Eberlein; Balkans: Kobler; Japan: Katayama; Italy: Azzario; Finland: Kuusinen; Britain: Leckie; Youth: Kurella; Czechoslovakia: Schiffel; Poland: Domski, Walecki; Netherlands: Ravesteyn; Convener: Kuusinen.

Commission on Yugoslavia: Italy: Bombacci; Bulgaria: Kolarov; Romania: Pauker;⁷ Hungary: Béla Kun; Youth: Likov; Austria: Friedländer; Czechoslovakia: Koren; Germany: Heckert; Poland: Próchniak; France: Leiciague; Convener: Koren.

Chair: The various delegations have named their representatives on these commissions. If any changes are requested, the delegations should indicate

5. Penelón (South America) and Rakovsky (Presidium) were added to the French commission during Session 3. Spector (Canada) and Scoccimarro (Italy) were added during Session 6. The Commission established a sub-commission, composed of Zetkin, Bordiga, Kolarov, Humbert-Droz, Katayama, Manuilsky, and Trotsky, which drafted the resolutions on the French question.

6. Stirner (South America) was added to the United States Commission during Session 3. MacDonald (Canada) was added during Session 6.

7. 'Pauker' could refer to either Ana or Marcel, both of whom were delegates.

this. Are there any proposed changes? I therefore put to a vote the composition of the commissions as they have been read out by the secretary. (*Adopted*)

If necessary, other commissions will be formed. Delegations that have not yet chosen their members of the designated commissions – as is the case for the Austrian delegation, for example – should do so at once. The Presidium has decided to name a general secretary for the Congress, and proposes Comrade Humbert-Droz for this post. Is there any objection? Comrade Humbert-Droz is thus approved.

The Polish Party earlier proposed as member of the Presidium a comrade who has now been replaced by Comrade Marchlewski. I put this change to a vote. (*Adopted*)

We now come to the first point on the agenda.

Report of the Executive Committee

Zinoviev: It is now my task to deliver a report on the activity of our executive between the Third and Fourth Congresses.⁸ I will then speak regarding the Communist International's future activity. My report thus divides into two parts.

I have set down the basic facts and figures on the Executive's activity during these fifteen months in an article that has been published in all languages.⁹ I will therefore not repeat that.

We have to review two questions: first, whether our Executive correctly carried out the decisions of the Third Congress, and, second, whether these decisions were correct. Because, now, fifteen months later, we have a great deal of material that was unavailable earlier.

As the Third Congress closed, what was the situation that determined our entire policy? After the Third Congress, it immediately became clear that world capitalism had launched a pronounced, well-organised, and systematic offensive against the working class on almost the entire world. The working class found itself to some extent in retreat. The fifteen months of our activity were taken up with a large number of very important and major strikes around the world. But, when we look more closely at the outcome of these strikes, we must recognise that the large majority ended in the workers' defeat. The membership of working-class economic organisations shrank. The trade unions, for example, embraced about twenty-five million members in 1920; now there

8. The Comintern's Third Congress had ended sixteen months earlier, after sessions held in Moscow, 22 June–12 July 1921.

9. See *International Press Correspondence* (hereafter *Inprecorr*), 2, 99 (16 November 1922), pp. 791–3.

are only eighteen million, and possibly even this figure is somewhat exaggerated. This fact alone shows us the difficult conditions under which the working class found itself during the period under consideration.

We must not underrate the importance of *Soviet Russia's* situation during this period. As you recall, soon after the Third Congress it became clear that Russia was stricken by a severe famine. This was not yet evident during the Congress, but right after its conclusion, the Communist International Executive had to turn to the working class of the entire world with an appeal to support the Russian proletariat in this year of hunger.

This fact had major political consequences. You know that the International is often attacked for being a mere tool of the Russian Soviet Republic. There are many 'friends' who make this assertion. It is now clear that an important and very close interrelationship exists and must exist between the first proletarian republic and the Communist International. From our communist viewpoint, it is clear that the Communist International is very important for Soviet Russia, and vice versa. It would be absurd to ask which is the subject and which is the object. They are the foundation and roof of a building; each one belongs to the other.

The conditions we faced during this year were fully used by our opponents in order to combat the very idea of a proletarian dictatorship. The entire Second International tried to use the famine in Russia as the point of departure for a campaign against the Communist International. And it used this situation to launch another very noisy campaign, claiming that the Communist International was merely a tool of the Soviet Russia. The Russian Soviet Republic is a significant political fact that obviously no one can ignore. The question is simply: On which side of the barricades do you stand?

Take just one recent example: the letter of Mr. Clynes, a leader of the British Labour Party. I believe that most of you have read this letter. Mr. Clynes, one of the best known 'worker leaders' of recent years, sent a letter to the Soviet Russia that has now been published. In this letter, Clynes proposes that the Soviet Republic conclude as fast as possible the proposed agreement with Mr. Urquhart,¹⁰ in order to improve the Labour Party's prospects in the current elections. Mr. Clynes notes that he is speaking not only in his own name but in that of all his colleagues.

10. Leslie Urquhart was chairman of a British corporation that had owned large mining works in the Urals under the tsar. In 1921, Urquhart and Soviet authorities drafted an agreement ('concession') for Urquhart to operate his former properties under Soviet authority. In October 1922, however, the Soviet government rejected the agreement, on Lenin's insistence. In explanation, Lenin cited Britain's exclusion of Soviet Russia from negotiations on Turkish independence. Lenin 1960-71, 33, p. 388. See also Lenin's remarks in his Fourth Congress report, p. 300.

Britain is undergoing an interesting stage in its imperialist development. The elections are closely tied to the situation in Soviet Russia. The Labour Party, one of the most important parties of the Second International if not its major component, cannot ignore this; it must take a stand. But, on which side of the barricades? On the side of Mr. Urquhart, the side of the bourgeoisie. So, when the Second International accuses the Third of always going together with the Russian Soviet Republic, of being its tool, we can reply: You also do not disregard Soviet Russia; you also find it necessary to take a stand regarding it. But you do this in a manner that seeks to make use of the first proletarian soviet republic in the interests of the bourgeoisie rather than the proletariat.

As said, the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals took the famine in Soviet Russia as the starting point for an energetic campaign. We must concede that this enjoyed some success. For the ordinary worker, who was now faced with the plain fact that the first soviet republic was in the grip of famine, that the life of workers and peasants was very difficult – for the worker who is not a party member and not yet politically educated, this aroused a certain disappointment regarding the revolution as a whole. That is troubling but understandable. Given the conditions in which the working masses found themselves after the War, this was absolutely unavoidable. It was surely unscrupulous of our opponents to seize on this fact. They were very familiar with the origins of this hunger. They knew very well that the main responsibility lay with the traitors of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and with imperialism's policy of blockade. But it is quite clear that the Second International had to use this fact in its campaign against us, and that is what they did.

So during this year, the Communist International and the first soviet republic were in a rather difficult situation, one that our unprincipled opponents of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals set out to use, and did use with success.

As I said, the strikes were defensive actions of the working class. I will not present you with extensive tables – that can be done in a pamphlet. I will rather focus on the country that is particularly important for us for the question of the united front: France. The comrades in France were the most emphatic opponents of the united-front tactic. That has now changed. But I believe that if our French friends, when they were sharply criticising the Communist International, had been aware of the facts that I will now present, they would surely have had a quite different attitude to the united-front tactic.

Strikes in France, where workers were on the offensive, that is, where they fought for an improvement in their standard of living, were as follows: in 1915, during the War, only 8,000 workers in France conducted such strikes.

In 1916, still during the War, the number was 37,000. 1918: 131,000. 1919: 1,053,000. First half of 1920: 628,000. But then the curve bends downwards. In the second half of 1920 only 57,000, and in 1921, the year we are considering, only 9,000 workers took part in strikes for gains. By contrast, during the first eight months of 1921, 160,000 French workers took part in strikes that had a defensive character. What does that mean? That means that, in the years 1921–2, capitalism's offensive was extremely intense, so that the French working class had to limit itself to defensive strikes. It did not have the power to conduct strikes for gains, because the bourgeoisie was on the offensive all down the line.

In my opinion, this fact was decisive in France, as in other countries, with regard to the united-front tactic. If our French friends had noted these figures and followed the development of strikes in their own country more closely, then, in my opinion, they would have withdrawn most of their opposition to the united front.

That was the overall situation as our activity began during the year under review. The Third Congress had for the first time drawn a clear line against the so-called 'left elements' like the KAP and the semi-anarchist groups.¹¹ It also drew a line against groups on the right. I remember the Levi group, which at the Third Congress was still the subject of much debate. I remember the Socialist Party of Italy, of which so much was said at the Third Congress. We recognised at this congress that the construction of true Communist parties had only begun. The Third Congress bequeathed to us the celebrated slogan, 'To the masses'. Its resolution on tactics formulated our task as being to win the majority of the working class, to make the socially decisive layers of the proletariat ready for battle and to lead them in struggle.

Out of this general situation flowed the slogan of the united front, which was formulated by our Executive for the first time in December 1921. I believe, comrades, that now, after the holding of two further expanded meetings of the Executive – which were in fact small world congresses – events have reached the point where in France both the Communists and also the syndicalists have given up their opposition to the united-front tactic. We will thus have less to say in this congress about this tactic. It is clear that our Executive acted rightly when it declared in December 1921 that the slogan 'To the masses' necessarily led to the united-front tactic. Indeed, our policies as a whole were nothing other than a practical application of the united-front tactic in the specific

11. The Third Congress demanded that the KAPD either affiliate to the German CP or lose its status as a sympathising party of the Comintern. The KAPD then left the International. See 'Resolution on the Executive Committee Report', Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 182–3.

conditions of different countries. And let me say at once that, in my opinion, this will remain our task for the coming year, and perhaps also for a number of years.

The united-front tactic was, in fact, the first large-scale international campaign undertaken by the Executive. As you know, we have spoken much of the fact that the Communist International must be an International of action, a centralised international world party, and much more. In principle, that is quite right, and we must insist on this. But it will take years and years to achieve this in life. It is fairly easy to adopt a resolution that says: We must carry out international actions. The attempt that we made right after the Third World Congress – an effort that actually was basically no different from the efforts of the Second International – failed,¹² because our parties are still too heterogeneous. In some cases they are not yet Communist; there is still much in them that is Social-Democratic. Our organisations are still deficient, and carrying out an international action entails great difficulties.

In recent years, we sought to carry out many international campaigns, such as that for famine relief in Russia or the campaign regarding the trial of the Social Revolutionaries.¹³ But the campaign to apply the united-front tactic was particularly important. And I must admit that it caused a great deal of commotion. We will deal with that fully in a special point on the agenda.

It became clear that some groups of our Communist International would like to carry over too many of the habits of the Second International into the Third. In my view, comrades, we cannot let what has happened in France pass without protest. At a time when the Communist International must be a centralised world organisation of the proletariat, when it has begun a campaign of massive proportions against the Second International through the united-front tactic, discipline must prevail in our ranks – if not iron discipline, then at least one that is basic and proletarian in character. And this was not the case. I must say that what the French and to some extent the Italian Party did was a disruption of the international campaign that our organisation had initiated. We should see that clearly and take the necessary measures. Although this was politically a very important campaign, it was not one capable of mobilising millions of comrades. And, when such disruption occurs in a campaign of this sort, it arouses justified anxiety that in difficult times, when we must combat arms in hand, we will again face disruption of this kind.

12. It is not clear to what campaign Zinoviev is referring. Two sentences later, Zinoviev refers to the ambitious campaign launched on 30 July 1921, immediately following the Third Congress, for material aid to Soviet Russia. (See Comintern 1922c, pp. 59–61.) Its achievements are outlined by Münzenberg in Session 18, pp. 634–47.

13. Regarding famine relief, see the Fourth Congress report and resolution, pp. 634–47, 1069–71. Regarding the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, see p. 78, n. 16.

Comrades, I believe it will be best if this report takes up the Executive's activity one country at a time. And here I must express my general impression that the larger the segments of the old Social-Democratic movement incorporated into our ranks, the greater are the survivals of centrism and social-democratism in our party. You will see that clearly in my brief overview.

I will begin with *Germany*.

At the Third Congress, Germany was the focus of almost all our discussion. As you all know, the German Party was in a rather difficult situation during that congress. Our enemies spoke of its total collapse, leading many of our friends to become overly fixated on the momentary difficulties of our German sister party. The Executive is proud that it was able to provide our German sister party with some degree of assistance in resolving this difficult crisis. I believe that we are fully justified in saying, without exaggeration, that at the Fourth World Congress our German sister is counted among the firmest and best organised (in relative terms of course) and politically clearest parties. And that should provide consolation when we see that many of our larger parties now find themselves in a similarly difficult situation. For example, many participants in this congress regard the French Party with the greatest pessimism. Given the example of the German Party, I believe we can reassure the Congress and say that if the Congress acts rightly, we will succeed in providing the French Party with assistance and bringing it rapidly back on its feet. The political situation in Germany is generally revolutionary and favourable for the only truly revolutionary party that exists in Germany, that is, our Communist Party.

The unification of the USPD and the SPD that we predicted in Halle is now a fact.¹⁴ I remember well that when, after the historic vote in Halle, we said in our summary that no other road was open to the right wing but a return to the Social Democracy, there was great indignation; this was termed shameless demagoguery and the like. But no prophet was needed to predict that. It was quite clear that, in this epoch of civil war, those who do not want to be Communist must wind up in Social Democracy. Now that has come to pass.

I believe that this development is positive for the revolutionary movement. In his greetings to the Congress, Comrade Lenin was correct to say that the unification of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals was a step forward for the revolutionary movement. It is better for the working class to have less fiction, less deception, and fewer illusions. When we regard old-fashioned revolutionaries such as Ledebour in Germany, we now know for certain that

14. The USPD and SPD consummated their fusion at the latter's Nuremberg Convention on 24 September 1922. At the USPD's Halle Congress in October 1920, a majority of delegates had voted to affiliate to the Comintern.

he must go one of two ways: either with the Communists or with the Social Democrats.¹⁵ The German proletariat will see that within a few months.

Which parties have best applied the united-front tactic? The *German* and the *Czech*, in relative terms, of course. We have sometimes noted that our German sister party does not sufficiently stress the independence of our own line, since for us the main point in this tactic is to maintain freedom for communist agitation. That was not always rightly done, but, in general, the German sister party applied this tactic quite correctly. Strikes like that of the German railway workers were a classic example of the correct application of the united-front tactic.¹⁶ This strike also showed that every economic strike can grow into a political one. I have read an article in the German *Internationale* that says the Fourth Congress should state clearly what is now coming in Germany: a period of sharpened *economic* struggles or one of sharpened *political* struggles. It is quite wrong to put the question this way. For what is coming is a period of sharpened economic struggles and *simultaneously* a sharpening of political struggle. That is how the question is posed. The railway workers' strike showed quite distinctly that in the present situation almost every economic conflict becomes a political conflict.

You know about the *factory-council movement*, which has now begun and doubtless has a great future. The Social Democrats accuse our party of aiming to call a congress of factory councils and then placing Germany before the accomplished fact, as the Bolsheviks did in 1917 with the convocation of the Second Congress of Soviets (when they had already overthrown bourgeois rule).¹⁷ Unfortunately, our German Party does not deserve this accusation, or better, this compliment. The Communist Party in Germany is, unfortunately, not yet strong enough to carry through what the Bolsheviks achieved in October 1917. But this campaign will be of the highest importance; it will become the catalyst for a truly revolutionary mass movement around the Communist Party.

15. An ally of Rosa Luxemburg in the prewar SPD Left, Georg Ledebour stayed with the USPD when the KPD was formed and opposed affiliation to the Comintern in 1920. However, he refused to rejoin the SPD in 1922 and thereafter led a small independent group.

16. A strike of eight hundred thousand German railway workers 1–7 February 1922 was outlawed by the German government, which included SPD ministers. The KPD made an effective appeal to the SPD and USPD to join in defending the right to strike. See Zetkin 1922a.

17. During the night of 24–5 October 1917, forces organised by the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviets took control of most of the city. At 10 a.m., the committee proclaimed the Provisional Government dissolved and assumed state power. When the second Russia-wide Congress of Soviets convened that evening, this power was transferred to the Congress as a whole, which thereupon organised the Soviet government.

Numerically, our party in Germany has not grown greatly. More generally, it is striking that the parties whose political influence among the masses has increased this year have not grown numerically to the same extent. There are various reasons for this, such as unemployment and the poverty of workers who are not even able to pay the paltry party dues. There are also political causes. That can be seen most clearly in Germany. No one will deny that our German sister party has substantially increased its political influence. And, yet, its membership total has not grown greatly. I once told a meeting of the Russian Communist Party that the German Party should adopt the slogan of achieving a membership of one million. But that will not be easily achieved. I will not say that the proletarian revolution must be postponed until this figure of a million has been achieved. I remember that the Russian Party, for example, had at most 250,000 members when the proletarian revolution broke out – in relative terms, the German Party is already larger than the Russian one was in 1917.

But we can be certain that the decay of German Social Democracy will continue at a rapid pace. We sense that decisive events in Germany may take place much sooner than many of us expect.

There are still disagreements in our German party; much must still be fought out. For example, with regard to programme, there was not full agreement at the last meeting of the Central Committee. But, when we compare the movement with what existed fourteen months ago, we must recognise that the German Party has taken a giant step forward. Unless every indication is wrong, the path of the proletarian revolution leads from Russia through Germany. The recovery of our German party is therefore of the greatest political significance. There are only two parties in Germany. As for the Ledebour group, we predict that, within a few months they will either wind up with the Communists or amount to a fat zero. We will wait confidently to see how this turns out. What is clear is that only two significant parties exist in Germany and that the future belongs to our party.

The Executive's organisational relationship with the German Party was its best, which is not to say that it was ideal. There was much that went wrong, and blame lies partly with the Executive, and partly with the German Party. Nonetheless, relations were, on the whole, firm and good, and no political development passed us by without an interaction between the Executive and the German Party.

I come to *France*. We will have a separate discussion on this point. But I cannot avoid saying something of this in my general report. A few months ago, I wrote an article, 'The Birth of a Communist Party',¹⁸ in which I said that

18. See *Inprecorr*, 2, 63 (1 August 1922), pp. 473–4.

the birth of a Communist party is no easy matter. And, comrades, when we view the situation after the Paris Convention,¹⁹ we must say that the birth of the Communist Party in France was even more difficult than could have been expected. Here, we find a concretisation of the formula I suggested: the larger the elements that have come over from the old party, the greater the difficulties we have to overcome. You still see that in Norway, and perhaps in other countries as well. Suddenly, in France, we won over the majority of the old party, and it seems that much time will be needed now before we have overcome all the ailments caused by that fact. The most important observation of the Executive and its different representatives, including Humbert-Droz who spent almost half a year in France, was – if I may speak frankly – that we must seek a large number of forces for a Communist party in the ranks of the syndicalists, the communist syndicalists. That may seem strange, but it is so.

The tradition of the French movement has led to a situation where we must recognise, after the Communist Party's first two years, that a large number of communists, who will be the best elements in our future Communist Party, are found for the moment outside the Communist Party, in the ranks of the trade unions. And I believe that one of the most important tasks before our congress and the French Commission lies in drawing to us these genuinely proletarian and revolutionary forces. The tradition in France is to view the party as representing the *politiciens* [politicians], and, unfortunately, I must say that there is some truth in this. (*Hear! Hear!*)

We did not go far enough at the Third Congress in our criticism of the French Party. It was too young, and at that congress we had other preoccupations. It was perhaps a failing of the Executive – that must be admitted – but it is a fact: we did not go far enough at the Third Congress in our criticism of the French Party, and this was damaging to our French sister party.

Three or four months ago, the leadership of the French Party still confronted the Executive as 'left' critics. They criticised the united-front tactic, saying that the Executive had been too opportunist. I do not know if many members of the Communist International were so naïve as to believe that the French Party was really criticising us from the left. I do not believe that many members of the Communist International believed that. But it is good that this period is now behind us.

The French Party did not know how to apply the tactic in a country where events called for it in compelling fashion. I have already given you some statistics regarding strikes in France. They show that, if the Party had really understood the actual mass movement, it would have understood the united-front tactic and taken it as the starting point to draw closer to the masses.

19. For the Paris Convention, see p. 970, n. 7.

The bourgeoisie in France is carrying out a systematic campaign against the eight-hour day, and I must concede that the Executive was unable to convince our party to undertake a systematic campaign to counter this. Our efforts to launch a campaign in France in the spirit of the united front to defend the eight-hour day failed.

I recall the last 'general strike' that took place in France. Here, too, I must speak very frankly. In the years 1908–10, we became accustomed to the official syndicalists proclaiming the general strike almost every day. But no one took any notice. That was the worst time for the syndicalists, and I believe that rooting out this tradition is among our party's most important tasks. Unfortunately our party managed to carry this bad tradition into the present. The general strike call that went out a few weeks ago to the French workers (Le Havre) was, in reality, pushed through under the pressure of a quite small clique of anarchists.²⁰ Our paper, *L'Humanité*, the largest workers' newspaper in France, was used to call the working class out on strike at a moment when our party was entirely unprepared for it. The strike is now over, and we must draw a conclusion from it: we must make sure that in future nothing like this can happen again in France. The working class finds itself in a tragic situation. Truly we cannot accept that our party, a section of the Communist International, permits such strikes, in the process assuming on its own and our behalf such great responsibility.

At its congress, the French Party unanimously approved the Twenty-One Points.²¹ I had somewhat forgotten these Twenty-One Points, so today I read through them again. In the Twenty-One Points, the first condition states that the press must be truly communist. I must frankly admit that, in France, this first point of the Twenty-One Conditions has not been carried out. *L'Humanité* wants to be a communist newspaper, but that is not yet the case. It is widely distributed, and, in some fields, it has done excellent work – that must be recognised – but it is not yet a communist newspaper. And the Fourth Congress must begin to truly carry out at least this first point of the Twenty-One Conditions. I hope that we will succeed in this.

In the French Party, there are now, as you know, three major tendencies and two smaller ones. I will not characterise them one by one. Speaking generally, they are as follows: the Centre current, of whom we previously said that they stand in the centre but are not centrist.²² We have written and spoken on this.

20. Regarding the June–October 1922 strike movement in Le Havre, see p. 581, n. 15.

21. When the French SP split at its Tours Congress in December 1920, acceptance of the Twenty-One Points was the basis of agreement for the majority that then constituted the French CP.

22. By 'centrism', Marxists of the period meant currents intermediate between revolutionary and reformist forces and unwilling to embrace a revolutionary course.

That was possibly too optimistic with regard to the French comrades. They are not fully centrist, but a good element of centrism is evident there. They, in fact, represent both the Centre and centrism. We must now try to hold the Centre while ushering centrism out the door. It is mostly a matter of the leaders who came over to us from the old party, who certainly have achieved much for the Communist International, but who have not yet shaken off their Social-Democratic original sin. If we read Comrade Marcel Cachin's most recent editorial on the trade unions, we must say that this article is not much better than those of Verfeuil, whom we expelled at the Paris party congress.

The second current, the Renoult group, plays a mediating role. We must say that it includes very good proletarians, many of whom have criticised the united-front tactic sincerely from the left, but, in the end, will be convinced that our policy was correct and will come to us.

It is the third tendency that is truly communist. We are not required to agree with everything that comrades of this tendency have done. They committed major errors at the Paris Congress. I personally consider the resignation of our comrades of the Left to have been a gross error,²³ but I must say that it is this group that deserves the Communist International's moral support. This group has begun the struggle for the united-front tactic. In this, they have made some errors, but they were the only ones in France that genuinely defended the Marxist tactic of the united front and secured its victory.

I must tell you, comrades, that, based on our initial discussions with the French comrades, we are convinced that a split can be avoided, and obviously the Communist International will do everything possible to prevent such a split. But we can see from this example how difficult is the birth of a Communist party. Consider, comrades, that the French Party has not yet carried out a single mass action. Consider what will happen when that takes place. I remember how a real differentiation in the German Communist Party began only after it had moved into action. (*Interjection from the Germans: 'Very true!'*) Leave aside whether this was for good or ill: the true differentiation began with action.²⁴ In this sense, the action was therapeutic for the Party, saving it and curing it – but it was also the starting point for a new differentiation. We make no prophecies, but, if the French Party undertakes a genuine action, a mass action, where life and limb is at stake, then we will see a true differentiation, we will see who really belongs in the Communist Party and who does not.

23. At the October 1922 Paris Congress, the left current was excluded from the party executive. Leaders of the Left thereupon resigned their posts in the party apparatus and its newspaper, *L'Humanité*.

24. Zinoviev is referring to the March Action in 1921; see p. 78, n. 17.

The task of the Fourth Congress, in my opinion, is not to pass over everything indulgently, as the Third Congress did, but rather to state things as they are and give moral support to the comrades who are truly comrades. That does not mean that the other comrades should be expelled from the Communist International, but we must tell them plainly what their weaknesses are. We must explain to them how you become a true communist.

I now come to *Italy*. The example of Italy could be taken as a classic example of a Communist Party's policy and of how to build a Communist International. If we were to develop a policy manual for Communist parties, then I think that Italy will provide the most important chapter, the most important example. Italy is not a classic country of the Communist movement, but, still, we see that much is taking place there with classical clarity, as in no other country.

In the autumn of 1920, Italy was the focal point of the Communist movement. Our differences with Italy did not then involve us telling the Italian comrades: You must absolutely make the revolution at once. The Communist International has never said that to the Italian Party. Theoretically speaking, it is true that, if our party in Italy had seized power in the fall of 1920, the Hungarian example might have repeated itself. I do not say that is certain. I do not know whether that would have triggered an immediate blockade. I do not know, but it is not excluded. It is possible that if we had seized power in Italy in 1920, things might have gone the same way as in Hungary.²⁵ So we never told the Italian comrades, you must absolutely make the revolution. It could have been correct not to take power at that moment. If the majority had held this viewpoint, that would not have been justification for carrying out the break with the Italian Socialist Party on this point.

The break did not come because they did not want to take power. Our position at that time was that the situation is revolutionary and one must be ready for any eventuality; first of all, the reformists had to be excluded in order to build a genuinely revolutionary party. For this reason, we demanded the expulsion of those who were sabotaging the revolution. The Communist International did not in any way demand an uprising in 1920 in order to seize power. Such an assertion is historically incorrect. As you know, D'Aragona has now openly admitted that the reformists stayed in the Party in order to obstruct the revolution. That is why they had to be expelled. It was a question only of preparing the Party for the possibility of revolution, not of carrying it out immediately.

25. The Hungarian soviet government established in March 1919 was overthrown on 1 August by the invading army of Romania, which acted in concert with the Allied powers.

As you know, the majority of the Italian [Socialist] Party did not carry out our demand for expulsion of the reformists. They did not want to build a revolutionary party and did not want a break with these agents of the bourgeoisie. This term 'agents of the bourgeoisie' caused quite a commotion. When we sent a telegram calling the reformists 'agents of the bourgeoisie', our friends in France cried bitter tears over my tactlessness in applying this name to the reformists. But, now, after the admission by D'Aragona himself, it seems to me that the term 'agents of the bourgeoisie' is surely the most tactful label for these gentlemen. I cannot think of any more tactful way of putting it. The reformists, as agents of the bourgeoisie, stayed in the Italian Party and did all they could to thwart the revolution and deliver the working class into the hands of counter-revolution.

Among the Italian comrades, there is now a debate on what has happened in Italy: a coup d'état or a farce. It could possibly be both. Viewed historically, it was a farce. A few months or years will pass and it will turn out favourably for the Italian working class. But, for the moment, it is a very serious turn-about, a very serious counter-revolutionary action. Our comrades in Italy are not to blame because they failed to 'make' the revolution at such-and-such a moment. Rather, their responsibility and perhaps their criminal error lay in allowing the bourgeoisie's accomplices to remain in the Party, giving them the possibility to carry out a betrayal in classic fashion and delivering the working class into the hands of the Fascists.

You are familiar with the policy that the Executive applied in the Italian question. As you know, there was much debate at the Third Congress regarding whether we acted rightly at Livorno.²⁶ I believe it is now clear that we acted rightly at Livorno, and it is equally clear that we also acted rightly during the last year. Our Communist Party in Italy acted against the Executive's policy on many questions. But, comrades, I believe we had to act as we did. We had to break firmly and decisively with the Italian Socialist Party at the necessary moment. If we had not done this, the entire Communist International would have been lost. But, at the same time, we must do everything to make it easier for them to return to the Communist International. It is quite clear that in the coming months, come what may, the great majority of workers who are now still with the Maximalists will come over to the Communist International.

26. After the January 1921 Livorno Congress of the Italian SP, Paul Levi, co-chair of the KPD, argued that the ECCI representatives' conduct there had unnecessarily divided the Communist forces between those who left the SP to form the Communist Party and those who remained in Serrati's 'Maximalist' current. This issue became linked to the dispute over KPD policy in the March 1921 struggles in Germany, which was the main topic at the Third Comintern Congress in June–July 1921. Regarding the Livorno Congress, see also pp. 1039–40, n. 8.

And, because they will belong to us, we must take every fraternal measure to ease their return to the Communist International. That is what the Communist International is for – to ease the path of a segment of the working class at a moment when it has recognised its error and wishes to return to us. Certainly, we must ask for guarantees, and we will do that. The type of events we have seen in Italy must not be repeated. The Communist International must receive convincing guarantees that nothing like that will happen again. Nonetheless, we must do all possible to reunite with these comrades.

I heard that some comrades in the Communist Party of France came to the opinion that perhaps, after all, it is not so dangerous to break with the Communist International: 'Perhaps we will get something of a dressing down, but at the fifth or sixth congress they will invite us and unify with us.' And they were thinking of the Italian example. Well, comrades, what does this mean? Those who talk in this way have overlooked one detail: that, in the interim, the Italian Party was almost lost and the Italian working class was delivered into the hands of the worst Fascists. They view the matter from a personal point of view: today, I get a dressing down, but, in a year's time, I can come back and be welcomed. The fact that the party and working class are destroyed in the process, is, for them, a secondary matter. I believe that such a point of view can be held only by a few individuals. Surely it cannot be held by the majority of the French Party.

The lesson of the Italian Party is not that this or that leader quarrelled with us for two years and has now come to Moscow. That is a secondary matter. The personal issue is inconsequential. Not so is the lesson of the Italian Party – it goes much deeper and consists of this: whoever gives a finger to reformism will lose his entire hand. And anyone who commits such an error destroys his party and causes the greatest harm to the working class of his country.

We will have debates, not only with the Maximalists but with the Italian Communists.

On many questions, we do not have agreement. They have adopted a programme that is not Marxist. We have criticised it and rejected it.²⁷ And these viewpoints are deeply rooted in the Italian Party. There is still a touch of abstentionism in the Italian Party.²⁸ Our friend Bordiga has achieved much for the Italian movement. The comrades have fought valiantly. They have done everything to raise the banner of the Communist International in a most difficult situation. We must recognise these achievements of the Italian Party

27. For the ECCI Presidium's criticism of the Italian CP programme, see *Kommunistische Internationale*, 23 (November 1922), pp. 142–5.

28. 'Abstentionism' refers to abstention from bourgeois elections, the position prior to 1920 of the current in the Italian Party led by Bordiga.

and, not least, of Comrade Bordiga. But we must also say we have serious differences with the Communist Party of Italy. A touch of abstentionism is still there. Bordiga no longer advocates anti-parliamentarism – he fell into step on this – but its spirit is still there. We saw that with regard to the united front as a programme and a tactic.

The leadership of the Italian Party still maintains a position that the united-front tactic is permissible in economic but not in political questions. In our view, this is nonsense. Both belong together. You failed in Italy to apply the united-front tactic correctly. The slogan of the workers' government was raised too late in Italy. Personally, I made the error of conceding too much to Comrade Bordiga and doing without an open discussion of the Italian question at the last Expanded Executive meeting. That was a mistake. We should have had an open discussion.

Nonetheless, the Communist Party of Italy stands among the bravest contingents of the Communist International, among its best parties. Precisely in this difficult moment, this party will show what it can do. Today, I read an underground appeal of the Communist Party of Italy and received the first underground edition of its official publication. That shows that, under the most difficult conditions, the Italian Party has not let the banner fall from its hand. (*Loud applause*) We have chosen an Italian commission. It will review two issues: (1) Unification of the Party; and (2) How to reorganise our forces in this period of Fascism. We do not know how long this period will last, but we must be prepared for the worst.

Now, as to *Czechoslovakia*. The Executive successfully carried out the unification of the Czechoslovak Party, of course with the eager help of the Party itself. During the Third Congress, we had two parties and many groups.²⁹ It was not yet clear whether it would be possible, in this country where the national question plays a great role, to organise a unified party. This has succeeded.

As for the trade unions, we had many failings. Nonetheless, our party generally succeeded in bringing the majority of the economically organised workers under the red banner. The Czechoslovak Party applied the united-front tactic in what we can call exemplary fashion. Reading the bourgeois press in Czechoslovakia, reading reports of developments printed in opponent publications, we must acknowledge that our party has conducted itself correctly and succeeded in winning over large segments of workers that had belonged

29. Invitations to the Third Comintern Congress were addressed to both ethnically Czech and German CPs in Czechoslovakia, as well as groups in Slovakia and Ruthenia. A fusion congress, held 30 October–4 November 1921, united Czech, Slovak, German, Hungarian, Polish, and Ukrainian forces.

to opponent organisations. And we hope that the practical application of the united-front tactic will continue in outstanding fashion.

As you know, there is a point where we have a certain disagreement with the Czechoslovak Party – and perhaps also internationally; that remains to be seen. This concerns the expulsion of the so-called opposition. We have established a commission to deal with this question. Still, I can't avoid explaining our point of view. At its party conference, the Czechoslovak sister party expelled seven Central Committee members, including its former chairman, Šturc, for breach of discipline.³⁰ That came as a surprise for the Executive, which had not been consulted. The Executive considered it had the duty to immediately cancel this decision. That does not mean we should concede that the opposition was right. The Executive supports the position of the party majority. We do not want to label this as a left opposition or to support it politically. But we say that the expulsion was premature and that all means had not yet been exhausted. In the heat of battle, an attempt was made to compare this group's misdeeds with those of Levi. The offence of the group was that it published an appeal, despite the Central Committee's prohibition. From the standpoint of party discipline, such a step certainly cannot be approved. But it is mistaken to compare this breach of discipline with that of Paul Levi. Levi betrayed the working class at a moment when our brothers were being shot down. At that moment, Paul Levi wrote a pamphlet for the German prosecutor.³¹ That was a betrayal of the working class, for which there is only one answer: expulsion. What the comrades in Czechoslovakia did was certainly a severe breach of discipline, but in no sense was it betrayal.

Now, we must do all possible to hold this group in the party ranks, under the condition, of course, that no further breaches of discipline occur, and that, when decisions are taken, they are also carried out. We must have a disciplined party, but we must not be so quick to exclude even a very small group of workers until it has been shown that every attempt has been made to achieve a settlement. And, in this case, that was not demonstrated. We hope

30. At a Czechoslovak CP national conference in April 1922, the party's left wing, including Šturc, had supported a majority resolution criticising the minority's conduct. However, in the months that followed, the left current continued public attacks on party policies, including by distributing, on 14 September, a leaflet calling for removal of the party leadership. The seven signatories of the leaflet were expelled at a national conference held 22–4 September. Suda 1980, p. 57; Firsov 1980a, pp. 423–4.

31. Levi's pamphlet, *Unser Weg wider den Putschismus* [*Our Path: Against Putschism*], published in April 1921, delivered a stinging critique of the KPD's conduct during class battles the previous month. The Third Comintern Congress, held June–July that year, tacitly endorsed many of Levi's criticisms, while confirming his expulsion for indiscipline and disloyalty (see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 229, 290–1). For Levi's pamphlet, see Gruber 1967, pp. 320–41 and Levi 2009.

that the comrades invited here understand that the Executive has not invited them to hail their action or to tell them, 'You can trample discipline under foot' – no, not at all. We have invited the comrades in order to try to bring them back into the party and to tell them that party discipline is sacred above all things. Should it become clear that the comrades are unable to adhere to proletarian discipline, then there is nothing to be done. The congress decisions will be binding on this group of comrades.

The situation is sharpened by the fact that we already have six hundred thousand unemployed in Czechoslovakia. Poverty among the workers is appalling, and their discontent is great. The masses are angry. We could now easily see the formation of a syndicalist group, a 'Communist Workers' Party' similar to the Communist Workers' Party of Germany. The group must understand this clearly. It could form such a group, which might then eke out an existence for half a year, causing harm to the working class and disgracing itself politically. But we must see the situation as it is. In a country like Czechoslovakia, with such a shockingly high number of unemployed, we must do everything possible to block the formation of a separate 'Communist Workers' Party' group. The Communist International must do all possible to avoid that. And I hope we will succeed.

I now come to the question of *Norway*. I said earlier that the more forces we receive from the old movement, the more difficult the birth of a genuinely communist party. In Norway, we gained almost the entire old party, and there we now have major difficulties, which I will not conceal. The question is the same as in France. Certainly, there are big differences, but the causes are the same. In France, we took over very many traditions from the old party. In Norway, strong federalist traditions are still alive, and the organisational principles are quite idiosyncratic. The Party was built as an organisation of the trade unions. Already at Halle, we had a talk with Comrade Kyrre Grepp, leader of the Norwegian Party, and with other comrades, who promised us then to reorganise their party. So far, this has not happened. Even the name of the official newspaper has not yet been changed. The Norwegian paper still carries the name *Social-Demokraten* (Interjection: 'Hear, hear'.) And there are eleven papers in the regions called *Social-Demokraten* (Again: 'Hear, hear'.) As you see, it is high time to intervene in this country and carry through what the Communist International has demanded.

We are a Communist party. And, nonetheless, we still have parties where the Social-Democratic spirit has not yet been fully eliminated. We were, of course, born in the womb of the Second International, and we took over many of its traditions, which could not be eradicated overnight. But, when this night lasts a couple of years, we must demand that this process be speeded up. In

our papers in Norway, you can read articles that, for example, support the Scheidemanns against the German Communists.³² We also have vestiges of syndicalism in the negative sense of the word. Comrade Tranmael was earlier a member of the IWW, and some of this syndicalist tradition remains with him. He has no understanding of discipline. In one article he writes, 'Discipline, discipline, I cannot stand this word. It is demeaning for the dignity of free people'. And this is said by one of our comrades who is by no means an intellectual of a bad sort. He is an honest and upright fighter who belongs to the working class, and yet traditions are stronger than the individual. Tradition is so strong that it can cause such devastation with regard to one of our best comrades in Norway. A group of academics there, similar to *Clarté*, publishes a journal *Mot Dag*, which defends the same principles as the Levi group.³³ And our party tolerates such a group and does not intervene.

We must act decisively this year. The minority in the Norwegian Party is represented here, and we are firmly convinced that we will succeed in achieving what is necessary unanimously, or at least by majority vote. Comrades from Norway, you must understand that the Communist International can no longer permit a situation similar to what has existed up to now. We know how to prize the strong sides of the Norwegian movement, which has grown up together with the working masses. It has comrades who are totally committed to the proletarian revolution. But they must absolutely, once and for all, shake off the Social-Democratic dust. They must recognise that they cannot become a genuine Communist party unless they put an end to these things.

I come to *Poland*. We have an illegal mass party in Poland. Coordinating legal and illegal work is a very important problem, and, in my opinion, the experience of recent years shows that it is not as easy to achieve as we imagined. The Russian Communists had the experience of 1905–6. Our view was that, where a legal movement is not possible, then legal and illegal movements must be coordinated, with the illegal one taking the lead. Now, however, the experience of several countries shows that this coordination is not so easy. In Poland, it was possible and has worked. We have there an illegal party, which is simultaneously a mass party. We have small legal foot-holds subordinated to the Party. This is possible in Poland because the Party there has already experienced a revolution, in 1905, when it led the working class. This leadership was illegal, but fought in the front lines of the working class as a whole. It enjoys the general recognition of communist workers,

32. For Communists, SPD leader Philipp Scheidemann was a symbol of the counter-revolutionary role of his party after the German Revolution of November 1918.

33. *Clarté* was a pacifist and internationalist current and journal in France, founded in 1919 and edited by Henri Barbusse. Regarding *Mot Dag*, see p. 203, n. 14.

won through its effectiveness during the revolution. In Poland, something is working that is much more difficult in other countries, such as the United States, for example, because the illegal party there has not acted as a leader in the eyes of the working class as a whole, and the leadership has not proved itself to this extent. There the relationship, the coordination between legal and illegal work is quite different.

As said, in Poland we have an illegal mass party, an old party with a glorious past. However there are points where the Executive has had certain disagreements with the Polish Party on quite fundamental issues: the agrarian question, the question of nationalities, and, to some extent, that of the united front. We will discuss the agrarian question with our Polish comrades separately. The point of view long dominant on this question among our Polish comrades could, in my opinion, be called old-fashioned and almost Social-Democratic. Let me remind comrades of the position on this question taken by the Second Congress.³⁴ We then grappled with the idea of division of the land of great landowners as a measure to win the peasantry. We ran into some opposition to this proposal from the Italian Socialists. The Fascists have now shown that they understand very well how such a programme can be utilised demagogically in their interests. Such an error can cost us dear in Poland and other countries. Fortunately, the Polish Party has made a turn, and we hope that we will come to agreement with them on the agrarian question, so that we can establish an action programme that will have attractive power for the peasantry as well. The Communist party is a *workers' party*. But that does not mean that it makes demands on behalf only of workers. Rather, as a party of the working class, it knows how to lead all oppressed layers in struggle against the bourgeoisie.

We had similar differences with the Polish comrades with regard to the nationalities question. We hope that these differences too have been removed.³⁵

As for the united-front question, it has become clear that a minority in the Polish Party – a small minority, if I am not mistaken – was against the united front. However, it is quite significant that such an opposition cropped up in one of the oldest parties. We are convinced that the Polish Party itself will overcome these differences – and probably has done so already. Yet

34. See 'Theses on the Agrarian Question', Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 660–70.

35. The Social-Democratic party in Poland (SDKPiL), a major constituent of the forces that formed the CP in 1918, was opposed to the Bolshevik call for self-determination of subjugated nationalities. The Party interpreted the outbreak of war as signalling the end of the epoch of struggle for national states. This outlook continued to find supporters in the postwar CP of Poland as it did in the Bolshevik Party. See Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 348–53, and Smith 1999, pp. 20–2.

the differences existed, showing how difficult it is to apply the united-front tactic in practice.

I will not say much regarding the *Balkans*. I must note that our Balkan federation is functioning poorly.³⁶ As a federation, our organisation barely exists. The meetings are irregular. In my opinion, we must insist that the Balkan federation be strengthened and that the Bulgarian Party give it more attention.

A few words on *Romania*. We owe it to our Romanian comrades to tell the Congress that these comrades, despite all the persecution, have carried out loyally all the responsibilities placed upon them. As you know, the Romanian comrades' entire convention, several hundred comrades, was thrown in prison – right from the congress hall to the prison. Many of them were shot down, and many are still locked in prison. Social Democracy concluded a shameless alliance with the bourgeoisie against these Communist forces. All the greater is the achievement of our Romanian friends in having remained loyal to the banner of the Communist International under such difficult conditions, true to their duties and responsibilities.

In *Yugoslavia*, the Party is undergoing a crisis. There, too, the problem of legality and illegality is posed, and it is not yet resolved. We are experiencing many difficulties. But we see that, in Yugoslavia, things are once again going forward. A new movement has begun in the trade unions, and we hope that our party will once again regain its previous strength. As for the differences in Yugoslavia, these will be discussed by the Commission.

In *Britain*, a very important country, our party is developing extremely slowly. Perhaps in no other country is the Communist movement developing so slowly. The question of our party's affiliation to the Labour Party has now been resolved successfully. Our party has decided to join the Labour Party.³⁷ The incoming Executive will face the special task of devoting more attention than previously to Britain. We must begin studying Britain. We do not yet understand why development is so slow. Britain has never been a country of large political mass organisations. As you know, neither the Social-Democratic

36. Socialist parties in Bulgaria (the *Tesniaki*), Greece, Romania, and Serbia joined in July 1915 in the Balkan Revolutionary Social-Democratic Federation on a platform of internationalist opposition to the War and support for a new, revolutionary International. The Federation's most prominent leaders were Kolarov and Rakovsky. Their alliance was renamed Balkan Communist Federation at a conference in Sofia, January 1920, which called for a federation of Balkan socialist republics. It remained a Comintern coordinating body for Balkan parties until 1933.

37. The CP of Great Britain applied to affiliate to the Labour Party, a federated organisation, on 10 August 1920. Although this and subsequent bids were rejected, the CP won support for its membership in the Labour Party and union ranks. In June 1922, a Labour Party conference barred CP members from future such gatherings. Nonetheless, local labour organisations and trade unions chose thirty-eight CP members as delegates to the Labour Party national conference of June 1923.

nor the Communist Party has a large membership. No party of the German type exists in Britain. There are unusual traditions in Britain. Given the widespread unemployment and the deep poverty of the British proletariat, it is strange that Communism is developing so slowly. We see a stagnation, and we have every reason to pay more attention to the movement in Britain than we have done up to now.

We were also able to send a delegate to the *United States*, who stayed there a rather long time.³⁸ We must study the experiences of the entire movement. The greatest difficulty of the movement there lies in the task of unifying legal with illegal work. The situation is quite different from in Poland, Yugoslavia, Finland, and Latvia, where there was a revolution in which the working-class leaders proved themselves with success and won recognition from the working class. In the United States, we have a different situation: a rather strong left trade-union movement and a Communist Party marked by severe factional battles. We, therefore, face a particularly difficult problem in the United States, which must be studied.

In *Austria*, our party has made significant progress, despite all difficulties.

In *Hungary*, the situation is very regrettable. I see here many comrades who have taken part energetically in factional struggles and thus contributed to a worsening of the situation. Allow me to analyse somewhat their conduct before the forum of the Communist International. Many of the comrades who played leading roles in the revolution and achieved much in the past have now done all possible – and all impossible as well – to ruin the situation and harm their party. The Executive has now made an energetic attempt to overcome all the squabbling. I will not say anything negative about emigration. We know from the past that emigration can be very useful for the cause. The Italian Party may now have to go through a period of emigration. But there is emigration and emigration. There are emigrations, following the defeat of a revolution, that must endure a great deal of adversity, but our Hungarian comrades have achieved so much in this field that it has become unbearable. In my view, the Fourth Congress will have to seriously and energetically say 'Enough!', that we do not want to experience any repetition of what we have seen, and that we will not permit the slightest expression of anything of this sort. A few weeks ago, in a single day, 170 Communists were arrested. Although the revolutionary movement is advancing, the situation of our party is as bad as it could possibly be. We have the responsibility at this moment, when the working class is advancing, when the bourgeoisie has once again

38. The ECCI delegate was Henryk Walecki (Valetsky), who stayed in the US from July to October 1922.

begun to arrest hundreds of our comrades, to overcome the factional struggles in emigration and build an illegal party.

In passing, let us note that the unification of legal and illegal work will be easier in Hungary, because the Communists there have a serious tradition.

In *Japan*, there is a small party, which, with the Executive's help, has united with the best syndicalist forces. Our Japanese party is young, but it represents an important nucleus, and it is now to adopt a programme. The congress of parties and peoples of the Far East that met here in Moscow has great importance for Japan in particular, because this was the first get-together with important persons in the Japanese movement.³⁹

In *India*, we have registered important accomplishments. I can inform you that our comrades' work over the last few months has been crowned with success. Our comrades succeeded in smoothing their path in India, where they found access to the newspapers, joined the trade unions, and are working to gather Communist forces. In my opinion, this is a very great step forward.

During the past year we founded party nuclei with greater or less strength in *Turkey, China, and Egypt*. We should have no illusions: these are still quite small nuclei. But it is a step forward. We must help comrades there to carry out work of two types: first, to broaden the core of the proletarian movement, and, second, to press forward as the vanguard of the liberation movement as a whole.

Important steps have also been taken in *Australia* and other countries.

I will now turn to the *Profintern*. As you know, comrades, in 1921 the Profintern encountered the fact that, in one of the best parties, the German Party, there was a liquidationist tendency against it. There was serious discussion in the German Party whether the Profintern was born prematurely, whether it should be liquidated, and so on.⁴⁰ True, that happened under the influence of the Levi current, but it was not only the Levi people who were slightly tinged with this. That was a dangerous issue for the Profintern. The Executive, of course, took it as its duty to combat the liquidationist tendency. In our view, the Profintern was not at all born prematurely.

This current has now been fully overcome in Germany, and I hope also in other countries, and the Profintern is on the high road to success. We can predict that, in the coming years if not months, the Profintern will experience a great upturn and is headed toward great achievements. As you know, the Amsterdamers now want to speed up the split.⁴¹ They have carried through the

39. The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East met in Moscow and Leningrad, 21 January–2 February 1922. For the proceedings, see Comintern 1970.

40. For the ECCI response to this debate, see p. 560, n. 20.

41. 'Amsterdamers' refers to the Social-Democratic leaders of the International Federation of Trade Unions, headquartered in Amsterdam.

split in France and Czechoslovakia. In Germany, a split in the unions is imminent. Our task and that of the Profintern is, we believe, to combat this split. We need the unity of the workers' movement; the Amsterdamers need its split. The more influence we win, the more these people want to split the unions, and the more we must fight against that. We must organise for this and seek countermeasures. We need a separate discussion of how to do this. But, where they force us to organise ourselves separately, as they have done in France and Czechoslovakia, and are in the process of doing in Germany and other countries, we must declare that our unions born as a result of this split are born with the cry for unity on their lips. The first call of our newly born union organisation, formed because of expulsions, must be, 'trade-union unity!'

If the Czech, German, and other comrades are compelled to build a separate union – overall or in one sector – they must take as their first slogan, 'Unity, struggle for unity of the trade-union movement!' In the second part of my talk, I will speak more fully about this.

Our movement is making important progress as regards the *cooperative* and *youth* questions. I would like to speak in particular about the *Youth International*. Its transfer to Moscow has proved its worth. The fears were unfounded; the Youth International has worked well. Yes, we must note a dropping away in some countries, and that is disturbing. The youth have gone through difficult times in Germany and in some other countries. That reflects the overall difficulties faced by the working class. Despite this, the Youth International and the youth movement remains an advance guard of the Communist International. After our congress, there will be a youth congress, which we must watch attentively. We must keep in mind that our youth organisations need new methods for their struggle. We must attain a decisive majority among the youth. The unification of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals will cause the Social Democrats especially great damage in the youth movement. New methods are needed to penetrate into the masses of youth, who have become somewhat apathetic. We will have an opportunity to do this.

That gives an overview of our work during the fifteen months. True, we have made very many errors, for which you should criticise us. But do we wish to maintain the Twenty-One Points or not? Our comrades in France have criticised Clause 9, for example, on the basis of which Fabre was expelled.⁴² I doubt that there will be a single comrade who questions that we acted correctly here. This expulsion was absolutely necessary. But some of the French comrades have complained about this expulsion. They said that it was wrong

42. Point 9 of the Twenty-One Conditions states that Communist parties are required to carry out disciplined work in the trade unions. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 768–9.

to do this, that we interpreted Clause 9 too sweepingly. The Congress must decide if we were right to apply Clause 9 in this way.

Now another question. The Executive decided that *national congresses* of the Communist parties will, as a rule, take place after the world congress. Exceptions are permitted. I will not insist on an examination of whether this was absolutely required. But what was the meaning of this decision? Its meaning was that we want a centralised world party. We want a party that is led in centralised fashion. We want the world congress to be truly the decisive body for all parties. We do not want the Communist International to be simply a hodgepodge of parties. This was strongly criticised in France.

What does the example of France show us? If the convention had met after our congress, would it have been better? Who knows? As I said, if you wish to modify that decision, I am not going to argue strongly against that. I am ready to go into that. But the sense of the decision is that we must remain a centralised world organisation. The Twenty-One Points have been applied negligently. If you want to cudgel us for that, you will be completely justified. The Twenty-One Points must now be applied much more stringently. I am not saying we have done nothing. The Communist International has existed for only 3½ years. Comrades, that is too short a period of time in which to organise our Communist parties on a global scale. The greatest misfortune would have been not in applying the Twenty-One Points negligently but if we had regarded them as a mere piece of paper. But, I believe the Congress will say that the Executive's task is to carry out the Twenty-One Points. We must succeed in becoming a true international world party. We have been for that in principle; we must make it reality.

That is the report on the Executive's activity during the last fifteen months. I have yet to report on the future policies of the Communist International.

Chairman: With the agreement of all delegates, I will close this evening's session. The next session will begin tomorrow morning at 11 a.m.

Adjournment: 10:35 p.m.

Session 3 – Friday, 10 November 1922

Report of the Executive Committee (Conclusion, Discussion)

Conclusion of the ECCI report. Discussion of the ECCI report.

Speakers: Zinoviev, Bordiga, Radek, Vajtauer, Ernst Meyer, Varga, Ruth Fischer, Neurath

Convened: 11:30 a.m.

Chairpersons: Kolarov, Zinoviev

Zinoviev: Comrades, I hope that the theses that I have proposed on this question have been distributed or will be distributed shortly.¹ I will limit myself to a commentary on these theses.

We must begin with the questions of the economic situation, the international political situation, and the situation in the workers' movement.

As for the first question, I do not believe we need to change in any fundamental way what we decided at the Third Congress. In my theses, I propose that the Fourth Congress merely confirm the theses of Trotsky and Varga at the Third Congress on the economic situation.² We can and should note that the evolution during the last fifteen months has basically and generally confirmed these theses. The course of events did, in fact, take the form that

1. Delegates had received draft resolution on the ECCI report, which was adopted in Session 7 (see pp. 289–90). However, Zinoviev's remark regarding his theses apparently refers to an early draft of the Theses on Tactics (pp. 1149–63).

2. For the Third Congress theses, see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 184–203. For Trotsky's report on the topic, see Trotsky 1972b, 1, pp. 174–226.

we had foreseen in these theses. Although there is a temporary upturn in the United States, Britain, Japan, and France, and perhaps also in some other countries, it is quite clear that this upturn is only momentary, and that Comrade Varga was right in his recent pamphlet to characterise the situation as a period of capitalist decline.³ What we are now experiencing is not one of capitalism's periodic crises but *the* crisis of capitalism, its twilight, its disintegration. Despite some improvement in a number of countries, the world economic situation remains as before. Capitalism cannot save itself from this situation. The only rescue for humankind, the only rescue for the productive forces lies in socialist revolution. In this sense, the diagnosis is fully as before, and we can confidently stand by what the Third Congress said: the objective situation remains revolutionary. Capitalism cannot find within itself the resources needed to save itself from the decisive crisis of the entire capitalist world.

Now, as to the international political situation. Here, too, we can say that the contradictions are sharpening daily, and the objective situation remains revolutionary. During the last fifteen months, the disintegration of the Entente has proceeded with great strides. We have experienced an actual liquidation of the Versailles Treaty in various forms, and this treaty's disintegration continues. Bourgeois 'pacifism', which found its outstanding representative in the person of Lloyd George, is completely bankrupt. The Genoa and Hague Conferences sealed the bankruptcy of bourgeois pacifism.⁴ The election campaign now under way in Britain demonstrates an unprecedented lack of ideas on the part of the bourgeois parties. This battle between the old classical bourgeois parties in the oldest capitalist country displays not an iota of principle. It marks a total spiritual collapse of the bourgeoisie – a struggle of cliques, underlining what was already clear: that bourgeois pacifism has fallen into complete bankruptcy, and that the bourgeois parties are no longer capable of carrying out major struggles on issues of principle.

The colonial and semi-colonial countries, one of the most important factors in the process that we call the world-revolution, raised their struggle

3. See Varga 1921.

4. The Genoa Conference (10 April–19 May 1922) was convened to discuss economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe, and especially measures to improve relations with Soviet Russia. The inclusion of Russia among the thirty-four invited governments was a significant gain for the Soviet Republic. However, negotiations broke down over French and British insistence that Russia fully pay the debts incurred under tsarism before 1914 and fully restore nationalised foreign-owned property. It was during the Conference (16 April) that Russia and Germany signed the Rapallo Treaty to normalise relations and strengthen economic and military cooperation.

An attempt was made to overcome the Genoa deadlock at the Hague Conference (26 June–20 July 1922), with equally negative results.

during this period to a very high level. We observe that, in a large number of oppressed countries, despite all measures by the imperialist governments, the liberation movement has advanced ever onward during this period. I believe there can hardly be any doubt among us today that this struggle, although not communist or socialist in character, is and remains objectively a struggle against the capitalist governments. The great movements that we have witnessed during this time in India and other colonies and semi-colonies are in no way communist, but, objectively, they have the weight of a top-ranking factor against the capitalist régime.

We have been observing the twilight of bourgeois democracy for many years; now it is disintegrating more and more with every month.

What do the events in Italy mean? Is this not an unprecedented blow to bourgeois democracy? Was not Italy one of the countries enjoying this blessed bourgeois democracy? Of course, Italy was such a country. The Fascist attack is a blow not only against the idea of monarchy but also against that of bourgeois democracy. Thrust aside politically by the Fascist bands, the Italian monarch has suffered a loss of prestige, and so too has the entire system of bourgeois democracy. We must understand that what has happened in Italy is no local event. Inevitably, we will experience similar developments in other countries, perhaps in a different form. If the Fascists in Italy hold their own – and that is likely during the coming period – it is quite certain that similar phenomena will appear, probably in Germany and perhaps in all Central Europe. The triumph of a Stinnes government in Germany will perhaps differ in form from what we see in Italy, but can develop into something downright similar in content.⁵

What we see today in Austria is also something quite similar to the Italian overturn. And that is also a blow against bourgeois democracy, which was defended in Austria not only by the bourgeois parties and the Second International, but, until now, by the Two-and-a-Half International as well.⁶

Preparations for such a counter-revolutionary overturn are under way in Czechoslovakia as well, not to mention the situation in Hungary. The Fascists took Hungary as their precedent.

In the Balkan countries, especially in Yugoslavia, we see developments similar to those in Italy. We must see the facts for what they are. This applies

5. Hugo Stinnes, the leading voice of German industrial capitalism, had close ties to far rightists, like Erich Ludendorff, who sought to overthrow parliamentary democracy. Twelve days after Zinoviev's speech, a right-wing parliamentary government took office in Germany, headed not by Stinnes but by Wilhelm Cuno.

6. Allied powers had recently placed the Austrian government under trusteeship, in order to carry out sweeping attacks on Austrian working people. See report and resolution on Austria, pp. 915–25, and p. 385, n. 9.

for a period that will not last long, but that will be a testing time for our Communist parties. It is perhaps unavoidable that we will see a period of more-or-less fascist overturns of this type in Central Europe, opening a period of illegality for our party for an entire period of time. A few months ago, the Executive alerted a number of our important parties, through specially assigned comrades, to the fact that we must prepare for a period of illegality, similar to what we see in Italy. The political situation before us at the time of the Fourth World Congress confirms this prediction. We must recognise this danger clearly, but that does not mean that the world-revolution will come to a halt. Rather, we are dealing with a revolutionary process, which does not develop in a straight line. It can go through various episodes. What we see in Italy is a counter-revolutionary act, but, from a historical perspective, it signifies a sharpening of the situation and the ripening of proletarian revolution in that country. We can say the same thing about the proletarian movement in a number of other important countries.

Thus the international political situation has, in general, sharpened during this period. The Third World Congress was quite right to say that we did not have a secure equilibrium in capitalist Europe, and that events of importance, even parliamentary conflicts, major strikes, and the like, could easily lead to revolutionary conflicts. The picture we have drawn for you, although superficial, shows that this diagnosis was absolutely correct. The international political situation is sharpening, and what we saw in the Balkans was quite remarkable. Developments related to the Greek-Turkish War show that the spectre of a new war was at a certain point as tangible as could be.⁷ It was actually a small prelude to a future new world war. Right now, as I speak to you, we also see a sharpening of this problem, which can easily lead to bigger complications. To the degree that we have an overview of the situation, it will not lead now to a new war. But what we experienced in the Balkans was a small-scale symptom of what will and must take place, unless the social revolution arrives first and robs the bourgeois state of the possibility of organising a new war.

7. In May 1919, the Greek army occupied the region around Izmir (Smyrna) in Turkish Anatolia, against weak resistance, and this territory was granted to Greece in August 1920 by the Treaty of Sèvres. Fighting intensified in 1920 as the Greek forces continued their advance. In January 1921, the Greek army launched an offensive into central Anatolia, seeking to overthrow the revolutionary-nationalist régime in Angora (Ankara) that rejected the Sèvres Treaty. The Turkish nationalist forces, led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), repelled this offensive, defeated the Greek armies, and occupied Izmir (September 1922). Meanwhile, widespread mutinies in the Greek army forced the abdication of the King of Greece. These events are discussed by Orhan (pp. 613–19 and 723–6) and Ravesteyn (pp. 651–85).

The situation thus remains uncertain. A decay of the capitalist régimes is also noticeable in the field of pure politics. At the same time, we see an unprecedented strengthening in the political position of Russia, the only revolutionary state, which has already maintained itself for five years.

We will speak more fully about the New Economic Policy when we take up the Russian question. I will not get into that now; I will only emphasise what I already said when the Congress began its work. We have become convinced that Soviet Russia's New Economic Policy is no accident, resulting from the weakness of some of our Communist parties, but something larger in scope. You are right to say, as all the best friends of Soviet Russia say, that if Russia had to resort to the New Economic Policy, this was because the German, French, and British workers were too weak to overthrow their bourgeoisie. That is correct. But that alone does not exhaust the question. We have come to the conclusion that not only our country, with an overwhelmingly peasant population, but perhaps all countries or almost all countries with a large proletarian population will have to go through such a political phase in one form or another. The New Economic Policy is not the result of our weakness or the weakness of the world proletariat; it is rooted in the relationship of forces with the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.

Certainly, the peasantry of a country like Russia is quite different from that in Germany. Nonetheless, even in Germany and other developed capitalist countries with a large industrial proletariat, the working class will be compelled at the crucial moment to take a series of measures aimed at neutralising the decisive segment of the peasantry. It will have to take a number of measures that we had to take in Russia. As I said, we will speak of these things when we take up the Russian question.

Looking at the world political situation, there is no way to avoid recognising the first-class factor represented by the Soviet government. At a moment when on the one hand the Entente is breaking apart, the colonial and semi-colonial peoples are engaging in heightened struggles, when, in the Balkans, the spectre of war is abroad – at this moment, Soviet Russia is reinforced by adopting a new economic form. That makes Soviet Russia an enormous factor in world politics. The star of the first proletarian republic is rising higher and higher. That is creating a situation that is objectively revolutionary.

The capitalist offensive, international in character, is one of the revolutionary factors. The working class has not yet been able to bring it to a halt. There are many indications – in France and also in other countries – that there will be a shift in this regard soon. Workers are offering more and more resistance, and they will repulse this offensive.

I now come to the situation within the workers' movement. In this regard, the most important development is the unification of the Second and

Two-and-a-Half Internationals that will, in a very short time, be an accomplished fact. In Germany, it is already consummated, and, yesterday, we received a report of a similar unification in Sweden. Branting took the 'left' Social Democrats into his party. What happened in Sweden and Germany will take place in other parties, too. The unification has not yet been completed organisationally, but, politically, it is there. And that is a fact of great historical importance. The Second International is the enemy of the working class. It is the Two-and-a-Half International that is going into the Second, and not vice versa – there is no need for me to demonstrate that here. If it is nonetheless necessary, then I need only introduce a quotation of Martov, one of the intellectual leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International, far superior to many of the others. Martov writes in the most recent issue of his journal *Socialist Messenger* regarding the problem of the Second International:

No illusions! The mechanical unification of the two Internationals, *under the given conditions*, means a return to the reformist Second International by those parties that left it in the hope of creating an entirely new International. It is a defeat for these parties.

Martov is here expressing his opinion quite clearly. Of course, Martov finally comes up with a consolation for the Two-and-a-Half International, saying, 'Inside the Second International, we will champion Marxism'. But those are only words. In reality, this is nothing other than a return to the Second International, an outright defeat of the Two-and-a-Half International.

So, we will have a unification of the reformist parties. This fusion of reformist Internationals will hasten to an extreme degree the split of the working class. But we must say: No illusions! The unification of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals means two things. First, it means a preparation of white terror against the Communists. The world political situation is leading to fascist overturns, to overturns whose results, on a governmental level, can be seen in the people around Stinnes. The fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals is the preparation for an unprecedented split in the working class, which will weaken it. As for the first question, it is not hard to conclude that this fusion opens an entire period of white terror against the Communists. It is no accident that, at the head of the counter-revolutionary movement in Italy, we now have Mussolini, a renegade of the Second International, a former Social Democrat. It is also no accident that, in Germany, we have an Ebert and a Noske at the head of the government, and, in Poland, Pilsudski. It is no coincidence that in some countries, such as Britain and Germany, the Second International plays a decisive role. For in a country like Germany, all it would take would be for the trade unions to swing over to the

side of the working class, and the relationship of forces would be radically altered. So no illusions! This fusion means nothing other than wheeling up the artillery of white terror against the Communist parties.

In addition, this fusion means the splitting of the working class. We take our stand today for unity of the trade unions – and not in vain! The reformists see clearly that the ground is slipping away beneath their feet. Historically, that is inevitable.

It is inevitable that these trade unions in their entirety – if events develop in a normal manner – will come into the hands of the Communists. These people sniff that out – there's nothing wrong with their nose. They sense it and fully understand its inevitability. They see that the influence of Communists and of revolutionary movements as a whole is growing in the working class. They sense that instinctively, and seek a defence against it. They act as if they had received direct instructions from the bourgeoisie to smash the trade unions into pieces – to smash them before they are forced out. I am not saying that this is a direct order. You know that politics is not so simple – Stinnes, for example, does not just give the trade-union leaders a written order. But, politically, the bourgeoisie's instruction is this: before the socialist leaders make their exit, they should destroy the trade unions, slamming the unions' doors behind them so hard that they break every window in the trade unions. That's what is happening.

As said, we do not know when this process will reach completion, how many years or months it will last, but, historically, it is absolutely unavoidable, and that is sensed by our 'deities' of the Second International. That's why we see the same pattern everywhere, an outright preparation for split at a moment when they feel that major sectors are going over to us. They aim to weaken the working class and the trade unions and smash them into pieces, so that, when we take control of the trade unions, we will find that they are nothing but fragments. As I said, that is exactly what the bourgeoisie needs now. It is a betrayal such as we have never seen. Even the betrayal of 1914 was much smaller than what we see being prepared now. A betrayal is being methodically prepared. They want to fragment and split the workers' movement so that, at the moment when it must be ready to confront the bourgeoisie, it will be deprived of organisational strength, weakened, divided, and split. That is the politics of the fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.

The current split is no small episode. What's at stake here is no trivial matter but a major problem. Despite all their mistakes, despite the betrayal of the leaders, despite all defeats, the working class has built, in the form of these trade unions, a large organisation embracing millions of workers. At a given moment, this organisation will be decisive for our struggle. And now, as this

moment nears, in historical terms, the Two-and-a-Half International and the Amsterdamers are perpetrating the greatest betrayal of the working class. It will try to smash to pieces this organisation, the last refuge of the working class, so that, when we take over from the Social Democrats, we get nothing and are left without a genuine mass organisation. That is the most important fact before us. That is why the Social Democrats and Amsterdamers are condemned to become professional splitters of the working class, not only to betray, not only to cause harm to the politics of the working class, but to smash to pieces its weapon, its organisation. In the coming period, this task will permeate the entire politics of the now unified Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. That is a new reality with which we must reckon.

That is why, comrades, our united-front tactic is not merely a strategy against our enemies. Of course, we have the right and duty to develop strategic plans against our enemies, but the united front is established by the overall situation of capitalism, by its economic and world political situation, and by the situation inside the workers' movement. If what I have told you regarding the policies of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals is correct, if they are in fact preparing a systematic split of the trade unions and the working class, our united-front tactic follows necessarily. It follows that, for this and many other reasons, we must undertake a counter campaign against this plan of the Second International.

And the united-front tactic is exactly that.

At the Third Congress, we set ourselves the task of winning the majority of the working class. Has this task been accomplished? No, not yet. That must be said plainly. In many countries, our party's influence has risen enormously, yet still at our Fourth Congress – and perhaps this will be true at the Fifth Congress also – we cannot say that we have won the majority of the working class. Arduous efforts are still needed to win the majority of the working class. In such a situation, the united-front tactic is, to repeat, the most effective means to win this majority of the working class. It must be stated clearly that the united-front tactic is no mere episode in our struggle. It is a tactic that will endure for an entire period, perhaps an entire epoch.

Under certain circumstances, we will perhaps modify this tactic, but, generally speaking, given that the Second International is the main enemy and the mainstay of the bourgeoisie, we must stand firmly by this tactic.

In economic terms, capitalism is ripe for socialism. The world political situation can be characterised as revolutionary. The Second International is the mainstay of the bourgeoisie, which cannot hold on without its support and that of the Amsterdam International. That is why our relationship to the Second International is a question not merely of party tactics but of the world-

revolution, of the entire policy of our class. And since, as I have noted, the unified Second International will, over the years, work directly for split, the way we will win the majority of the working class is to counter this systematically with the united-front tactic.

We have already gained from this tactic, we have won a great deal from it. The united-front tactic brought great advantages this year to the Communist International, and we must not overlook that. Not in the sense that we have won the majority. If we had that, we would already have almost everything. But we have already won much for the party. We have achieved that it is not the Communist parties that the working class sees as splitters, but our opponents. Previously, the working class was of a different opinion, and, in fact, there was some justification for that. There was a time when, in the interests of the workers as a whole, we had to split the old Social-Democratic party. Not to have carried out this split would have been a betrayal of the working class. There was a time when, in order to speak the truth to the working class and to win them, we *had to split* the old Social-Democratic party. It was impossible to do this within the old Social-Democratic party. We therefore had to split the old Social-Democratic party and create a rallying point for a genuine liberating movement of our class, through the creation of the Communist parties. So, there was a period of time when we had to accept that we would be called splitters. Yes, we had to split the old Social-Democratic party. There was no way around it: otherwise, we could not gain this rallying point; we could not create an instrument for working-class liberation.

But, now, we are in a new historical period. This task has been accomplished. We now have Communist parties. True, they harbour Social-Democratic left-overs, along with ailments of childhood and growth, ailments of various sorts that must receive treatment. But the task now is much more the winning of the majority of workers and rescuing and winning the trade unions, the most important weapon that the world proletariat possesses. Thus the united-front tactic. Comrades, I believe that we will not have any big fights over this issue at this congress.

In France, the 'Last of the Mohicans' of the fight against the united front have put away their weapons, and – most importantly – not only the Communists but the majority of syndicalists now use this tactic. Yesterday, we had a quite brief talk with our friends of the CGTU [United General Confederation of Labour]. When we asked, 'Are you still opposed to the united front?' they replied simply, 'We are *carrying out* the united front'. And anyone who follows the state of affairs in France knows well that the united-front tactic is being applied consciously and methodically there, including by the syndicalists in the CGTU, because there is no alternative. The needs of the proletariat's

daily struggle have compelled all those who defend the interests of the working class in both economic and political fields to apply the united-front tactic. Winning over the opponents of the united front in France has been quite a big success, which shows that our ranks have now come together and are carrying out our tactic consciously and methodically.

What is the united front and what is it not? It should certainly not be what the French call an 'electoral combination'. We carried out a survey of how the united-front tactic is being applied, and it went rather well. We received three hundred to four hundred answers, not only from the official publications of our party but also from comrades in the midst of the working class, in the midst of the masses. This survey is now being analysed, and we will probably publish a book on it, which would be quite worthwhile. The survey showed that there is still much confusion in the minds of our comrades on what exactly the united-front tactic means. As stated, it does not mean an electoral combination and certainly not an organisational fusion with the Social Democracy.

The responses from the Italian and French party publications showed me that many comrades, curiously, had the notion that we should be ready for an organisational fusion with Social Democracy. That would be the greatest crime we could commit. All of us would rather cut off our hand that sign up for unity with the greatest betrayers of the working class, who are now enemies, the final prop of the bourgeoisie.

That is not at all a united front. *The united front is the unified struggle of the worker masses in their daily demands against capitalism.* The united front should mean that we are ready to fight together with all workers, whether they be anarchists, syndicalists, Christian socialists, Social Democrats, or whatever names they bear, united against capitalism and the capitalists in daily struggle for a slice of bread, against wage reductions, and against abolition of the eight-hour day. We accept, in this, that we sometimes must sit at a table with leaders who are traitors. That is what the united front means – that and nothing else. I believe this problem has been resolved for the Communist International and even for the party in France, where the greatest confusion reigned.

We will also struggle for each partial demand of the working class. Today I was shown an article by our former comrade Gorter. He writes: 'We must take a stand against every strike. You will ask: Why against every strike? Because we need to save up our strength for propaganda, for revolution.' Further on, he writes, 'We are very few. Our forces, those of the KAPD, are so few that we must concentrate not on strikes but on revolution.'

That is such a mishmash that one stands disarmed before the naïveté of such a politician. He does not have time to help the workers in daily struggle

against the bourgeoisie, because he wants to help the entire revolution. Anyone who has a feel for the working class, whose devotion to it is not merely subjective but based on some understanding of its life, who has worked in this class and with it, will reject such childishness. Precisely because we wish to struggle for proletarian revolution, we must take part in every strike, leading the way and fighting for every partial demand. We are revolutionaries. That does not mean that we are ignorant of the need to better working-class conditions, be it only to the extent of a drop of milk for the children. We are against reformism, but not against bettering the lives of the working class. We know, of course, that, under the given conditions of capitalism, there is very little scope for this, and that the revolution will lead to a genuine improvement in working-class living standards. But we also know that we can only organise the working class if we fight for its partial demands. In this sense, we view the united-front tactic as not merely a momentary occurrence, an episode, but as something that, under the given conditions of capitalism, will endure for an entire period.

The slogan of the workers' government has not been sufficiently clarified. The united-front tactic should be applied almost universally. We can hardly name a country with a significant working class where the united-front tactic would not now be appropriate. It fits well in the United States, just as in Bulgaria, Italy, and Germany. Under present conditions, this tactic is almost universal. That however is far from the case with the demand for a *workers' government*. The workers' government should not be interpreted in that general way; it is more limited in its application. It should be employed only in countries where the relationship of forces brings to the fore the question of power, of government, both in the parliamentary and extraparliamentary framework. Certainly, it is possible in the United States today to carry out good propagandistic work with the slogan of a workers' government, explaining to the workers that, if they wish to free themselves, they must take the power into their own hands. But given the relationship of forces in the United States, it cannot be said that the slogan of a workers' government will arouse the kind of echo that it did in Czechoslovakia, can do in Germany, and both did and will do in Italy.

The slogan of the workers' government does not have the general character of the united-front tactic. The workers' government slogan is a specific and concrete application of the united-front tactic under specific conditions. It is easy to make errors of many kinds in this area. I believe, comrades, that we must protect ourselves against attempting to use this slogan universally, as if we necessarily had to go through a period of workers' government. I believe that, to the extent one can prophesy, it is much more likely that the workers' government will become a reality only exceptionally, under quite

specific, concrete conditions in one or another country. Moreover it does not mean that we are going to go through a semi-peaceful period and that the workers' government will relieve us of the burden of struggle. A workers' government with only a parliamentary basis would be of no value. It would be only a small episode in the struggle, which would not prevent civil war. That does not mean that the workers' government slogan should not be used, under certain conditions. The working class must clearly understand that the workers' government can only be a transitional stage, which will not eliminate the struggles and the civil war. That must be said plainly. Only when we understand the dangers of this slogan can we use it confidently.

The united-front tactic too has its dangers, as the Executive pointed out in its December theses.⁸ It brings us especially great dangers in the question of the workers' government. In countries with a parliamentary tradition, such as France, this is seen as if it meant something different for us than the dictatorship of the proletariat. We understand this slogan as an application of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Even if a workers' government materialises, we cannot avoid civil war, and, under certain circumstances, it will even sharpen the civil war.

I must say a few words regarding the factory-council movement. There is a separate section on this in my theses. I propose the following thesis: if a party does not have a Communist organisation and Communist cells in the factories, it is not to be taken seriously, it is not a genuine Communist mass party. I will add: the workers' movement that has not understood the need to support and organise a mass movement in the form of factory councils is not a genuine revolutionary mass movement.

This thesis can be applied in almost every significant workers' movement of our times. It is a sign of the times that, in Germany, where important battles are approaching rather quickly, the factory-council movement plays the vanguard role in the movement. Turning to other countries, we must advise our comrades first to establish Communist cells in the factories and second to support the factory-council movement. Only then will we become a mass movement. Many of our parties have not heeded this advice. At the Third Congress, we adopted a splendid resolution written by Comrade Kuusinen that explained how every Communist party should work, what the mechanism of the work should look like, how cells should be founded, and so on.⁹ But it must be said that there is no point in adopting such good resolutions

8. See 'December 1921 Theses on the Workers' United Front', pp. 1164–73.

9. For the Third Congress resolution, see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 234–61. See also Lenin's comments on it during the Fourth Congress, pp. 303–4.

if we do not carry them out. It's a matter of actually carrying out this resolution, of founding the cells. That will enable the movement to advance ever onward.

I must add a few words about international discipline. In the theses on the united-front tactic proposed by the Renoult group at the Paris Convention, there is an entire section about international discipline. Wonderful words are written there. The group has brilliantly demonstrated that nothing can be achieved without discipline, that the International is lost if it does not enforce this discipline. Wonderful words. But this group that wrote in its theses about international discipline has shown that sometimes, even among us, words and deeds are far apart. This group could have done better. International discipline is demonstrated only through deeds. Our united-front tactic is, at present, a very complex matter. There is an 'International' rooted in the bourgeoisie that is carrying out a consistent policy against us. In order to combat it, we must be rigorously organised in a real International with rigorous discipline. The task of the Fourth Congress will be to state that and carry it through.

In the coming period, we will encounter decisive struggles. I have heard some objections from esteemed comrades who say there is presently an interruption in the world-revolution, that we will see an advance only when the material conditions of Russian workers have risen so high as to exceed the average conditions of European and American workers. Then, the example of the economic conditions of Russian workers will exert a revolutionary influence, and a new revolutionary wave will rise up. Comrades, that point of view, in my opinion, is objectively opportunist, representing a sophisticated opportunism, even though it is defended by many of our friends who are subjectively revolutionary and true soldiers of the International. I will not spend much time on this – only a few words. The living standard of the Russian worker is rising now – that is a fact. The living standard of the average European worker is falling, and that of Russian workers is rising. That is clear. It is rising slowly, but an improvement is evident. And the time will come when conditions of Russian workers are economically better than those of European workers. However, it would be true opportunism to say that, so long as the situation in Russia remains so difficult, it is impossible to carry out a revolutionary struggle of workers of the capitalist countries. It would be outright opportunism.

The real revolution will not be carried out by the working class of a given country to give an example to other countries, and not because the workers of this country want to ensure that other workers receive more bread, more meat. No! The revolution will take place because the working class in the given country sees no other way of overthrowing the bourgeoisie. And we

should therefore permit no such suggestion to slip into our agitation, which can only cause a blockage. The Russian worker had more obstacles to overcome than any other working class will have in the future. The working class of each country will enjoy the support of the Russian workers. The Russian working class was the first to carry out a revolution and had the entire bourgeois world against it. It is unlikely that any other working class will face such difficulties. And we must explain the conditions of the Russian proletariat to the working class of the world just as it has been, with blockade, hunger, epidemics, diseases, but also in all its greatness. We must understand that the Russian working class, despite all its agony, has now got past the most difficult time and is going toward improvements, hour by hour, day by day, and month by month. That is the conception of the Russian Revolution that must represent the foundation for our policies as a whole. (*Applause*)

Chair: I give the floor to Comrade Bordiga, who will explain his motion regarding the voting procedure.

Bordiga: Comrades, on behalf of the Italian delegation, I propose that:

- 1.) We first take the discussion and then the vote on Zinoviev's report on the activity and tactics of the ECCI up to the Fourth Congress.
- 2.) We then move to the discussion and vote on the International's tactics after the Fourth Congress.

Of course I am not going to motivate this motion at tedious length. It seems to me to be completely logical. The two questions are different in nature, all the more given that we already have two texts that were distributed to the Congress for adoption: first the draft resolution of the Fourth Congress on the Executive Committee report, and second the initial draft thesis on the Comintern's tactics, drawn up by Comrade Zinoviev.

I believe everyone will agree that we should first take the discussion on the Executive Committee's past activity regarding the International's general policies and then examine the draft theses on the Comintern's tactics, that is, determination of the guidelines of the tactics the Comintern will follow in the future. This should perhaps be done with the aid of a special commission; the Congress itself will have to decide whether such a body is needed.

Radek: I would like to express some reservations regarding this motion.

The entire agenda of this congress actually forms a whole: assessment of the past and our future work. It is not possible to draw a sharp line in Zinoviev's report between the two. We run into the question whether we can speak of the past without taking up future perspectives. No new event, which could annul and change our tactics, stands between the Fourth Congress and our

future work. For this reason, the decision regarding the past predetermines our future tactics. If we declare here, at the Congress, that we agree with the united-front tactic and the methods of work in the different countries that the Executive Committee has supported, the decision regarding the future is thereby taken, and our task in the subsequent work of the Congress will consist only of filling in the details. Politically, after the decision taken here, we will have nothing new to say. We will only work out the strategy in detail and apply it to the different countries. For this reason, I believe we must express our views in discussion over the report as a whole: were the tactics correct, and should they be continued?

Chair: No other speakers are on the list. I will therefore put Comrade Bordiga's motion to a vote.

(The motion is rejected.)

The discussion is open. I give the floor to the first speaker on the list, the Czechoslovak comrade.

Vajtauer: For now, I will only make a few comments on Comrade Zinoviev's remarks in his speech yesterday on the situation in Czechoslovakia. Comrade Zinoviev passed judgement yesterday on the Czechoslovak question. We were quite surprised that, as President of the International, he did not even consider it necessary to get information from both sides. He knows only the course of Comrade Šmeral, which is reflected in this information. What will we say to our workers, when they read the speech of Comrade Zinoviev, which contains points totally contrary to the truth?

Comrade Zinoviev says that, in Czechoslovakia, the united front was carried out in exemplary fashion. Was it truly exemplary, comrades? At a moment when, within a few days, the economic situation became so critical that the working class was looking about to see who had something to tell them and who could lead them, the Communist Party had nothing to say to them. Only when the other parties had put forward their positions and written their own resolutions did the Communist Party come with its demands. And these were the demands of Comrade Lenin, which he formulated in June 1917.¹⁰ But the situation was then entirely different from what it is today for us in Czechoslovakia. Given conditions at that time, this was a kick in the teeth. The united front was set up in such a way that our comrades were invited

10. Vajtauer may be referring to the Bolsheviks' revised programme, published in June 1917, or to Lenin's speech on the Provisional Government, delivered to the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, 4 June 1917. See Lenin 1960–71, 24, pp. 466–79 and 25, pp. 17–28.

by our leadership to national-socialist meetings.¹¹ But counter-revolutionary resolutions were adopted there. The Communist speakers did not even take a stand against these counter-revolutionary resolutions, and the Communist workers had to vote on these resolutions in the form in which the national socialists had introduced them. As a result, party members were dismayed and confused. The national socialists were able to completely take the initiative. Only two committees were set up, in two small towns – two small united-front committees. And this was called ‘exemplary’.¹²

Even more exemplary was the way the united front’s influence was broadened. The government was then undergoing a crisis. Various governmental combinations were attempted. In an interview with foreign correspondents, Masaryk said: ‘We may be able to work quite well with the Communist Party, but first they must expel the leftist forces in their party. Only then will a serious discussion with the Czechoslovak Party be possible.’ At that point, comrades, similar editorials and demands appeared in all the bourgeois and social-patriotic papers. That’s why Šmeral began a campaign against the left wing. He succeeded through a provocation in throwing them out of the Party. And, two days before the expulsion of the left wing, the agrarian paper *Venkov* [Countryside] wrote about the expulsion as something already agreed upon, although it took place only two days later. The united front was broadened to include not only the national socialists but also extended to the bourgeois right wing, including Masaryk. If the working class had not noticed the danger and massively supported those who had been expelled; if they had not shown that they were against worker-government combinations in an entirely parliamentary framework, according to the conceptions of Šmeral, Votava, and others; then we would have experienced a united front that would have been truly exemplary! That would have been a united front of the Communist Party with all the Social Democrats plus the agrarians all the way to Burg and Masaryk.¹³ Anyone who proposes a united-front campaign of this type must surely be a good friend of the Communist Party!

11. ‘National socialist’ refers to the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, then led by Edvard Beneš, a left bourgeois-nationalist party that advocated measures for nationalisation and social reform. The party led its own trade-union movement.

12. Vajtauer is probably referring to negotiations between the CP and the Czechoslovak Socialist Party (‘national socialists’) that took place in May 1922. Workers in Prague carried out a one-day walkout on 19 May in support of a metalworkers’ strike. As part of efforts to extend worker support, the CP conducted discussions with the CSP, seeking united solidarity with the metalworkers. The CSP raised the issue of CP participation in a governmental coalition. The CP refused to take part in a government together with bourgeois parties, which led to a breakdown of negotiations. See Firsov 1980a, p. 417.

13. ‘Burg’ probably refers to the government minister Václav Burger.

The result of this is that the Party has broken into two parts and is now incapable of action. (*Interjection: Aha!*) Zinoviev adds that the political line of most of those expelled from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is incorrect. He says we cannot support the left wing. Fine! But the workers will conclude that the Communist International approves everything that the Party's executive is doing there; that it approves the Party's complete inactivity in all economic battles; that it approves even the actions of Communist metalworkers in Kladno who, dragged along by the opportunist Communist leaders, have acted as strikebreakers. The Executive of the Czechoslovak CP said nothing about that. It also approves the fact that the secretary of the Kladno miners betrayed the miners of Ostrau [Ostrava] by agreeing without any resistance to the twenty per cent reduction in wages, even though that is precisely why the Ostrau workers were on strike.

The Executive is also approving all the confusion in the union movement, which was crowned by the Congress of All Trade Unions that just took place, which literally fell to pieces because of the incompetent opportunists.¹⁴ The workers will conclude that this must be a very peculiar International to accept responsibility for all that.

And is what the opposition wants simply anarchism? (*Interjection*) The fact that all expelled local branches and trade-union associations have organised a broad industrial federation, is that anarchism? To give more attention to trade-union work, in order to protect the unions from the opportunists, with all the practical work that entails, is this anarcho-syndicalism? To proclaim a general strike – is that KAPism?¹⁵ To seek to make the Party capable of struggle and action, is that anarchism? Is Šmeral right to say that no communist can organise the jobless and lead them into struggle, that only anarchists can do that, because the jobless are putschist elements? Is it anarchism to create united-front committees through action and a programme of struggle, and to thereby prevent Šmeral from converting the united front into a national-unity front embracing everyone from the clericals to Masaryk and installing that as the government? Is it also anarchism to oppose a fraudulent workers' government, set up in a parliamentary framework, whose united-front committees are constituted by law and must be legally approved? If the Communist

14. Vajtauer is referring to the 26–29 October 1922 conference of revolutionary trade unions that formed the International All Trade-Union Federation. The Social-Democratic press termed the Congress a 'complete fiasco' marked by serious internal divisions; the CP's *Rudé Právo* spoke of its 'absolute unanimity and unity'. See also p. 629, n. 7.

15. 'KAP' refers to the KAPD (Communist Workers' Party of Germany), which split from the Communist International in 1921, accusing it of holding opportunist views. In 1922, a wing of the KAPD founded the Communist Workers' International, which included groups in a half-dozen European countries. It ceased functioning in 1925.

International considers all that to be anarchism and KAPism, then every worker will agree with us in saying: Then I am really an anarchist and so I will remain, because I will never betray my proletarian duty!

Comrade Zinoviev has kindly conceded that our case is different from that of Levi.¹⁶ But it did not occur to him what motivated Šmeral in expelling what he himself characterised as the best people in the Party. We have this to say to Comrade Zinoviev: Not only was it not the Levi case; it was no breach of discipline whatsoever. It is our bounden duty to alert the working class to the dangers threatening the Party. It was our bounden duty to avoid political swindling. We did that, and we say to Comrade Zinoviev that we will break discipline in this fashion whenever an attack on the Party is being prepared, no matter where it comes from.

Chair: Given the character of the comrade's views, I ask him to say whether he is speaking on his own behalf or in the name of the Czechoslovak delegation.

Interjection by the Czechoslovak opposition: In the name of the entire opposition and the expelled comrades.

Trotsky: Did the conclusion also represent the entire opposition?

Response: Yes.

Ernst Meyer (Germany): Comrades, the German delegation fully agrees in all major points with the conduct of the Executive since the Third World Congress and with Comrade Zinoviev's presentation yesterday and today. We propose only that the vote on the proposed resolution be taken after the issues posed in different countries have been dealt with.

Comrades, the situation presented by Comrade Zinoviev remains in its essential features the same as when we analysed it in the Third World Congress. We must acknowledge that this situation has not been readily understood in all countries. Instead, this situation has been presented in different countries in exaggerated fashion – exaggerations both in analysis and in the resulting conclusions. Moreover, various groups, including, to some extent, in Germany, have entirely refused to recognise that this analysis is correct.

We have seen errors of an opportunist character. But some comrades have concluded from this that it is necessary to shut oneself off completely. The tactics recommended by certain comrades in different countries amount to converting the Communist International into a sect. The German Party – I believe

16. Paul Levi was expelled from the Communist Party of Germany in 1921 for indiscipline and disloyalty.

this is evident in its practice since the last world congress – has shown that it has taken pains to carry out everything decided in comradely discussion on an international level.

The united-front question is now our prime concern. According to Comrade Zinoviev, it is no mere episode, but rather must be viewed as a period of communist tactics. It has been much debated in Germany. However, I missed in Comrade Zinoviev's remarks a reference to the fact that the debate and application of this tactic was much advanced by the Berlin Conference.¹⁷ We can see that the Conference achieved not only significant clarification within the party, but also that this event – and its evaluation by the Party and the Communist International – contributed to convincing the non-Communist working class that the Communists wish to fight together with them and that the Communists are quite different from the slanders spread by their opponents.

Clearly, a number of misunderstandings have crept into the application of this tactic – even by our friends. Comrade Zinoviev has already made reference to some of these. Many comrades outside Germany view the united-front tactic as a common agreement with Social-Democratic or even bourgeois parties for elections. They view it as a preparation for organisational amalgamation. And it cannot be denied that such misunderstandings have cropped up here and there, not only among the workers but also among some within our party.

In addition, fears have been voiced that our cause has been harmed by negotiations at the top, substituting for a process carried out by the workers as a whole. Lost from view here is the fact that negotiations at the top should have no aim part from making possible the action of the workers as a whole. Our experiences during the Rathenau campaign make it quite clear that, in many cities and districts, common work – common struggle – was made possible only when the leaderships came together to negotiate and discuss.¹⁸ Many comrades assert that the united front should be constituted

17. The reference is to the 'Conference of the Three Internationals', a meeting of executive-committee delegations of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Communist Internationals, held in Berlin, 2–5 April 1922. The conference was called by the Bureau of the Two-and-a-Half International to consider proposals for united action and a united congress of workers' organisations. Comintern representatives at the Berlin Conference supported these initiatives, but leaders of the Second International raised objections, particularly with regard to the Comintern's united-front policy, the Red Army's incursion into Georgia in 1921, and political prisoners in Soviet Russia. The conference issued a call for united May Day demonstrations and set up a coordinating 'Commission of Nine', but the unity-initiative collapsed the following month. For the official report, see International Socialist Congress Executive Committee 1967.

18. Two hours after the murder of Walther Rathenau on 24 June 1922, the KPD proposed to other workers' organisations a united campaign for eleven basic measures for defence against the threat of ultra-right subversion. The SPD, USPD, and trade-union

only on an economic basis, not in a political framework. That is also wrong. Experience – including that in Germany – teaches that, in the present situation, such a distinction is entirely impossible. Comrade Zinoviev was quite right to speak against certain viewpoints heard in the German Party that propose this kind of schematic division in the character of struggles that Communists must carry out.

Apart for misunderstandings that may crop up, real errors have been committed, including by our party. Such errors have been quite openly identified in discussions and resolutions of our party's leading bodies. There is no need to repeat here what has been sufficiently discussed in meetings of our Central Committee and in the press. We would like to alert you to just one point. However necessary it is to discuss errors, in order to avoid them in the future, criticism must not be taken to the point that obvious errors blind us to what is necessary and correct. For example, what the Czech comrade said about deficiencies in the application of the united-front tactic amounted to rejecting this tactic altogether. If the comrades of the Czech opposition have nothing more and nothing different than this to say to us, regarding not only the breach of discipline but also the tactical and practical questions, then I believe that the comrades represented by the previous speaker are sitting for the last time at a common table with Communists.

The united-front tactic must not, of course, be applied schematically. It passes through different phases. It would be wrong always to see the united-front tactic as top-level discussions and party-to-party negotiations. The united-front tactic must vary depending on the situation. If certain comrades on occasion counterpose the Party's stance during the Rathenau campaign and the railway workers' strike to the factory-council movement, that is nothing more than a misunderstanding.¹⁹

The founding of the factory-council movement and its development are simply a result of the stance that the German Party has taken since the Third World Congress. We would never have seen a factory-council movement of this scope if we had not consistently applied the united-front tactic in order to grow closer and closer to the masses (*Shouts of agreement from the Germans*) and if we had not driven ever deeper into the factories and unions and the working class masses as a whole.

confederation agreed in principle and joined in a united delegation to the government on 26 June. The following day, millions marched in protest. See also p. 78, n. 19.

19. Factory councils, organised by industry and embracing all workers, had been a powerful force in the 1918–19 German Revolution. They regained momentum in 1922. KPD influence in these councils was sufficient to enable the Party to initiate and give political leadership to a national factory-council conference in November 1922.

The fusion of the SPD and USPD is also a result of our party's improved policies. We eliminated misunderstandings that had arisen in a previous and quite different situation and made it much harder for opponent workers' organisations to attack us. In this way, we induced the fusion of the SPD and USPD, which is a step forward for us, since it gets rid of the fiction that there is some kind of middle ground within a country between the reformists and the Communist Party.

The most difficult question that we faced in applying the united-front tactic, a question that we have perhaps not yet fully dealt with, is that of the workers' government. We must differentiate between a Social-Democratic and a workers' government. We have seen Social-Democratic governments in Germany, in Saxony and Thuringia, and earlier also in Gotha,²⁰ governments that we must support but that have nothing in common with what we understand to be a workers' government. When we ask that the International advance the slogan of a workers' government, and, in particular, ask that this slogan also be advanced by sister parties that work in somewhat similar circumstances, we do not mean that we ask them to call for a Social-Democratic government or take part in one. Rather, we ask that they struggle for a workers' government, and, in this fashion, promote the struggle. The workers' government differs fundamentally from a Social-Democratic government, in that it does not merely carry the label of a socialist policy but actually carried out a socialist-communist policy in life. A workers' government will, therefore, not be parliamentary in character, or will be parliamentary only in a subordinate sense. Rather, it must be carried by the broad masses, and its policies will be fundamentally different from those of the Social-Democratic state governments that currently exist in some states of Germany.

Now we come to a question that Comrade Zinoviev also touched on. Is the workers' government a necessary stage in the workers' movement of each country? Our answer is: no, it is not a necessary occurrence, but, rather, a historical possibility. It is *possible* that such a workers' government will arise and maintain itself for a certain time. That also answers a second question: Is

20. Workers' parties held a majority in Gotha, later a component of Thuringia, from February 1919 to May 1920. Subsequently, they won parliamentary majorities in Saxony (November 1920) and Thuringia (September 1921). In both these cases, KPD support was essential to enable the SPD and USPD to govern. In other states and in Germany's national government, by contrast, the SPD took part in governmental coalitions with capitalist parties. Meyer does not mention the provisional SPD-USPD government during the 1918–19 revolution, which organised the capitalist counter-revolution. During the Fourth Congress, the issue arose of under what conditions the KPD would join an SPD-led government in Saxony. A side-meeting of the German delegation with central leaders of the Russian CP decided against this proposal. See pp. 25–6; Broué 2005, pp. 655–8.

it possible that a workers' government will exist for a long time, or will it be quite transitory in duration? To answer this question, we must be clear on what exactly a workers' government is and whether there are differences between a workers' government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Comrade Zinoviev stated today that there was such a difference. That has not always been made sufficiently clear in discussions of this question. In the report on a session of the [June 1922] Expanded Executive we find the following statement of Comrade Zinoviev on page 123:

The workers' government is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is a pseudonym for a soviet government. (*Interjection: 'Hear, hear' from the Germans.*) It is more comfortable for an ordinary worker, and that's why we want to use this formula.²¹

In our opinion, that is not correct. The workers' government is not the dictatorship of the proletariat (*'Quite right' from the Germans*) but is, rather, first of all, a demand that we advance in order to win the workers and to convince them that the proletarian class must organise a common struggle against the bourgeois class. If this slogan is taken up and adopted by the majority of the working class, and if they launch a real struggle for this slogan, it will soon become clear that the attempt to achieve a workers' government – at least in the majority of countries with a strongly proletarian population – will lead directly either to a dictatorship of the proletariat or to an extended period of very sharp class struggles, that is, to nothing less than civil war in all its forms.

In that respect, we view the workers' government as a necessary and useful slogan to win the masses, one whose achievement will lead to a phase of sharpened class struggles, through which a proletarian dictatorship will ultimately emerge.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the German Party's recent work – while fruitful – was troubled by a lack of understanding and knowledge among certain sister parties of the issues we faced. In our discussions of the workers' government and the united-front tactic, our agitation was hampered by statements in the French party, in its press and elsewhere. That gives us occasion to point out that there is no question today that can be resolved on a national basis. All questions react back on the propaganda of sister parties.

This awareness of the international impact of the stand of every party in every country needs to receive more emphasis in our activity. That alone is true international discipline. It is not just that we are linked at the top and that

21. Comintern 1922a, p. 123. See also comments by Radek, p. 167, and Zinoviev, pp. 266, 270.

we carry out decisions made by international congresses. Rather, our international discipline and international solidarity consists of the fact that every sister party knows the others and, in its own activity, takes into account the reaction in the sister parties and the consequences for them. Recently, we have sought, through discussions with the French comrades, to reach an understanding, above all in the question of the Versailles peace treaty. That was the purpose of the Cologne Conference.²² We can say that these efforts were crowned with success. We feel that our French comrades have helped us in this question. But we must also note that the crisis of the French Party has greatly hindered carrying out what was agreed at Cologne. And, if we press for the French question to be thoroughly clarified and dealt with here, it is not only in the interests of our French sister party but also in our own interests. It seems to us that the Third Congress missed something here, and that the International did not take up this question soon enough. But, given this mistake, it would be wrongheaded for us not to undertake a minimum of organisational measures, combined with decisive action regarding the principled issue.

In conclusion, the German delegation would like to point out that it seems to us useful that, in general, *party congresses* take place before the world congress. For example, it strikes us as somewhat odd that the French Party could settle its issues at a party convention held before the world congress, while the German Party, which showed no signs of crisis, was not in a position to make better use of the situation created through the fusion of the USPD and the SPD. We concede that, in many cases, it will be useful for the national party congress to take place after the world congress. But this should not be a general rule. It must, rather, be decided in each separate case through discussions with the Executive.

Varga (Hungary): Comrades, I will take up only one point of Comrade Zinoviev's report, in which he took aim personally, in very gracious fashion, at a comrade with an opportunist viewpoint. Let me dispense with anonymity: I am the comrade accused of opportunism. This results from a misunderstanding. It would never have occurred to me to say that the workers of Europe should slow down their struggle until the condition of the Russian working class had improved. I have only pointed out that the campaign against famine and the fact that the European working class has got into its head the incorrect idea that the conditions of the Russian working class

22. On 26 August 1922, representatives of the French and German CP leaderships met in Cologne in response to French government threats to occupy the Ruhr region of Germany. The conference appealed to workers of France and Germany to reject nationalist propaganda and called for close ties of both governments with Soviet Russia. Damjanović (ed.) 1981, 5, p. 928.

are also at present quite bad exerts a damaging influence on the prospects for a conclusive victory – that is, for the establishment of new proletarian dictatorships.²³ Now, comrades, you will say that this is a private matter and not the business of the Congress. But the mere fact that Comrade Zinoviev found it necessary to mention it here shows that he does not view this as a personal matter concerning me but, rather, that he ascribes a certain importance to this concept. Otherwise, he would not have mentioned it. So I think it is necessary to give the matter some attention.

Comrade Zinoviev says that the working class of each country will be driven to revolution because it finds no escape from the present situation, from its present distress. What are the facts? The working class of all capitalist countries is suffering bitterly today from the period of capitalist decline.

Workers seek a way to escape from this condition. There is a conscious revolutionary nucleus – the Communist party, and it shows the way. It says that the path leads through the dictatorship of the proletariat to the building of socialism. We say that this path will entail sacrifices, struggle, hunger. We have no reason to conceal this. Perhaps you will permit me, since I stand here accused of opportunism, to indicate that, although I am not familiar with Russian conditions, I make a comment simply on the basis of the Hungarian dictatorship [of the proletariat] and of theoretically thinking through the economic changes that are unavoidable in the transition period from capitalism to socialism. I have discussed this in my book, *The Economic Problems of Proletarian Dictatorship*,²⁴ showing that precisely the layer that is in the vanguard of the struggle, the industrial proletariat, is unavoidably going to lose ground.

Yes, comrades, but the broad mass of the working class, which has not yet achieved a conscious revolutionary outlook, asks: 'How long will this period of sacrifices and hunger last?' To this question, the Mensheviks reply: 'It will last as long as the dictatorship of the proletariat exists!' Comrades, various circumstances – those that flow unavoidably from this dictatorship, also those related to the isolation of the dictatorship in Russia, and, finally, accidental circumstances such as the bad weather and drought of the years 1920 and 1921 – led to an outbreak of famine in Russia. The Russian proletariat had to turn to the proletariat of the capitalist countries for help. This campaign certainly had its good sides. But, comrades, everyone working in a country outside Russia will have to concede that, among the broad masses of the working class, this campaign against the famine aroused a certain fear of the revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Comrades, the Mensheviks repeat

23. The 1921 famine in Russia and international famine-relief efforts are discussed in Münzenberg's report, pp. 634–47.

24. See Varga 1921.

a hundred times, a thousand times: 'You say that we will save ourselves from our present conditions by making a revolution. But here you have the Russian example, where the proletarian dictatorship has existed four, five years, and now you have to ask us for help. If you – German, Italian, and French workers – make your revolution, after ten years you will be asking the workers of the remaining capitalist countries for help, or, better, begging for help.'

Comrades, let me say this: we must now put an end to this impression, promoted among the broad masses by the famine campaign and the Mensheviks, that things are going very badly for the Russian workers. We must put an end to it because it is not true. Comrades, at the parade, I watched very closely the hundreds of thousands of workers – those close by, in the streets – and I must say that they are better fed than the workers of Berlin. They are perhaps not as well dressed, but their appearance is far healthier. Comrades, when you observe the mood of the masses, who are not all Communists – ninety per cent of them are non-party – I ask you: have you ever seen workers on the streets of Europe who were in such good spirits and so content? I will not say that all Russian workers are in good spirits, for I have been outside Russia for some time. But the fact that the Moscow workers are well fed and in good spirits must be made plain.

There is also the fact that the conditions of Russian workers, over the last nine months, have tended upward, while the conditions of the working class of all continental Europe have been worsening – in some countries, like Germany, worsening rapidly. Comrades, we must explain this to the unaffiliated workers in Germany through hundreds of articles. We must tell them: 'It may not yet be true today, but, in three or six months, the Russian workers will actually be living better than those of Austria.' We must say this. We must combat the notion that our dictatorship means *making hunger perpetual*. I consider that to be very important, because it is closely linked to my general outlook regarding the progress of the revolutionary movement on a world scale.

Comrades, in speaking yesterday with the German delegation, I used a word that was not correct, that is too sharp. I said that in no country will the bourgeoisie permit itself to be taken unawares, as was the case to some extent in Russia and almost entirely in Hungary.²⁵ What does this mean? I am trying to say that the Russian bourgeoisie was not able to mount the resistance that it was capable of, because it was convinced that the Bolshevik régime, the proletarian dictatorship, would collapse within a few weeks. As for Hungary,

25. The Hungarian soviet government was formed as an indirect result of an initiative by the bourgeoisie. In March 1919, mass opposition to the Allied demands on Hungary brought about the capitalist régime's collapse. Provisional President Mihály Károlyi asked the Social Democrats to form a government, and they in turn formed a council-based coalition government with the Communists.

comrades, I must say that the bourgeoisie had no idea at all of what proletarian dictatorship means and slipped into it almost without resistance. That will not happen again. The bourgeoisie sees that a proletarian government has held firm for five years in Russia. Moreover, no moderately sensible person in Europe believes that the Russian proletarian dictatorship is going to collapse in the foreseeable future. Given these facts, the bourgeoisie, the ruling class in all countries, will hold itself in readiness, armed to the teeth. Their alertness is focused fully on each Communist movement. The factor of surprise is, in my opinion, fully excluded. What does this mean? It means that we must teach our troops, our armies, that they must not imagine that a relatively small, determined Communist party, a relatively small circle of revolutionary comrades, can storm the bourgeois fortress. We must draw in the masses. And that is why I have said that we cannot draw in certain wavering layers of the working class unless we put an end to this legend of the hunger and starvation of the Russian working class. I do not know if this is opportunism. I think not. It is a clear perception of the facts regarding the thinking of West European non-communist workers.

Comrades, this question is closely linked both to that of the united front and also to that of the agrarian action programme to be discussed at this congress. In my opinion, this programme is really nothing more than the idea of the united front applied to the rural population. Just as we use the united front to link up with the daily needs of the proletarian masses, so too, in my opinion, we must link up with the daily needs of all the layers in the rural population who have something to win from a revolutionary overturn. That means that I consider it essential for the success of the revolution in the counties outside Russia that we broaden out the masses on whom we can rely in an offensive against the bourgeoisie or whom we can at least hold back from swerving into the bourgeois camp and fighting against us.

I believe that what I have said is not opportunism but, rather, recognition of the real situation in the West European countries. So long as we continually run into the notion, echoing back to us from the non-Communist masses, that our dictatorship means hunger, hunger, and more hunger, we will be unable to carry these masses with us. One of the most important international tasks of the next year is therefore to put an end to the legend of hunger and starvation of the Russian working class.

Ruth Fischer (Germany): Comrades, the report of Comrade Zinoviev provides plenty of material for discussion, but I will dwell only on two German questions that would seem to be of interest to this world congress. First, the question of how the Third World Congress has affected the development of

the German Party. Here, it must be said that not insignificant portions of the German Party do not regard the settlement of the German party questions in quite the rosy light in which they are portrayed in Comrade Zinoviev's report. The Third World Congress did not take a clear stand on the political viewpoints of the Levi group and was not able to carry out a correction regarding the March Action without creating the impression that Paul Levi was expelled only for disciplinary reasons.²⁶ A large part of the German Party believes that the difficult development of this question of the German Party, the unfortunate character of the party congress in Jena, and, finally, the evolution of the Friesland group were, to a considerable degree, influenced by just this unclear position taken by the Third Congress.²⁷ This led to the loss of precious months for our work, and I say that here not in order to open up old wounds, but to say that the question of the KAG [Levi group] should not be identified as one of breach of discipline. This error must stand as a lesson for us in handling many other questions. Every question of discipline is a *political* question.

Now, I will take up the second question regarding the application of the united-front tactic in Germany and our practical experiences with this slogan. First of all, it is always necessary to say what we mean by the united-front tactic, because there are so many interpretations. The development of united-front tactic in Germany has a very complicated history, beginning with the Open Letter and continuing into the factory-council movement.²⁸ It must be understood that our work should aim to unite the struggles for an improvement in workers' living conditions. However, comrades, advancing partial demands of the type symbolised by Radek's well-known 'crust of bread' is

26. In a letter of 14 August 1921 to KPD's Jena Congress, Lenin wrote, '[E]ssentially much of Levi's criticism of the March action in Germany in 1921 was *correct*. . . . Levi couched his criticism in an impermissible and harmful form. . . . Levi committed a breach of discipline'. (Lenin 1960–71, 32, pp. 516–17) Lenin here stated explicitly the conclusion expressed, in more muted form, by the Third Congress, over objections by Fischer's wing of the KPD.

27. The KPD's Jena Congress, meeting 22–26 August 1921, adopted decisions pointing toward a united-front tactic. However, it also expelled Curt and Anna Geyer, prominent advocates of such a line who stood on the Party's Right. Following the conference, a current led by General Secretary Friesland (Ernst Reuter) evolved to the right; Friesland was expelled in December.

28. On 8 January 1921, the KPD addressed an open letter to other German workers' organisations, calling for united action for immediate demands of the workers' movement, including defence of workers' living standards, self-defence against violent rightist attacks, liberation of workers in political detention, and renewal of trade relations with the Soviet Union. See Broué 2004, pp. 468–73; and Reisberg 1971, pp. 53–63. Regarding factory councils, see p. 138, n. 19.

an inadequate conception.²⁹ It must also be said that it is not enough to *agitate* for these demands. Beyond that, a basis must be created to establish organisational foundations among the masses themselves that provide a possibility to *take up the struggle for these demands*.

Comrades, the much-discussed question of negotiations at the leadership level is simply a matter of expediency and tactical approach. The first error is to place too much emphasis on these sacred negotiations at the top. What is the real reason for this exaggerated emphasis, this worship of negotiations and working together with the leaders? This harbours a very dangerous illusion, an illusion whose consequences lead to revision of communism and of the revolution. That happens in the following way: our enormous defeats, the terrible blows, the bloody experiences we have been through have produced a mood inside the German working class, among a sector of German proletarians that only division and organisational weakness were to blame for their retreat in face of the counter-revolution, as if organisational strength – and this is a typical German illusion – could be the main factor in defeating the counter-revolution. The SPD utilised this illusion to capture the USPD. This conception was used at all the district conferences of the SPD to draw the USPD workers into the SPD. This was openly stated to be the proletarian united front.

There is a nuance of difference between our view and that of the Mensheviks. They do not state it clearly, but they are convinced that a genuine *struggle* against the counter-revolution is possible only if the large Social-Democratic parties and the ADGB [General Federation of Trade Unions of Germany] are with us – that is, not just negotiations with the leaders, not just working together with the leaders, but the conception that the Communist Party is now and forever too weak to advance without a firm alliance with the Social Democrats. That is a very dangerous conception. (*Interjection*) I will speak of that in a moment. Of course, I am not referring to the German delegation with us here today. (*Laughter*) This idea that a coalition with the ADGB and the Social Democrats is an absolute precondition for faultless action has been once again refuted by Comrade Zinoviev's explanation that our bitterest enemy today is the Second International and the parties affiliated to it. It is refuted by the fact that these parties are now going over everywhere to a very sharp offensive against us.

But you ask, where is this conception rooted? I must tell you plainly, without sugar-coating, it is lodged in the heads of many German Communist

29. An appeal by the ECCI on the united front, adopted 27 December 1921 and probably written by Radek, called on workers to 'unite at least for the struggle for bare existence, for a crust of bread'. Comintern 1922c, p. 367.

workers, who have been battered in the struggle against capitalism and the bourgeoisie. Those who prefer self-deception and indulging in illusions are welcome to continue in this, but activity of workers in the factories and trade unions shows that this conception is correct and that we as a mass party are not free from the illusions of the masses, in whose midst we live. These illusions react back on us and find a certain expression in the Party.

Although time is short, I should also add that the concept of a possible coalition with the Social Democrats is refuted by all the experiences of the recent years of revolution. This concept points toward the notion of an organisational fusion with the Social-Democratic parties, which is being discussed in our Norwegian sister party with such refreshing candour. This is not only a false conception of the united front, but also conceals still-hidden tendencies toward revision of the revolution, toward styling its hair in 'Western' fashion, toward creating democratic transitional stages between what we have now and what we aim for. There is an attempt to deceive ourselves regarding the difficulties of the civil war; an attempt to overthrow capitalism in alliance with the Social Democrats *in neatly organised fashion and without great difficulties*.

Comrade Zinoviev emphasised that the situation is difficult, including in Germany. None of us here is expecting victory in Europe the day after tomorrow. We face very skilled and dangerous opponents, and we must not deceive ourselves regarding the strength of German Social Democracy. Precisely for these reasons, the German Party and the Communist International must oppose these revisionist dangers with full energy in conducting our daily work. Those who express this view are called discontented 'Menshevik-sniffers', but this distorts the opinion of the critics. I tell you plainly, the danger in the Germany party is not great and can be easily eliminated. But also in the KAG crisis, we were the unfortunate pessimists, until events proved that we were right.³⁰

Comrades, in conclusion, I want to give you an overview of the united-front tactic as it has been carried out in practice. To start with, let me say that the railway workers' strike was a movement with a scope that was perhaps not fully appreciated outside the country. The German Party applied its policies in this strike in a fully correct manner. We told the masses at that time that the eight-hour day was in danger, that trade-union rights were in danger. We threw ourselves into the mass movement, but we did not advance any programme that would have been contrary to our views.

30. The KAG (Kommunistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft – Communist Working Group) was founded in the summer of 1921 by supporters of Levi in the KPD dispute over the March Action (see p. 78, n. 17). Later that year, a current emerged in the KPD that favoured rapprochement with the KAG. However, most KAG members joined the USPD early in 1922.

The Rathenau campaign was quite different. It must be said frankly that the Rathenau campaign demonstrated the negative side of the united-front tactic. The masses were aroused and were looking to us, but we were meanwhile conducting *secret* negotiations, diplomatic negotiations that stretched over weeks with the AGDB and the SPD, who were consciously playing games with us. In the negotiations, we merely displayed solicitude rather than putting forward aggressive demands. We did not dare show our face in the press and the meetings.

We had to display solicitude. And, when the masses are aroused and victory is possible, there is no greater error than to behave like diplomats instead of speaking as revolutionaries and stating the facts as they are. The German party cannot brush off the error of the Rathenau campaign, even if it tried. And this error had a big impact on our German members, who are suspicious, much more suspicious than you suppose, because of the experience of the KAG crisis.

In conclusion, let me say something about the factory-council movement, which represents the positive side of this error. But, comrades, I must tell you just as frankly that we cannot take credit for the virtues of the factory-council movement. Rather, it's the doing of the Social Democrats, who booted us out, with one kick, and thus made it impossible to continue the Rathenau policy in any way. And I can assure you, comrades, that, if the movement in Germany becomes sharper, the Social Democrats, who know a good thing when they see it, will repeat the same operation they carried out in the Rathenau campaign, because they find this a good method of crippling the Communist Party in dangerous situations.

The factory-council movement should not be overestimated. I believe that we here cannot yet measure its true significance. In my opinion, it has three main virtues, which we must clearly highlight. First, it destroyed the entire ruckus about unity of the Social Democrats and Independents [USPD], all their shouting about the great Social-Democratic Party that alone could put everything right. Instead of recruiting to their great Social-Democratic Party, the Social Democrats had to fight our party. They had to combat and write articles about our slogan and were placed on the defensive. When they held their party conventions, it did not have the intended impact.

Second, after two years, the question of initiatives by the factory councils, by factory committees, is once again on the agenda. Anyone who has any idea of how bogged down the factory committees in Germany are will understand the importance of this success.

Third, and this is the most important point, the question of control of production is once again being debated in the working class – clumsily, weakly,

and without skill, but nonetheless it is being debated. It is under debate in the factories, and not only among the Communists, although they need this badly, for they have forgotten much in the last two years. It is also being debated by the Social-Democratic workers and by *Vorwärts* [*Forward*], which must motivate its rejection.

If the German Party and the Communist International continue to devote the necessary attention to this movement and perceive in it a correct application of the united-front tactic, it will bring us great success. During this movement, we have often addressed the leading bodies as a tactical method of winning the factory councils to our side. We have written the ADGB saying we are for building a bloc with them in the practical questions that workers face, in order to persuade workers that the ADGB wants neither a conference nor a struggle.³¹

The factory-council movement shows our sister parties that no danger lies in the united-front tactic, if it is correctly understood; it's simply a question of defining it clearly and knowing what you want. And, at the same time, the Communist International and the Fourth Congress must grasp that the question of the united-front tactic, in a certain sense, broaches that of revolution, as we see in different ways in the different parties. And I wish to express my mandate from the organisation in Berlin: We want the Fourth Congress to be vigilant that the Communist International remains free of any form of opportunism. (*Applause from the Germans*)

Neurath (Czechoslovakia): Comrades, brothers and sisters: first of all, I note that our entire delegation wishes to make a statement regarding the report of Comrade Zinoviev. Rather than deal with that, I will present a few facts in answer to the comments of Comrade Vajtauer.

Comrades, given the comments of Comrade Vajtauer, some of the delegates may possibly conclude that there is a left opposition in the Czechoslovak Party, represented here by Comrade Vajtauer. Comrades, that is quite wrong. The left opposition in the Czech Party carried out a struggle against the opportunism represented prior to the unification congress by Comrade Šmeral. After that congress, however, Comrade Šmeral took his stand on the decisions of the Third [World] Congress, creating the objective basis for the opposition to collaborate with him. The so-called New Opposition, which has existed roughly since last December, has, in the course of eight months,

31. During the autumn of 1922, the leadership of the ADGB (Social-Democratic-German trade unions) denounced calls for convocation of a conference of factory councils as 'the worst type of incitement and disruption', and threatened to expel workers who participated in such a gathering. Reisberg 1971, p. 572.

proposed no principles different from those guiding our policies. Only a few weeks ago did the opposition propose something resembling a programme, and I will inform you of some of its statements.

But, first, I must draw your attention to the fact that, immediately following the fusion congress, we had to withstand a number of unusually intensive struggles. The Executive of the Czechoslovak Party succeeded in taking the lead in all these struggles and in exerting the greatest possible influence on the broad layers of the working masses. I recall, for example, the struggle of the government employees, the employees of private concerns, the metalworkers, the miners, and the glass workers. During all these struggles, it was the majority, who are termed the Šmeralists, who formulated the guidelines for the Communist shop stewards. And these guidelines won acceptance, brought success, and were never attacked or contested by members of the opposition. Nor did they ever propose their own guidelines counterposed to ours.

We carried through these struggles, proposing slogans that – especially in the miners' struggle – were those best received by the working masses.³² But we had to note that some of the Communist shop stewards were doing stupid things. Well, of course, Communist shop stewards can, now and then, do stupid things. But, when, in the course of the miners' strike, their representatives made statements during negotiations with the employers with which we could not agree, we spoke to these shop stewards and reprimanded them forcefully, pointing out what they had to do to correct these errors. The opposition did not take any position on these matters at the time. The errors were discovered not by them but by us.

That was during these major struggles. We carried out actions for the united front – agitation in massive assemblies. The opposition was in agreement. At least, they never betrayed any sign of a different opinion; they were silent. When the new party secretary, Comrade Zápotocký, took office, he said the following: 'The opposition gives us no hint of their principles, yet they fight against us and are not in agreement with us.' Indeed the opposition's general drift is that Šmeral is an opportunist – for which they present not an iota of proof. Second, they say he wanted absolutely to become a government minister, and third, that he was conducting negotiations behind the Party's back with the counter-revolution, and, there too, they have offered no proof. And that the others that sought to work with Šmeral had given in and become

32. During a miners' strike in February 1922, the Czechoslovak CP called for a general strike in support of the miners, advancing a number of specific demands. The strike movement was cut short when trade-union leaders agreed to accept a limited wage-cut. Firsov 1980a, p. 415.

Šmeralists. That was the total positive content of the programme advanced by the opposition.

At the Easter Conference, we told the opposition that this game must stop. Tell us what you want and reveal to us, once and for all, what is the substance of your programme. You will present your platform. And if you have no platform, if you don't know in what respect you are different from us, that must be made plain. This was the conference where we presented principles regarding the united front. We presented theses on the work of the Party. We took decisions as weighty as any that a Communist conference can take. And the opposition did not say a word. The comrades of the opposition did not say a word to indicate that they disagreed on some point. Not a word about any disagreement about the united front principles or the other tasks of the Party. We called on the opposition to speak if they had a different point of view, but they did not take the floor. So, we concluded that they were finally in agreement with the principles we had proposed.

After the conference, the game continued. I am sorry to have to report this, since it is not exactly edifying. The old game continued. No principles, no programme, no serious ideas, apart from the foolish argument that Comrade Šmeral wanted to climb up into a minister's chair on the back of old Šturc. Then, comrades, Comrade Jílek travelled to Moscow. He was cleverly sent to one place and another as a representative of the Czechoslovak Party. In Moscow, the most experienced comrades sat down and studied the material. They asked Jílek, what is your programme? He spoke here, and Šmeral spoke as well. And the result? The Executive concluded that there are no fundamental political differences in the Czechoslovak Party; there are organisational shortcomings. We did not try to excuse ourselves by saying that we could not remedy these deficiencies because we had spent month after month at all the sessions of the Executive Committee coping with the comical attacks of the opposition. We made no excuses; we said that the Executive is right, and we will make every effort to eliminate these deficiencies. Comrade Jílek voted for this resolution in Moscow. He also declared that there are no political differences among us in Czechoslovakia. And then he returns to Czechoslovakia and only then organises the opposition, gives it an organisational form, and continues the opposition in much sharper form than previously.

Now, comrades, what is to be done? Comrade Radek published an article. The Executive published its decision.³³ Both declared that there are organisational shortcomings in Czechoslovakia. We discussed them, and they will be

33. For Radek's article, see *Inprecorr*, 2, 58 (14 July 1922), pp. 433–4. For the ECCI resolution, see *Inprecorr*, 2, 90 (20 October 1922), pp. 686–7.

eliminated. But there are not political differences. The Party can now set about accomplishing its greatest and decisive tasks.

But nothing came of that. Unfortunately, we were able to devote only limited time to the great tasks before the Czechoslovak Party. We could hardly concern ourselves with the great problems of the movement, because again and again we had to busy ourselves with the same old stuff. Again and again, we were tied up in seven-hour sessions with these things, in order to explain to Comrade Šturm that Šmeral does not want to become a minister.

Then, we had a session with the participation of the International's representative. It determined that the opposition had not put forward anything that would justify a conclusion that there were theoretical differences. Comrades, I will not go on and on about that; I will just give you the flavour. Right before the session, I just referred to, an article appeared in *Komunista* whose content was very bad, signed by a member of the opposition. In the article, which was 220 lines long, 180 lines were reprinted from Comrade Trotsky's book, *The New Stage* [1921]. That was where the opposition got their platform.

Bukharin: In quotation-marks?

Neurath: No, comrade, not in quotation-marks.

What happened then? The opposition continued its struggle. We had no recourse but to once again call a conference – the national conference.³⁴ All comrades were exhausted. We could not bear it any longer. The major resolutions on the miners' and metalworkers' struggles were written during the journey from Reichenberg [Liberec] to Prague, and then it was impossible to take them up in the sessions. Comrade Zápotocký and all other comrades declared: 'We can't go on like this. Yet another national conference, and if this opposition cannot be liquidated, then we can't work with their representatives any more.' The national conference convened, with two representatives of the International in attendance. Finally, some programmatic principles were formulated there. I will not hesitate to inform you of some of these principles. In the opposition programme, they take a position on the economic crisis and how the Communist Party should relate to it. In the section discussing the goal, we read:

Workers are exploited in two ways, by the employer and by the trader. The inflation created by middlemen weighs much more heavily on them than capitalist exploitation.

34. Neurath is referring to the 22–4 September 1922 conference of the Czechoslovak Party. See p. 109, n. 30.

Among the traders, small and large, are the most zealous class enemies of the workers. The merchant class is the most eager defender of the capitalist system and equally the most eager fighter on its behalf....

The most effective means that the working class can and should employ are:

- 1.) Boycott of capitalist products.
- 2.) Expansion and centralisation of all productive and retail cooperatives.

Regarding the use of boycott, Comrade Vajtauer says the following, verbatim:

Boycott: As regards the use of a boycott, the situation is as favourable as it could be. The bourgeoisie never hesitates to utilise the dependency on it of the working class, and, so too, the working class should not hesitate to utilise the dependency on it of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie throws thousands of workers onto the pavement, using this rough method to achieve low wages. At present, the working class can use its boycott to bring down any firm that produces consumption articles at too high a price or acts in a merciless fashion toward the working class. And the working class must not reject this method. For failure to use this fearsome weapon would only hasten the concentration of large-scale capitalism.

An index of firms under boycott should be drawn up, including all those demanding a price that is relatively high in terms of their production costs, as well as those that act in a hostile manner toward the working class. It is true that this pressure on prices will unjustly punish many smaller units, because they are not in a position to buy their raw materials more cheaply. But the campaign should not shy away from this obstacle. The dangers of collapse will lead those with small businesses to band together into productive cooperatives and join the association of workers' productive cooperatives, which can purchase in quantity and thus meet the demands of the working class.

And that is the entirety of the programmatic declarations at the national conference of this opposition, which was termed a left opposition at the Executive meeting.

Comrades, I believe that is enough of this dreadful game. I can no longer withhold from you the opposition's viewpoint on the important question of the workers' government. For you have heard the opposition's opinion that the Executive was wrong to say we had carried out our duty and that, by contrast, we had in fact violated our duty.

We ask the comrades what was this violation of duty and, second, to tell us how the opposition views the question of the workers' government. Comrades, no answer has yet been provided to the first question, how we violated

our duty. However, the opposition has said what they understand to be the problem of the workers' government. I quote you the following sentence as an example:

The workers' government has the task of creating a period of culmination, in which the concentration of production and distribution takes the form of collective capitalism. (*Laughter*)

Comrades, I have never understood this sentence, and I do not expect to ever understand it.

- 2.) The transformation of the military into a militia system.
- 3.) Establishment of an organisational tie with Soviet Russia.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia must strive to resolve the problem of the workers' government at the same time as the sections of the Communist International in all free capitalist countries, in very close association with the Communist International. We firmly decline to discuss the nature of the workers' government and warn against any merely abstract discussion of the question.

This treatment is supposed to be a non-abstract discussion. This is concrete. (*Laughter*)

My speaking time is probably exhausted. I must speed up; I am almost finished. I will tell you this: here, at last, we have factual material. We learned about these principles, or a part of these principles, only at the national conference. At this conference, the Communist International representatives rose to say, 'Members and representatives of the opposition, you must recognise that you have no grounds to act politically against the majority in any way. You must work with them.'

Before the national conference, thanks to the nature of our agitation and the publicising of our principles on the workers' government and the united front, we were able to achieve unexpected influence on the masses, an influence that the Czech national socialists are still seeking to gain. I say Czech national socialists, because Comrade Ruth Fischer [Berlin] confused the Czech national socialists with the German National Socialists. The Czech national socialists have wide mass support, and we have won such an influence among these masses that their leaders are compelled to come to us at the office, talk to us, and invite us to take part in a conference in order, as Comrade Vajtauier says, to exert influence on the government. But does Comrade Vajtauier not know what we told the national socialists? We told the national socialists: 'United front? Yes, but with whom? With you? We do not need that. We decline a united front with you. We want a united front with the workers that stand

behind you. You want better wages for the workers? You want an offensive against the bourgeoisie? Very good; we are ready to fight with you, but with a precondition: our guidelines, which are definitive for this struggle, must be recognised.'

From that, Comrade Vajtauer derives the principles that he has put forward here today. In this serious situation, one that has never been better in any country than it is for us today, the opposition comes and says, if the Central Committee does not carry out a number of our demands, if it does not put an entire newspaper completely at our disposal, we will immediately send a leaflet out to the organisation listing all the crimes of which the Central Committee is guilty. That was forty-eight hours before the national conference. We were not in a position to stop it. The leaflet went out, raising charges against us such that, if they were actually justified, we would not be permitted to stand before you here today. There would indeed be no more place for us inside the Communist International.

These were the bitterest and more severe charges that could possibly have been raised. We therefore went to the national conference and said: 'Show us now what truth there is in these charges.' And the comrades were not able to say a word beyond the fact that they were suspicious of Comrade Šmeral. The national conference therefore took the decision to expel the opposition. The overwhelming majority of party members took note of this decision in the context of eight or ten months spent wrestling around with this opposition that never expressed a thought, that was never prepared to collaborate with us, that never tried to show that they could do this better than us. After we had wrestled around for ten months, neglecting all the important issues, we had to decide in the interests of the Party and its development to finally establish respect and authority for the principles of discipline. We asked the opposition if they were willing to withdraw the leaflet and what was written on it. They replied, 'No.' The Communist International representative practically begged them, beseechingly, and they once again refused.

And, now, to conclude: let us note that there is no truth in the assertion – a fairy tale aimed at taking in uninformed comrades – that a significant part of the party members share the views of the opposition. The decisive evidence will be submitted to the Commission. I can tell you that only one single district shares the opposition's point of view, and it not entirely. That is the Prossnitz [Prostějov] district – thus one district out of twenty-four.

The decision of the Communist International Executive has cancelled, destroyed, and shattered the authority of the Central Committee. Yet, we not only noted the decision but published it. We conformed to it. We did so because we are convinced that the majority at this congress will be determined

to take decisions that permit us to work and struggle in Czechoslovakia, decisions that exclude once and for all the acceptance of principles that are suitable not for a proletarian organisation but, rather, for a veterans' club.

We will not permit this kind of opposition any longer. We will no longer permit the work of this party in carrying out its critical obligations and tasks to be obstructed in so frivolous a fashion. (*Applause*)

Chair: The Belgian delegation wishes to be represented in the Commission on Blacks and has named Comrade Overstraeten. Is there any objection? (*Adopted*)

The South-American delegation, for its part, wishes to be represented by Comrade Penelón of Argentina in the Commission on France, Comrade Pintos in the Spanish Commission, and Comrade Stirner from Mexico in the American Commission. (*Adopted*)

The Presidium proposes Comrade Rakovsky as a member of the French Commission. Any objection? (*Adopted*)

Adjournment: 4:30 p.m.

Session 4 – Saturday, 11 November 1922

Discussion of Executive Committee Report (Continued)

Speakers: Becker, Radek, Duret, Bordiga, Graziadei

Convened: 11:15 a.m.

Chairperson: Kolarov

Becker (Germany): The Executive's report devoted much praise to the German Party. But we, comrades, are not entirely comfortable with this. As we see it, if we are now made out to be one of the good boys of the great Communist International family, we will only be pummelled all the more when we make our next blunder, and we therefore believe it's important to underline here our shortcomings.

We have to reckon with two tendencies that limit us in carrying out the united-front tactic in Germany. These tendencies do not take the form, as in Italy and France, of open currents that have developed their viewpoint into a theory and are in principle opposed to the united-front tactic. With us, as I said, we have only tendencies. But I believe, comrades, that it is precisely for the countries that are setting about to carry out the united front in practice that it is most helpful to learn the nature of these tendencies, because you too will have to reckon with them.

Comrades, this tendency plays a role not only in the leadership. It is rooted in the fact that a number of members, and not a small number either, do not comprehend their tasks as communists, even in difficult situations where the proletariat is slack and indifferent; do not strive to be the active element that

holds high the banner of class struggle precisely in such situations and works with every fibre for the mobilisation of the masses. Instead, they have a pessimistic attitude. A sector of the masses is infected by this slackness, has no initiative of its own, and sees no perspective in an attempt to address the daily needs of the proletariat.

Comrades, it must be said that, in recent months, the morale of a segment of our members has declined appreciably. This morale, however, is the basis for the tendencies that express themselves in the leadership of the Party. To be sure, the two tendencies make accurate observations on the political situation, but their tone is one that encourages passivity and pessimism. Comrades, this finds expression not only in the tendency that is called left but also in the right tendency. There are a number of other factors that influence the leading comrades. Some comrades – mostly of the left current – have not yet understood the different possibilities for carrying out the united-front tactic and therefore have *exaggerated* fears of opportunist errors. And their discomfort leads them, in many cases, to such inner inhibitions in carrying out the united-front tactic that they feel moved to rein in its application.

The right tendency plays a role among a number of leading comrades who, for this or that reason, already had a passive approach and who have not developed the activity that is necessary to carry out the united-front tactic. In Germany, we have learned that, when we undertake to apply the united-front tactic, the Social Democrats, for their part, also set up a united front. We have gone through difficult cases when we were not always the first to demand a solid unified action; instead, the Social Democrats beat us to it and took out of our hands the leadership of united-front policy.

Comrades, in carrying out united-front action during the Rathenau crisis,¹ both tendencies acted in uncertain and apprehensive fashion. Comrades of the right tendency were fearful in the negotiations with leadership organisations, concerned that we would be too quick to break from these leadership bodies. This fearfulness went so far that the Party, to some extent, did not show its own face in a sufficiently assertive manner.

As for the left tendency, it also displayed uncertainty. Let me refer just to the Berlin story.² As Comrade Fischer, who spoke yesterday, also knows, during the Rathenau crisis, in carrying out the campaign, the Berlin organisation held a 'silent demonstration', that is, a demonstration without speakers. Whatever excuses you offer, when something like this can happen with the left forces

1. See p. 137, n. 18.

2. The Berlin organisation was the stronghold of the left current in the KPD led by Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslow.

in the Party, it is and remains a sign of uncertainty. When we take part in a united demonstration, we must put the main emphasis on our own face.

Comrade Fischer said yesterday that an exaggeration of negotiations with the leadership bodies has become noticeable in the German Party. I must say that I have not noticed any such tendency in the Party. On the contrary, I spoke of a passive tendency on the Right, and this found expression in an approach to starting up the negotiations that was expressed not only in passivity but in an anxious caution. We noted no worshipful attitude toward these negotiations. On the contrary, if we conducted such negotiations more frequently, it would be an even better application of the united-front tactic, leading to the masses distancing themselves from their Social-Democratic leaders even more.

Comrade Fischer said that attitudes exist in the Party toward the united front that amount to favouring an organisational fusion with the Social Democrats. I do not deny that such tendencies exist in the thinking of some of our comrades. But, surely, the question is whether the Party, as such, is nourishing these tendencies. And, here, I must say that the Party not only does not encourage such tendencies but combats them. In the factory-council movement, as was the case in all earlier actions and will be in the future, we also saw slack elements – factory councils, trade-union staffers – who sabotaged the Party's policy out of fear that it could lead to the Amsterdamers splitting the trade unions. We threw them right out of the Party. The fact that such elements show opportunistic leanings in applying the united-front tactic is no reason to say that the Party as such supports such tendencies.

There is also a phenomenon that you experience in all countries: the united-front tactic is understood in a mechanical way. After an action, after any major betrayal by the Social-Democratic leaders in some united-front action, tendencies are immediately evident among entirely good comrades who say that this common action, these negotiations with the Social-Democratic leaders must be the last. From now on, we will carry out the united front only from below, they say. In Germany, we have always replied to such mechanical conceptions by saying, if you can generate enough activity so that, two months from now, we can say we no longer need to negotiate with the Social-Democratic leaders because they no longer have mass support, then we will not negotiate with them ever again. But, so long as the leaders have masses organised behind them, we will have to continue to negotiate. We have applied these methods successfully in the factory-council movement and simultaneously organised the united front among the masses.

Comrades, let me touch on another question that is important not only for the German comrades: the question of the *workers' government*. Especially

important here is the question that led to false conceptions among the French comrades – that of support for a Socialist provincial government and that of a workers' government in individual states of Germany.

Comrades, to start with, we have never viewed the workers' government question – whether in the form of a provincial or a national government – as primarily the result of the line-up in parliament, but, rather, as flowing from the success of our work in mobilising the masses for our immediate demands. We have not called for it prematurely or in the present situation, which is not ripe for it.

As for the difference between a socialist and a workers' government on a regional level, a workers' government in a single regional state would have to be the advanced outpost in the struggles of the German working class as a whole for a national workers' government. That means it would have to take up the struggle against the national government and the bourgeoisie. The present socialist provincial governments have all hewed to Kautsky's theory that one must make a coalition government with the bourgeoisie or, if one makes a socialist government, it must take into account the interests of the bourgeoisie alongside those of the working class. Our support for such governments is purely a tactical question. It depends on the extent to which we have succeeded, or not yet succeeded, in convincing the worker masses in the parts of Germany where such socialist provincial governments exist of the incorrectness and danger of this policy.

We harbour no illusions with regard to workers' governments, and the dangers in this regard sensed by comrades who look at the question from outside simply do not exist.

Radek (*greeted with applause*): Comrades, when the Executive delivers its report, we all shiver before the approaching tempests that will assail its position from both Left and Right. The right sector, to the degree that it exists, has not yet been heard from. Comrade Varga has in his charming manner sought to show that he does not belong to the Right, and we will take him at his word. So, I am obliged to deal chiefly with the attacks from the 'Left', and to polemicise with them, even though I believe that in the situation where the proletariat now finds itself internationally, the danger threatening us comes not from the Left but from the Right. (*Very true*) The right danger consists, first of all, in the fact that it is very hard to carry out Communist politics at a time when the masses are not on the assault. In a period of assault, every worker feels instinctively the need for revolutionary action, and the party acts more as a regulator than as the driving force. In a period like the present, one of preparation between two revolutionary waves, communism signifies above all difficult intellectual preparatory work of the party and the youth of

our Communist parties. In addition, given their Social-Democratic past, it is not easy but rather quite difficult to unify two things: the mass character of the party and its Communist character. Consider the situation in the French Communist Party and the Norwegian Party, the two parties most typical of the Communist International's right wing: the debate on the situation of these parties will constitute the most difficult part of the work of this congress. If I now concern myself only with the two left comrades who have spoken here, it is not because I consider the danger of a drift to the left to be greater, but because so far no one from the Right has spoken.

I will start with Comrade Vajtauer, representing the Czechoslovak opposition. I must make clear at the outset that the speech of Comrade Vajtauer contrasts sharply with that of Comrade Fischer. Comrade Fischer's speech dealt with the Party's errors. Comrade Fischer may have analysed these errors rightly or wrongly, but no one who heard her speech had the impression that the comrade speaking did not belong to the Party. Everyone understood that we were dealing with an organic component of the German Communist Party, far from the worst in its ranks.

Comrade Vajtauer's speech could only arouse quite a different reaction. Comrades, we have a rough idea what the Czechoslovak opposition is, despite the difficulty in grasping its theoretical character. When Comrade Neurath tried to do this, my friend Comrade Bukharin, who certainly does not belong to the Right, was so affected that we wanted to take him under the arms and drag him unconscious from the hall. (*Laughter*) Nonetheless, it would be quite wrong to take this phenomenon lightly and dismiss it as a joke.

The Czechoslovak Left deserves to be taken seriously, not only because it includes outstanding veteran proletarian forces in the Party like Comrade Šturc, but because it signals a danger. There are six hundred thousand unemployed in Czechoslovakia, and a tendency crops up in the Party and presents theses saying: 'We are faced with an immediate struggle for power!' When such a tendency appears in such a situation, we should not focus solely on whether or not they have formulated their ideas clearly. Rather, this shows that in the critical situation in which the Czechoslovak Party now finds itself, a segment of it is discontented with the Party's attitude. They believe that the Party is not struggling hard enough. And, although this segment may still be small, given six hundred thousand unemployed, there is always enough raw material available so that we may see developing out of such a *nucleus of opposition* a policy that can hurl the Party into premature battles.

For this reason, I believe we must deal with these matters seriously. But I must say that the opposition has not made that easy for us. Vajtauer appears here in the name of the Proletarian Opposition, as it calls itself in the

Czechoslovak Party, in the name of an opposition that expresses the mistrust of the proletarian Acheron.³ We had the honour of becoming acquainted with Comrade Vajtauer in the Communist and workers' movement only two years ago. So, after this glorious revolutionary activity, Comrade Vajtauer comes here and claims, roughly, that Šmeral and the majority of the party executive are conspiring with the bourgeoisie and Masaryk, and the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie is demanding of the Czechoslovak Communists: 'Give me the head of Vajtauer, and then we will conclude a coalition!' Vajtauer comes and tell us that, in Kladno, where someone as tested as a Comrade Muna – who has performed his duty as a revolutionary in a time that was somewhat more difficult than the period in which Comrade Vajtauer blessed the international Communist Party with his activity – Vajtauer comes in the name of his opposition and says that, in Kladno, under the leadership of Muna's party, a strike was broken. He flings such things around and then comes and says: 'Choose between me and these traitors.' And then he says: 'If what I am doing here is anarchism, then, if you please, we will be anarchists.' Given all this, we say: 'A little more modesty please, Comrade Vajtauer.' You come here and say: 'Yes, discipline, provided you vote for me.' In this case, we will certainly talk with the opposition, but we will first of all tell this opposition: 'Please, if you want to present a proletarian opposition here, then choose as your representatives people who, if they are not proletarians – for not everyone has the good fortune to be born a proletarian – at least possess a certain sense of responsibility toward the history of the proletarian party.'

Let's get to the point, comrades. What has Comrade Vajtauer said here? He has interpreted Šmeral's dreams. He has said that Šmeral wants to become a minister, as it were. He did not lay it out bluntly. That is an approach that reflects Vajtauer's anarchist background. He did not say that, on such and such a day, Šmeral said something on the basis of which I claim that he wants to be a minister. He has interpreted Šmeral's dreams. There is a reason for that. In the past, Vajtauer undertook scientific study of the interpretation of dreams, and he now is applying this method to the Communist International. (*Laughter*) We ask what the Comintern Executive is supposed to make of this dream-interpretation? The only thing to do is to put it in an almanac of dreams.

The Comintern Executive has before it the following facts: the opposition current had a majority in the Executive up to March this year. That is the first fact. The second is that, in July [June] this year, a session of the Expanded Executive took place in which we dealt thoroughly with the Czech matters.

3. Acheron, the river of woe, is one of the rivers that separate Hades from the land of the living.

After lengthy efforts, Comrade Jílek signed with us a resolution saying that there are no principled differences in the Czechoslovak Party. That was in July, and, in September, the Party stood in danger that Šmeral was selling out – in the dream of Comrade Vajtauer – and comrades around Zinoviev are frivolous people because they do not believe in his dream. (*Interjection: 'And especially the International'.*)

Comrades, Vajtauer may threaten us so menacingly with leaving this International and declaring for a separate International, but we have experienced something like this before. At the Third Congress, the leaders of the KAPD spoke. I'd like to now suggest that you read the most recent article of Comrade Gorter.⁴ After the KAPD split, Gorter declared every strike to be a counter-revolutionary act. He claimed that everything was headed to the right, and the task of the Communists is to stand there and say, nothing can help but the revolution. Even if the voice of Comrade Gorter is added to that of Comrade Vajtauer and they both declare for a separate International, we will bear this fate with the courage that characterises us as Communists, at the risk of possibly seeing a third voice added to that of comrades Vajtauer and Gorter.

If we are not to take Comrade Vajtauer's speech simply as humour, then we must ask him that he not speak a second time in this manner to a congress of fifty-two Communist parties. We cannot deal definitively with the Czechoslovak question in this phase of the debate. It will be examined with the greatest care in the Commission, and the Congress will carefully take into account whatever is correct in the warnings of this comrade regarding the state of the Party. For we say plainly, when a couple of honest proletarians raise a warning voice, in this period when the greatest danger comes from the Right, we do not have the option of passing over the matter in silence or with a joke.

Provisionally, however, the Executive must stand by the results of its previous work on Czechoslovakia, which was, broadly speaking, that the policies of the Czechoslovak Party are correct. That is why we said to the comrades of the opposition, who have raised the banner of rebellion: 'You have acted wrongly, but we have the duty not to carelessly throw proletarians overboard, even if their criticisms are quite incomprehensible. So we will try once more to speak to the conscience of these comrades and discuss with them.' That is why we reversed the decision of the Czechoslovak Party.

When Comrade Neurath says that we have destroyed and shattered the Central Committee's authority, I say that, if we destroyed it, we could not have shattered it, and if we shattered it, we have not destroyed it. But, still,

4. Among Gorter's writings of that time, his 'Open Letter to Comrade Lenin' (1920) and his call for a 'Fourth Communist Workers' International' (1921) are available at: <www.marxists.org>.

the hope remains that this authority will be stronger when we leave this hall, if the work of the Commission shows that the Central Committee is doing everything possible to transform the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia into a good party, fit for struggle. No one claims that it has already reached that state. And, if Comrade Vajtauer says that Comrade Zinoviev is telling us, 'Look at young Šmeral, he is a model! In this sign shalt thou conquer!' I don't know when he said that. I value Comrade Šmeral much more than many left comrades. I am convinced of his good will in carrying out the decisions of this congress, and, unlike many comrades, I harbour no trace of suspicion toward Šmeral, although I have spoken quite sharply against him. But I know one thing: we do not yet have a model Communist party, not there or in any country, for the simple reason that such a such an exemplary youth must first be beaten for several years (*Laughter*) – not only here at this congress, on the basis of wisdom that we have drawn from the Russian Revolution, but on the basis of the lessons of your own revolution in the West. There is no exemplary Communist party, because such a party can be created only through revolution. It must be created in the fire of civil war, and Czechoslovakia has not yet gone through such experiences.

I now come to the speech of Comrade Fischer. In her speech, she named a great number of weaknesses in the Rathenau action that we also immediately perceived in the Executive here in Moscow, as we received the detailed reports on the course of events. When voices are raised in the Party, saying, 'In an action that is to be carried out by the masses, no secrets from the masses', and 'Don't let the Social Democrats dictate that when we conduct negotiations with them, our comrades will not be publicly informed in full detail', and 'The Communist press has to assess every development from a Communist point of view and not run after the corpse of Rathenau shouting "Republic, Republic"' – when that is said, we can only answer that we would prefer that this would be not the voice of the opposition but the consciousness of the entire party. (*Very true!*)

The fact that the German Party committed errors at the beginning of the Rathenau campaign can be denied only by a sworn advocate of every party executive. When we saw *Rote Fahne* [*Red Banner*] here, Comrade Zinoviev said a couple of times, 'The devil take them, why are they so wrought up about the Republic, about this Rathenau? Not a word of criticism about these things!' And that was our general impression. The Party was clinging excessively to the Social Democrats out of fear of isolation.

If that was the limit of Comrade Fischer's criticism, she would be quite correct, but there are other aspects to this criticism. Comrade Fisher says, among other things, that she is not opposed in principle to negotiations at a

leadership level and also not in principle in favour, but things must be done with caution. Well and good, but her politics, her criticism of the Party in the Central Bureau [Zentrale] or the Central Committee did not consist simply of these obvious generalities. Her opposition conveyed a constant suggestion: 'You are too preoccupied with preserving your virtue.' (*Very true*)

Comrade Fischer says that we had the railway workers' strike, a brilliant action without leaders. We went to the masses again and again and said the same thing as the masses were saying, repeating, 'Masses, masses', and no leader was there. By the second action, there were leaders there, and, although she is not in principle opposed to that, the results were harmful. (*Interjection: 'The congress of factory councils?'*) I'll come to that in a moment.

Comrades, what actually happened? When we are in the accursed position of negotiating with the leaders, the opposition, with Comrade Ruth Fischer in the lead, becomes exceptionally nervous. I experienced this business during the conference of the three executives.⁵ Every day that passed without us having broken with the others seemed to Comrade Fischer and the opposition to have been a wasted day. And, when negotiations began in the Rathenau crisis, the opposition came every day to the Central Bureau with a motion demanding either an ultimatum or a break-up. Why? That's what is so mechanical about the whole outlook of the left comrades. Our united-front tactic does run according to a schema. We now know one thing in general: we are the weaker side. We face great barriers on the road to the masses; Social Democracy seeks to isolate us from its workers. When the pressure from the masses is great enough, they must negotiate with us. And, when they negotiate, we have an interest in breaking this off only at the point when we have compelled them to set the largest possible masses in motion or when it is already been clearly established for everyone that they do not want any action.

To break off earlier, or even to have an impulse not to sit an hour with these people – or even half an hour – that is evidence that we feel ourselves to be weaker than we actually are. The Party should take a clear position in its press from the very beginning, explaining to the masses: 'Yes, we are negotiating with the Social Democrats, but if you do not take action, they will betray you.' If we did that, then we could confidently negotiate further up to the point where this betrayal has been fully revealed. But, rather than pressing the Party to take a clear position before the masses, you are always tugging the Party by the hand to keep it from negotiating. That displays a kind of nervous hysteria that does not serve the Party well.

5. Radek is referring to the Conference of the Three Internationals held in Berlin, 2–5 April 1921. See p. 137, n. 17.

The overall situation is that we enter into negotiations in the understanding that, in practice, they will still deceive us, this time and next time. If we are not to appear as dupes, we must say that to the masses from the outset. But we should activate a process of breaking off from them only at the point when we are capable of doing alone what they do not wish to do together with us.

When we discussed the Rathenau crisis among ourselves, here in the Executive, I always asked – and I believe this is the basic point – can the Party take the risk of going up alone against the monarchists? In my view, for the Party to have moved into action on its own would have been a greater error than any that were actually made. (*‘Very true!’*) For we learned after the Kapp Putsch that Social Democracy is only waiting for the moment when they can join with the monarchists to hurl themselves on us. And for the Party to have avoided that is not an error but an achievement.

At the same time, we tell the Party not to approach such situations with a rigid concept in your heads that we will always be weaker. (*‘Very true!’*) During the course of such an action, the mood of the masses can give us such great strength that we are immediately able to press forward on our own. The art of tactics in such a situation is to advance carefully and not to break off prematurely, yet to be ready for this break and to prepare the masses for this break through the political line of our agitation and the way we handle the entire situation.

On the whole, as Comrade Zinoviev has already pointed out in his theses last year on the united front,⁶ the united-front tactic involves very great dangers. These dangers flow from the fact that we are in a transitional period leading to a new revolutionary upsurge. During this time of transition, the broad masses have a feeling that there is nothing they can do differently from the others. They do not have a feeling that revolutionary action is possible, and there can easily arise in the Party a soft twilight mood, so to speak – a disinclination to act on one’s own; a conviction that only arm-in-arm with Scheidemann can we Communists go strolling down Unter den Linden.⁷ The party leadership and party press are affected by this mood and are too quick to slip over into Social-Democratic politics. This is a real danger. When you begin an action, you must be aware not only of the danger of being crushed if you go into the streets alone, but also of the danger that the Communist Party will disappear among the masses and fall into a soup with the Social Democrats.

6. The ECCI 1921 text drafted by Zinoviev is appended to the Fourth Congress Theses on Tactics; see pp. 1164–73.

7. Unter den Linden is the major boulevard of downtown Berlin; Scheidemann was a central leader of the SPD.

As for the question of the workers' government, I would like to draw attention to a very striking formulation of Comrade Fischer. She said that there is a danger that communism might style its hair in Western fashion. I'd like to say a few words about this danger. Comrade Zinoviev said in the Expanded Executive, for us the workers' government is a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. That's how Comrade Meyer quoted him; I do not know if he used exactly those words. In my opinion, this definition is not right. But it arises out of a concern, one that Comrade Fischer has described with the words 'Western hairstyle'. For many comrades, the idea of a workers' government is a kind of soft downy cushion. They say that the devil knows when our dictatorship will come, and it is certainly a very tricky business to conduct agitation for the slogan of the dictatorship; I'd rather just say workers' government, which has a very gentle and innocent sound. No one knows what it is. Perhaps it will come to be. But, in any case, it does not appear to be so dangerous.

We must banish this danger through the character of our agitation. The workers' government is not the dictatorship of the proletariat – that is clear. It is one of the possible points of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat, based in the fact that the worker masses in the West are not politically amorphous and unstructured, as they were in the East. They are structured in parties, and they cling to these parties. When the revolutionary tempest broke out in the East, in Russia, it was easier to bring them directly into the camp of communism. For you, that is much more difficult. The German, Norwegian, Czechoslovak workers will much more readily take a stand of 'no coalition with the bourgeoisie, but rather a coalition with the workers' parties that can secure our eight-hour day, give us a bit more bread, and so on'. That leads to the establishment of such a workers' government, whether through preliminary struggles or on the basis of a parliamentary combination. It is nonsense to reject in doctrinaire fashion the possibility of such a situation.

The next question is whether we lean back on our soft cushions and relax, or whether we try to bring these masses, on the basis of their illusions, into struggle to achieve the programme of the workers' government. If we conceive of the workers' government as a soft cushion, we will not only drive it into bankruptcy, but also ourselves suffer political defeat. We will stand with the Social Democrats as a new type of swindler. We must maintain the masses' understanding that the workers' government is worthless unless the workers stand behind it, taking up arms and building factory councils that push this government and do not allow it to make compromises with the Right. If that is done, the workers' government will be the starting point of a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and will, in time, make way for

a soviet government. Rather than being a soft cushion, it will open up a period of struggle for power, using revolutionary methods.

I believe one of the comrades said that the workers' government is not a historical necessity but a historical possibility. In my opinion, that is the right formulation. It would be entirely wrong to present a picture that the evolution of humanity from ape to people's commissar necessarily passes through a phase of workers' government. (*Laughter*) But this variant is historically possible, above all in a number of counties where strong proletarian movements stand beside peasant movements, or where the working class is as large as in Britain, where the bourgeoisie has no direct major instruments of power against the working class. In Britain, a parliamentary victory of the Labour Party is quite possible. That will not happen in the present elections, but it is possible, and the question will then arise, what is this workers' government?⁸ Is it nothing more than a new edition of the bourgeois-liberal government, or can we force it to be more? I believe Austen Chamberlain was right to say that, if a Labour Party government is formed in Britain, it will start with Clynes in power and end with the Left in power, because it has to solve the problem of joblessness.

So, comrades, I believe that the Executive is basically correct in this question in how it presents the problem, warning on the one hand against an complete intransigence that says 'soviet government or nothing', and also against the illusion that tries to convert the workers' government into a parachute.

Comrades, as I said briefly with regard to the rules of order, the questions to be decided in the rest of the agenda will involve merely working out the details of our battle plans. The battle plan will be in place at the moment when you approve that the united front as it has been proposed by the Expanded Executive is the next road that we have to follow. I believe that the experiences we have accumulated in recent years must convince even the blind that no other road is open to us. Either we take this road, or we go the way of Gorter, who wanders alone under the stars crying out the word 'Revolution!'. The road of the united front is much more difficult than just busting everything up, which seems easier and more agreeable. But, if we do not have the strength to do that, if this road is necessary, we must take it, in full awareness of the dangers lurking on it from the right, and also in firm confidence that this road will harm not us but the Social Democrats. Otherwise, the Second International would not be trying so hysterically and frantically to break down all bridges to us. We are not doing that. And this is not because we

8. Four days after this session, the Conservative Party won the British general elections. In the subsequent vote, in December 1923, the Labour Party under Ramsay MacDonald gained enough seats to form a minority government the following month.

aim to merge with the Scheidemanns, but in the conviction that by embracing them we will crush them. (*Loud applause*)

Chair: The next speaker is Comrade *Duret*, who represents the tendency in the Communist Party of France that opposes the united-front tactic. He has asked us to allow him a longer speaking time in order to explain this point of view. The Presidium has no objection. Any objections? So this is decided. The Presidium grants the speaker forty-five minutes.

Duret (France): Comrades, I speak on behalf of the tendency that has been called the French opposition to the united-front tactic. I have asked for an extended speaking time because I believe that there is not enough knowledge in the International as a whole of what we represent.

It is indisputable that, at the time when the united-front tactic was placed on the agenda, the overwhelming majority of the Communist Party of France turned against this tactic. I firmly believe that this protest, this rejection represented a healthy response by the French proletariat.

We must not forget that France is the classic country of social traitors, the country of Briand, Millerand, and parliamentary cretinism. That explains this response, *this rejection*, this rebellion among the French workers, who did not immediately accept the united-front tactic and saw it as nothing else than a unification with the reformists, whom we had just left – a break that was a favourable indication that the French proletariat was seeking revolutionary action.

However, the different ideologies grafted onto this healthy response of the French proletariat did not always have this character. You are well aware that the Centre that has now rallied to support this united-front tactic and represents the largest current in the Party was then entirely opposed to the united front. But the way it had led the struggle and the explanations it provided were not revolutionary but purely opportunist in character. They said they were against the united-front tactic in the belief that it was superfluous. The Party had been acting correctly, they said, and modifying the existing situation therefore did not require a change in its methods.

The group to which I belong, which was then very weak, had a different point of view.⁹

It too was against the united-front tactic, but for reasons diametrically opposed to those of the Centre. They said: 'We are against the united front because we are a good Communist Party.' We said: 'We are against the

9. Duret was a supporter of the current in the French party led by Daniel Renoult.

united front because there is in reality no Communist Party in the true sense of the word. Our party is Communist *in appearance* but fundamentally it is reformist.’

What were the grounds for this position? The Centre was against the united front only because it was simultaneously against the principle of daily struggle for the immediate demands of the working class. Under the title, ‘Arguments Without Merit’, an article of Soutif appeared in the February issue of *Internationale*, in which he spoke regarding the Executive’s arguments on this point. ‘Why should we fight for immediate demands, for reforms?’ he wrote.

We know that the bourgeoisie will not grant us anything out of sheer kind-heartedness. It will grant us only what we snatch away from it. But when we are strong enough to obtain reforms from the bourgeoisie, we will also be strong enough to seize power and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁰

These words come from a quite typical member of the Centre and the party majority. We took a stand against this approach in theses published in *Bulletin communiste*, and in a piece that I wrote as a reply to Comrade Soutif’s article.¹¹

We consider that the task of the French Party consists of winning the majority of the working class for communist ideas and that the daily struggle for immediate demands is essential for the Communist Party of France.

In our theses, we explain that, while combating the united-front tactic, we also wish to expose those who use the pretext of opposing this tactic in order to follow the path of least resistance, those who seek to restore their revolutionary purity through empty revolutionary chatter.

In order to present our position on the united front and the way that we view this question in France, I must analyse the united-front tactic with reference to the speech by Zinoviev in the first session of the Expanded Executive.¹²

What were the main arguments that led the Communist International to issue the slogan of the united front?

Zinoviev said that all Europe is undergoing a certain period of revolutionary retreat. After the War, the masses lapsed into a fatigued state. When the Communist party raised the slogan of seizure of power, the masses did not follow its banner. They were concerned only with securing their daily bread. And, thus, they have fallen under the influence of the reformist organisations.

10. See ‘Arguments sans valeur’, *Internationale communiste*, 18 (22 February 1922).

11. See ‘Thèses sur le front ouvrier unique’, *Bulletin communiste*, 2 (12 January 1922) and J. Duret, ‘Pour les actions immédiates et partielles’, *Bulletin communiste*, 9 (2 March 1922).

12. For Zinoviev’s speech, see Comintern 1922b, pp. 35–48.

It follows that conditions were objectively favourable for a development of reformist ideas. However, the masses responded to the capitalist offensive with the slogan of struggle for their daily demands and unity in this struggle. This slogan can take two different forms: one that is reactionary and dangerous for the Communist party, and one that is revolutionary and can bring gains for the Communist movement. The dangerous form, of which Zinoviev has spoken, is the attempt to merge all already existing parties into one big proletarian party. The revolutionary form is the coming together of all the forces of all proletarian organisations in an action. This revolutionary endeavour, consisting of arraying the vast majority of the working class against the forces of capitalism, is what Communists must demand. Communists must make plain that they are not responsible for the split, for which the reformists carry the entire responsibility. In addition, Zinoviev says, the masses fear being hurled into dangerous adventures by the Communist party, and, as a result, when the party raises this slogan, they hesitate to follow its lead. If we wish to build the united front and take the lead of the movement, we must demonstrate to the masses that the Communist party is no party of adventure. On the basis of this proof, we will lead them into the struggle.

I believe I have presented Zinoviev's theses more or less accurately.

I would now like to look into the specific way that this analysis has been applied to France. In the interests of clarity, I would like to portray the situation in France, contrasting it to that of Germany, which I believe Comrade Zinoviev has referred to repeatedly.

What then are the essential differences between the situations in these two countries?

In Germany, the large majority of the proletariat is either politically or economically organised, while, in France, the large majority is unorganised.

It can thus be said that while, in Germany, the masses are influenced by reformist organisations or belong to them, in France, the masses are under no one's influence and look on all the political organisations with deep suspicion, regardless of their 'brand'.

That is why we believe that the problem of the united-front tactic takes on an entirely different form in France, compared with Germany.

In France, there is no genuine mass party. Even more, in the historical development of the French movement, we do not encounter large political mass parties anywhere. We see only ideological currents, merely groups of fighters that gather around an idea, a banner.

We also see, in France, a yearning for unity, and Zinoviev is quite right in saying that the unfolding of the capitalist offensive generates such a thirst for unity. In France, however, this desire for unity finds expression on the trade-union level, not that of parties, because the masses view the political

party not as a representation of its different segments but as a kind of large electoral organisation, established purely for electoral purposes. There is, therefore, no tendency among the French masses to seek unity of the political organisations.

Together with our friends, we arrived at the view that if there is a longing for unity in France, an attempt to build a working-class bloc against the bourgeoisie, this cannot be a bloc of political organisations that represent only an insignificant minority of the working class. If the united front is to become a reality in France, it will be shaped by factory councils or workers' councils or similar organisations, which will unite the vast majority of the proletariat, and through which the concentration of working-class forces against capitalism can be achieved.

If the masses in France harbour a justified suspicion toward the Communist Party, this is because the Communist Party has never done anything in the interests of mass action and has never demonstrated that it is the vanguard of the proletariat.

As Zinoviev has said, the situation was such that possibilities existed for action. Those in France who championed the united-front tactic made an error in claiming that there were no possibilities for revolutionary action there.

When the employers' offensive in a country bears down on every demand advanced by workers, the Communist Party has the important role of organising the proletarian forces against the power of the bourgeoisie. It is then easy for the Party to transform all the spontaneous and disconnected actions into a single, large, systematic movement.

There are two ways to conceive of the united-front tactic:

- 1.) One can send a sort of invitation to a reformist organisation saying: We wish to initiate such and such an action and propose specific means of struggle such as mass action, strikes, and the like; do you wish to join us? That is the policy that was utilised long before the united-front slogan was advanced. That is the tactic of the open letters that were often utilised in Germany.¹³
- 2.) One can turn to the reformist organisations without taking an intransigent stand regarding the slogans or forms of action. The proposal is to utilise carefully selected slogans and to employ forms of action that, actually, a Communist party customarily does not utilise. However, in the course of the action, one attempts to show that the slogan is not revolutionary enough, striving to go beyond the framework of the action that is under way. One seeks to transform a reformist-pacifist action into a revolutionary one.

13. Regarding the KPD's original Open Letter, see p. 145, n. 28.

I must say that this second method can be utilised by a strong, conscious, organised Communist party, but not by parties that are Communist in name only.

That is why we have fought against this second interpretation of the united-front tactic.

As it happened, there were irksome aberrations even in Germany. I ask the French delegation: what would have happened if the attempt had been made to apply this tactic through a party like ours, which is incapable of carrying out revolutionary action and is dragged along in the wake of organisations that are not able to advance a slogan and initiate an action?

If we wish to carry out daily work among the working masses, a daily struggle for their demands, which links us closely with them, we should not place ourselves in accord with the Dissident and Socialist organisations.¹⁴ Here, I must make a parenthetical remark. It is necessary to calculate precisely the impact of an action by a political party of the organised proletariat on the broad unorganised masses. In countries such as Germany, where the majority of the working people are organised, when the political party puts forward a demand it can carry with it large masses of the proletariat. On the basis of this fact, a 'theory of the offensive' was developed last year with regard to the Communist Party of Germany.¹⁵ In the present situation, no slogan advanced by any organisation will find an echo among the masses unless it corresponds to a revolutionary mood in their ranks.

The mass movement in France could only take the form of an elemental movement. Moreover, it is not easier to bring such a movement into existence when an agreement exists between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, because the Communist Party must undertake the struggle alone in any case.

The united-front tactic has an aspect that, despite my best efforts, I have still not been able to understand. That is the workers' government.

Comrade Thalheimer was once so gracious as to explain to me the nature of the workers' government in five or six pages. But my skull is very thick;

14. The term 'Dissidents' refers to the minority at the 1920 Tours Congress of the French Socialist Party that rejected affiliation to the Comintern and continued to use the name of the old party.

15. Proponents of the 'theory of the offensive' feared that 'at the decisive moment, the party would not be capable of revolutionary action; concern regarding a premature uprising was downgraded'. (Hájek and Mejdrová 1997, p. 305). Radek reflected this thinking in a letter to some German CP leaders in March 1921 in urging the need for 'incessant pressure for action, to impart to the Communist masses the idea that they need engage in action'. (Broué 2005, p. 492.) This approach found support during 1920–1 among members of the ECCI's inner leadership, including Zinoviev, Radek, and Bukharin, and among German party leaders who spearheaded the March Action in 1921; it was rejected by the Third Comintern Congress in June–July 1921.

I did not get it. Comrade Radek gave me an even fuller explanation, which I also did not understand. As you see, I am a slow learner. I am making colossal efforts to comprehend, and I am asking what the workers' government actually is. We are told that it is not the dictatorship of the proletariat but something intermediary between the dictatorship of the proletariat and what we have now.

At the same time, we are told that the workers' government is not based on parliament. So I ask, what is it based on? It will probably be explained to me that it is based on the *masses*. However, 'the masses' is a vague expression, and it would be good to know just what is meant. If we are referring here to the organisation of the masses, to workers' councils, and the idea is that the workers' government must be based on workers' councils and factory councils, we are completely in agreement. In this case, however, the slogan of the workers' government means 'All power to the soviets, to the workers' councils'. In this case, I see no significant difference between the workers' government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. By contrast, if the workers' government must depend on a parliamentary majority, that is quite another matter. In this case, the slogan of a workers' government has quite a different character.

Comrade Zinoviev tells us that the slogan of a workers' government does not have general validity. It is not for every country. It is a historic possibility. I believe that he has also said that a workers' government is linked with the existence of workers' councils.

What are we to make of the slogan put forward in France of a workers' government of Blum and Frossard?¹⁶ Everyone knows that there are not yet any workers' councils in France, and that the greater part of our party activists, without even speaking of the unorganised masses, do not even know what workers' councils are.

Radek: Thanks to the Party!

Duret: Of course. But you must do us the justice of admitting that our group was the first to struggle along these lines.

Lauridan: What about the CGTU?

Duret: The slogan of a Blum-Frossard workers' government was explained by a comrade of the Left, our Comrade Planchon of the Seine Federation, while making an amendment to the Frossard-Souvarine motion.¹⁷ The amendment

16. The Blum-Frossard slogan was shorthand for a government of the Socialist and Communist Parties, of which Blum and Frossard, respectively, were the most prominent leaders. See Zinoviev's comments on p. 271.

17. The Frossard-Souvarine motion, a product of Left-Centre parity negotiations in early August 1922, aimed to set a political framework for united functioning by

was that the slogan that could best bring the masses in the future to an uprising was that of a Blum-Frossard workers' government, and since there were not any workers' councils in France, such a Blum-Frossard government would initially have to be based on a parliamentary majority.

I believe that, from a communist and revolutionary point of view, this conception of a workers' government is an aberration.

We are told that the slogan of a Blum-Frossard workers' government is not meant as something concrete, something to be realised immediately, but is rather formulated in a way that can lead the French working masses toward a powerful campaign. This seems rather like the kind of social myth that Sorel used to advocate. It is somewhat reminiscent of his myth of a 'general strike'.

The value of a slogan for the political movement, the mass movement, of a given country must be gauged in terms of its impact on the politics and tactics of the working masses.

How does this take place? It's very concrete. If you advance the slogan of a workers' government of Blum and Frossard in the manner advocated by Planchon, this leads quite simply to providing parliamentarism with a new buttress, to imbuing it with new life. In France, there are no workers' councils. A workers' government must rest on a majority. We must work with all our strength to achieve a Socialist majority in parliament – not a Communist majority, but an overall majority of peoples' representatives.

We can see where this takes us. This leads us to electoral cretinism and the resurrection of parliamentarism. That's why we say that it would be dangerous in the present situation of the French Party to raise the slogan of a Blum-Frossard workers' government. It would polish up the coat of arms of the reformists still found in our party. That is one of the reasons leading us to oppose the united-front tactic.

The united-front tactic must be a slogan of action. But we must clearly understand what action means in the Communist Party of France: writing articles! (*Many voices: 'Very true'*.) We make speeches in parliament and otherwise maintain unaltered the methods of the United Socialist Party.¹⁸

The past that weighs on a large number of Communist parties of Europe burdens the Communist Party of France twice as heavily. Of course, we do not want to reject participation in elections. We do not want to reject the methods of peaceful struggle. But all these methods of struggle can be valuable,

the two main factions in the French CP. It was debated throughout the party in the run-up to the October 1922 Paris Convention, where the Left-Centre unity project broke down.

18. 'United Socialist Party' refers to the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO or SP) formed in 1905 through a unification, chiefly of parties led by Guesde and Jaurès.

influential, effective only if deployed to launch mass actions. We should view all forms of proletarian struggle from the point of view of mass struggle. The goal of our action must be the action of the working masses, of deeply seated layers of the proletariat.

Those in the French Party who uphold mass action are still in a minority. We know that if the united-front tactic is proclaimed with the interpretation it has received in France, where it is viewed as an electoral tactic, it will be directed against the best revolutionary forces of the French Party.

The objection will be raised, 'You want mass action and want to use this slogan to lead the masses into the street, but you know that the reformists will not join in. They are quite willing to attempt a joint action with us but only provided it is peaceful and parliamentary: joint rallies with joint petitions. As soon as it is a question of mass actions, they do not take part.'

So if we want to preach mass action to the French Party, which is still not a genuine Communist party, responsibility for the failure of the action would fall on the Party's shoulders. If we proclaim the united-front tactic without guarantees, this would mean bestowing new strength on the reformist and opportunist elements of the Party.

Unfortunately, it must be recognised that the reformist and opportunist elements in the Party and International are becoming more and more numerous. The disintegration of the Two-and-a-Half International has its good sides, but it will have bad sides as well. One of these is that a large number of party members from the Two-and-a-Half International, perceiving this fiasco, will come over to the Communist party with their banners held high.

We see that already our dear Comrade Serrati is present here in this room, only as a guest, for now, but probably he will also soon belong to our big family.¹⁹ And, after Serrati, others will come. They will come over to the Communist movement bringing along their old prejudices, their old means of struggle, their Social-Democratic methods. That is why we must understand that the sickness lurks on the Right, not the Left.

Comrade Radek has already made that clear.

But the Left is always chattering. The Centre never says anything; ditto the Right. But, in practice, they continue their little game, their opportunist work.

19. Serrati represented the Italian SP, which had left the Comintern in January 1921 but was now reapplying for admission. Serrati did rejoin the International, but not until 1924.

Given that, at the Paris Congress, it was the Left that came in for criticism,²⁰ the main role of this congress will be in preventing aberrations that come from the Right. Comrade Radek was quite correct in referring to that.

When we still had a situation where we had to reckon with revolutionary spasms, we faced what was called the ‘inopportunism’ of the Left, a tendency that had to be overcome. But provided it does not resemble the Dutch school and does not cut itself off entirely from the masses, the inopportunism of the Left represents no danger.²¹

The opposite is true of opportunism from the Right, which caused the collapse of the German Social-Democratic Party. If this congress fails to prevent opportunism from the Right, this will increase the power of the reformist elements who are still part of our Communist International.

It must be clearly established what we, for our part, are going to undertake on behalf of the daily demands of the working class. How should we struggle for these demands? I believe the International must explicitly declare that, when the Communists take up the struggle for daily demands, there is no justification for them to relent for a single moment in criticising the objective worth of these reforms. However vigorously the Communists struggle for a reform, they must make it clear that such a reform will in no way alleviate the situation. They must explain that reform can be cancelled out by the play of the capitalist system, unless the capitalist order itself is shaken to its foundations. In addition, the Communist movement must not get stuck in a struggle for one specific reform, but, rather, when such a struggle begins, it must try to draw all layers of the working class into the struggle.

The party must make efforts to take the leadership of the struggle and transform it into one directed against the foundations of existing society.

That is why we have come to the view that the theories proclaimed in France by Treint – that gaining a reform from the bourgeoisie today is equivalent to revolution, that it is equivalent to blowing the entire structure of bourgeois society into pieces – these theories are dangerous for the workers’ movement from both a practical and theoretical point of view.

Comrade Zinoviev says that, as the initiator of a campaign to call a national congress before the international one, I should now be cured of this viewpoint

20. The Paris Congress of the French CP, held 15–20 October 1922, ended in a deadlock, in which neither the left nor centre currents obtained a majority, while about twenty per cent of delegates backed the Renoult-Duret tendency.

21. ‘Dutch school’ refers to a leftist current in the international communist movement, led by Anton Pannekoek and Herman Gorter. Allied with the Bolsheviks in the Zimmerwald Left during 1915–19, these Dutch Marxists led an ultra-left opposition in the early Comintern and quit the International with the KAPD after the Third Congress.

by the sad picture presented by the Communist Party of France today. I do not share this viewpoint, because the Communist Party has only now shown itself to you in its true light. Only now will you come to know it. Now that you know how the Paris Congress proceeded, you will be able to understand what you can hope for from this party.

The situation is clear. You now know what is the right way for you to address the French Party. In my opinion, the Paris Congress did not cause any harm to French communism and to the International.

As you doubtless know, our current fought against certain forms of the united-front tactic. Nonetheless, I declare here, in the name of all my friends, that we are prepared to respect and carry out all decisions of the International's Fourth Congress. If the Congress gives us an order to apply the united-front tactic in practice, indicating in what form we are to apply this tactic, we will do this as best we can.

However, we know that there are still elements in the Communist Party of France that have adopted the united-front tactic solely because for them this tactic is a step leading to the restoration of unity.²² We will always speak against these elements. It will be a life and death struggle between us and these elements. If the French Party accepts the united-front tactic, it must cleanse itself; all reformist and confusionist elements must leave its ranks.

Only in this manner will it become a genuine Communist Party worthy of the Communist International. (*Applause*)

Bordiga (Italy): Comrade Zinoviev has recalled and confirmed certain principles established by the Third Congress and approved by the Italian Party.

The first concerns interpreting the condition of capitalism. A crisis exists that is not transitory and that signifies the decline of capitalism itself, one that can be termed its final crisis.

The second point makes clear that, in order to make possible a revolutionary victory in this situation, it is necessary for the Communist Party to widen its influence among the broad masses. That it can be achieved by taking part in struggles for all the specific interests of the working class.

The Italian Communists have not supported a putschist method, either in theory or in practice; they have not given way to the illusion that power can be won by a small revolutionary party. What they do not accept is only the formulation regarding the 'majority' of the working class, which is vague and arbitrary.²³ It is vague because it does not make clear whether the reference

22. By 'unity', Duret means reunification of the French Communist and Socialist Parties.

23. The Third Congress Theses on Tactics had stated, 'At the present moment the most important task of the Communist International is to win a dominant influence

is strictly to the proletariat or also includes the semi-proletarian layers and all political and trade-union organisations. This formulation also seems to us to be arbitrary because the relationship of forces may very well make a revolutionary attack impossible even in a situation where we have the majority, while it is also not excluded that an attack may be possible before we have won this majority.

Our opinion on the International's tasks and the report presented by Comrade Zinoviev is that the International has so far not resolved the major tactical problems in the best manner. The left current is usually recognised by its confidence regarding an outbreak of revolution in the near future. Well, in this regard, I am more pessimistic than Comrade Zinoviev.²⁴

The existence of a great capitalist crisis is an absolutely necessary objective precondition for the revolution. Nonetheless, it must be recognised that the subjective conditions for the existence of a strong Communist International with influence on the masses can to some degree be jeopardised by the direct impact of the crisis on the workers' economic organisations (the trade unions and similar organisations), which we can term the 'original' natural organisations of the working class, and which are immediately affected by the evolution of the objective situation. The most immediate way to win the masses is through intensive trade-union work. The economic crisis and joblessness make this task more difficult. The opportunists express this problem through the slogan that we must wait for capitalism to flourish again before we act for the liberation of the proletariat.

In fact, here we may stand by a classical formula: it is necessary to win the greatest possible influence for the revolutionary party during capitalism's heyday, in order to be able, at the moment when crisis breaks out, to draw the economic organisations with us into a process of revolutionary action. That is what the opportunists have obstructed. Nonetheless, the Communist International does not retreat from its task of mobilising the world proletariat for revolution.

This problem confronts us today under difficult conditions, which, however, cannot be viewed as insuperable. Although, for now, some countries stand as exceptions, in my opinion the economic situation will worsen in general, bringing with it joblessness and a decline of the trade unions.

over the majority of the working class and involve the more active workers in direct struggle.' (Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 277.) This position was reaffirmed by the Fourth Congress resolution on tactics; see p. 1157.

24. By 'left current', Bordiga means forces in the Comintern such as the Italian majority leadership that raised 'left' criticisms of policies of the ECCI, as for example with regard to united-front policy.

As a result of the danger of new wars, discontent will grow not only in the proletariat but in semi-proletarian classes. The great task is to shape this chaotic discontent into a form suitable for revolutionary struggle. The International has sought to resolve this problem by explaining the conditions created by the offensive of capitalism. This was the origin of the *united-front tactic*.

We accept by and large the spirit of this tactic. The objections we raise, which apply to the general work of the International's leadership, flow from some observations that we will now present.

Winning the masses is our main goal. But this does not mean that this goal can be achieved necessarily in a steady mechanical development. It does not mean that we will necessarily find, at any given moment, a way to advance toward this conquest in broad stages. It is possible that we will be placed for a certain time in conditions where we do not see the party grow, but where we will be able during this interval to carry out efforts that can give us confidence that we will be able to win the masses later on. Zinoviev has said that some parts of the International have seen their influence grow despite a decrease in their membership level.

Winning the masses should not be understood solely in terms of statistical variations. It is a dialectical process, shaped above all by the evolution of objective social conditions. Our *tactical initiative* can speed up this process within definite limits or, to be more precise, given certain conditions that we take for granted. Our tactical initiative – that is, our party's adroitness in action – is effective only with regard to developments in the proletariat's psychology, using this term 'psychology' in its broadest sense, including its consciousness, its spirit, its will to struggle. We must recall here that, as our entire revolutionary experience tells us, two factors play a primary role: complete ideological clarity in the party and a strict and skilful persistence in its construction and organisation. What we say is that, on the road to a genuine conquest of the masses, expressed through the gathering around a party of new layers of the proletariat that are capable of revolutionary action, it is a bad business for us to permit these conditions to be jeopardised in order to achieve a seeming improvement in the party. Capacity for revolutionary action requires preparation that can never be improvised and that resides in the factors already mentioned: doctrinal clarity and organisational solidity.

Having determined this, we say that we will closely follow the line of the International if it sets the goal, as was done between the Third and Fourth Congresses (our party was the first to do this, even before the return of its delegates from the Third Congress) to benefit from all the expressions of the capitalist offensive in order to draw along with the Communist party the working-class masses who are still followers of Social Democracy or are dispersed. We will not repeat here an analysis of the nature of the bourgeois

offensive that the ruling class has been forced to undertake by the inevitable character of the crisis. There is a special agenda point to handle this question, and, in discussing Italian Fascism, we will be able to show the degree to which the bourgeoisie is able to achieve the simultaneous application of all its methods of counter-revolutionary defence.

The employers' offensive makes it possible to advance political and economic demands that immediately concern the totality of the working class, and that offer the Communist party a favourable opportunity to promote united working-class action and to demonstrate through facts that the other proletarian parties are incapable of championing even the most immediate interests of the proletariat. That has a double revolutionary effect, both placing obstacles in the path of the reconstruction of threatened capitalism and also increasing the influence of the Communist party on the masses. We have said that we perceive limits in the application of this tactic – limits related to the need not to imperil the other factors giving the party influence on the masses or the inner revolutionary readiness of its membership. We must never forget that our party is not a rigid mechanism that we can simply manipulate, but is, rather, a living being affected by outside forces, which can be modified through the direction given to it by our policies. That is why we say that setting up a permanent leading body made up of representatives of the different proletarian parties stands in contradiction to the principle of the united-front tactic.

We must, of course, prepare ourselves for the opportunists to either reject or accept common action. Responsibility for the action must rest with a body that arises from the working masses through the intermediary of their economic organisations, one that in principle can be conquered by any party. In this way the Communist party can subordinate itself to this body and provide an example by placing itself in the leadership of the united proletarian action, without taking responsibility before the masses for the bad results of methods of action imposed by the non-Communist majority of the proletarian organisations. For, with respect to winning influence on the masses and their psychology, we must reckon with the parties' past responsibility and traditions, as well as with the groups and individuals that the masses follow.

It is thus by no means a matter of excluding political issues from the list of united-front demands and including only economic ones. It is also not a matter of rejecting – in principle or out of some conceivable feeling of standoffishness – temporary negotiations even with the worst leaders of the opportunists. It is merely a question of not placing at risk the readiness of the broadest possible layer of the proletariat for a revolutionary situation – in which action will take place entirely in the framework of the Communist party's methods – thus avoiding the danger of leading the entire proletariat

to a defeat. It is a matter of preserving our party's full capacity during the development of the united front to pursue efforts in every field to enrol genuinely proletarian forces. The united-front tactic will have no point if the work of organising the masses carried out by the party inside the trade unions, the factory, and so on, cannot take place.

We say that the danger exists of the united front degenerating into Communist revisionism, and, in order to prevent that, we must remain within certain limits.

Now, as to the *workers' government*. If it is confirmed, as at the Expanded Executive in June, that the workers' government refers to 'the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie',²⁵ then we consider that, under certain circumstances, this slogan can be used as a terminological replacement for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Certainly, we will not oppose that, unless this need to hide our true programme could be considered opportunist. But what if the workers' government slogan creates an impression among the masses that it refers not merely to a transitory political situation or to the momentary relationship of social forces, but, rather, suggests that the most important problem in the relationship between the working class and the state (the problem on which we founded the programme and organisation of the International) can be resolved in some way other than through armed struggle for power and its exercise in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat? In that case, we reject this tactic, because it jeopardises a foundation stone for the preparation of the proletariat and party for revolutionary tasks, in return for the dubious benefits of achieving immediate popularity.

It will perhaps be said that the reality of the workers' government does not correspond to our fears. But, here, I must say that I have heard countless explanations of what the workers' government is not, but only from the mouth of Comrade Zinoviev or others can I learn what a workers' government actually represents.

If the point is to consider objectively the achievement of a transitional régime that will precede the proletarian dictatorship, then my opinion is that, if the proletarian victory does not take a very decisive form, the process will lead under the blows of reaction to bourgeois coalition governments in which the right wing of the opportunists will directly participate, while the centrists disappear from the political scene, after having exhausted their role as accomplices and Social Democrats.

25. The quotation does not appear in the published record of the Expanded ECCI.

In Germany, for example, we see that, right on the eve of a generalised economic crisis, the question of control of production cropped up in the factory-council movement. We saw something similar to this in the Italian situation of September 1920, which preceded a major proletarian defeat. If a similar revolutionary situation arises in Germany, the Communist party there must prepare itself to recognise all opportunist tendencies without exception and to reject even the slightest support for this slogan of workers' control.²⁶ Either the Communist Party will, from this moment on, succeed in playing an independent role, or there is a possibility that a counter-revolutionary situation will develop, preparing the road for a government in which German fascism can call on collaboration from the right-wing socialist traitors.

From all this it flows that we cannot fully adopt either the draft theses of Comrade Zinoviev or the directives on the activity of the Communist International. That relates not only to policy but to the construction of our international organisation.

We have heard Comrade Zinoviev complain of the lack of centralism and discipline in our international activity. We advocate a maximum of centralism and authority for the highest central body.

But the obedience of the entire organisational network with regard to the initiatives of the leading centre cannot be secured by a solemn oath to be disciplined or by commitments undertaken, no matter how sincerely.

Nor will it work to apply internal democracy and control by the ranks of the organised workers – that mostly leads to confusion. The guarantee of discipline must be sought elsewhere. We must remember, with the aid of the Marxist dialectic, that our organisation is neither a mechanism nor an army, but a genuine unified complex, whose development is both a result and a contributing factor to the evolution of the historical situation.

The guarantee of discipline can be found only in a sharp delineation of the boundaries within which we employ our methods of action, and in the programmatic clarity of the most important tactical resolutions and organisational measures. The Russian Revolution provided the international revolutionary movement with the basis to restore its ideology and fighting organisations. That is a gain that must not be undervalued, and its further effects will develop to the degree that the link between the Russian Revolution and the international proletarian movement remains firm. We criticise

26. Bordiga's hostility to the slogan of workers' control was influenced by the outcome of the massive strike wave of September 1920 in Italy. It was brought to an end by a manoeuvre by Giolitti, the prime minister, who proposed an agreement supposedly to institutionalise workers' control of the factories. The agreement, approved by unions and employers, served to demobilise the strike movement but was not implemented.

the tendency to grant too much freedom in organisational measures and tactical methods, a freedom that moves us further from our goals. The choice in such matters should be left to the leading centre. This choice should be made – we repeat – by the centre and not by the national organisations, who claim to have better judgment of the special conditions of their milieus. But, when this right is extended too far, and the centre lacks foresight, then cases of indiscipline will necessarily pile up, which undermine the construction of the revolutionary world organisation and damage its prestige. In our opinion, the International's central bodies should be organised in an even less federal manner. They should be constituted not by representatives of national sections but by the international congress.

It is quite obvious that only the Russian Revolution can give us a headquarters location and the general staff for the Communist International. But, in order to lead the movements around the world with certainty, this general staff should, in accord with them, set the plans for proletarian-revolutionary strategy. And not a single case should be permitted of a refusal to obey these decisions.

Unfortunately, there is no lack of examples of the bad results of too much elasticity and of an eclectic approach to the choice of means of struggle. The bad situation of the French Party is the most striking example. And we must also mention the quite striking fact that all parties that have an absolute majority of the politically organised workers on their side and that originated directly in the traditional Social-Democratic parties are going through a crisis. That is evident in France, Czechoslovakia, and Norway. We cannot avoid saying that, in a certain sense, a voluntary error is being made, namely, that the construction of the International of workers' parties is being viewed as too similar to that of state and military organisations.

By trying, come what may, to find decisive measures for the achievement of great revolutionary successes, we have possibly gone down a path that carries us through crises that break out without any way to prevent them through use of the resources at our disposal, and that removes us too far from results that are secure and firm. It is also possible that decisive turning points will take us by surprise, posing difficult questions for us. I do not deny that this experience may to some extent be necessary. I will only take the liberty of making a contribution that results not from abstract considerations but from the experience of a party that maintains its place in our common front line of struggle.

Our International is too often seen as something external to the parties that belong to it. Sometimes the parties, or factions within them, permit themselves to carry on a polemical discussion with the International that is often public and insulting. The International sees itself compelled to create factions

inside the parties that obey its directives, which strikes me as absurd and dangerous.

We see ourselves compelled to deal with too many organisational and disciplinary questions, at a time when we note that the enemy has launched reaction against us in a way that makes the negotiations and the entire procedure required in such cases almost impossible.

Let me close with the slogan issued by Zinoviev himself: let us be a truly communist international party, strictly centralised and imbued with the spirit of revolutionary struggle.

I also note that, in a party of this type, there will be no alterations in the structure or organisation for this or that region, and that, in our national congresses, we will never see delegates from a region that do not agree to the common rules of the organisation.

In the centralised international Communist party, we will truly have an indispensable unity of thought and action, such that every case of refusal to accept discipline will be duly punished.

Graziadei (Italy): I speak on behalf of the minority of the Communist Party of Italy. We will not spend too much time on the Italian question, since a commission has been formed to deal with that. We place ourselves at the disposal of this commission, which will certainly study all the peculiarities of our political situation. If we have something to add when the work of this commission is done, we will of course ask to speak in the Congress.

For the moment, we will stick to the theses and the agenda proposed for the Congress.

Comrade Zinoviev's report consists of two parts. Regarding the first, draft resolutions have already been presented to the Congress. On behalf of the minority, I wish to say that we are ready at this point to vote for these decisions.

As for the Italian question, we wish to say that, in our view, the Communist International has conducted itself in a generally correct manner regarding the situation of our country and our party. Of course, we reserve the right to discuss the conditions and safeguards that will govern how we handle future relations between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party of Italy.

The second part of Comrade Zinoviev's report is more interesting for us, because it touches on basic problems of the Communist International's policies.

Let me remind you that the Communist Party of Italy proposed theses on issues of policy at its congress in Rome.²⁷ The Expanded Executive explained

27. In January 1922, the Italian CP leadership published a fundamental programmatic statement, 'Theses on Tactics', sometimes called the Italian CP's draft pro-

last May that these theses are not correct and must be revised. That view had already found support from the minority at the Rome Congress. The revision demanded of us has in fact not taken place. Instead, the comrades of the majority consider – and this is entirely their prerogative – that the theses are so good that they have presented them a second time through Comrade Bordiga at this congress.

As for the question of the united front, I think it would be absurd to open up an extensive theoretical debate now, a full year after this slogan was issued. The united front provides a means of reaching the broadest layers of the working class.

From this point of view, I cannot understand the concerns of Comrade Bordiga, who inquires from an arithmetical point of view what a majority is. This issue of the majority is not purely rhetorical. The question must be examined from different points of view, which supplement each other. And determining whether a party is a mass party, and whether it has the strength to undertake a given action, depends entirely on the skilfulness of the political leaders in a given country.

Broadly speaking, the united front is a tool to win the broadest layers of the working class – and to win them in the shortest possible time.

Many comrades do not put sufficient emphasis on this question of time. And that is the reason why time has now turned against us.

What are the forms of the united front? With the permission of the Congress, I maintain that there are two forms of united front. One is the form through which a Communist Party makes efforts toward workers' groups that previously belonged to socialist parties and are now coming closer to Communist ideas – at least in their own minds – and are seeking fusion with the Communist organisation. I admit that this first form is particularly hazardous. Often, in the attempt to create a seemingly better situation, one lands in an organisational situation that over time only worsens, rather than improving.

Nonetheless, a tactic cannot be rejected merely on the basis that it holds dangers. All of life is made up of dangers. However, the Communist party is a party of struggle, and it must not abandon methods of struggle on the pretext that they entail difficulties.

The theses of the Communist Party of Italy state that the Communist parties around the world should accept only individual affiliation. Comrade Bordiga said more or less the same thing. That is one of the formal points in the theses

gramme. It was adopted in March by a party congress in Rome. That same month, the ECCI criticised the theses in a letter later published as a document preparatory to the Fourth Congress. The Expanded Executive conference in June (not May) adopted a further statement on the Italian Party's policies. See *Kommunistische Internationale*, 23 (November 1923), pp. 142–4 and Comintern 1922a, pp. 122–3.

that the minority already contested at the March Congress of the Italian Party. If this thesis were really adopted, in categorical terms, for all countries and all times, it would arouse the impression that the Communist parties are incapable of attaining their goal of winning the majority of the working class.

When socialist parties are present, encompassing many workers, we must have the hope of winning them. And, if we win them, we must recruit them not one by one but in groups, precisely because they are organised by another party and bring with them moral and often financial capital. Simple respect for their political conscience makes it impossible for us to ask that they join as isolated individuals.

The question arose in Italy, as it did one and a half years ago in Germany, of admitting some factions of the former socialist parties. The question is still with us.²⁸ I ask whether it has been good or bad for the Communist Party in Germany to have admitted the left Independents. I believe we can now say in general that the way the German Communist Party went about this proved to be very useful, although, at certain moments, it was necessary to fend off and combat the dangers of this operation.

The situation in Italy is somewhat analogous. The Communist Party of Italy said, in excessively slavish fashion, that under no conditions would the Socialist Party of Italy split. They held to this belief until the final moment. But the Socialist Party of Italy split nonetheless. There is no contesting that.

In a country where much is not clearly defined, there is no way to affirm with certainty that the Maximalists [SP majority] have already become Communists. I will take care not to propose any such nonsense. I say only that the split between the Maximalists and the reformists is a significant fact that contradicts the assumptions and wishes of the [Communist] party majority. This fact now confronts us as one of the most difficult aspects of the united front.

Let us move to the second form of the united front. This does not concern new worker forces that previously belonged to socialist parties and that the Communist party is trying to attract. Rather, here, the Communist party, while jealously protecting its independence, is nonetheless making efforts to initiate negotiations with other workers' parties and cooperatives and to ally with them temporarily in order to draw them into common actions. While doing this, the Communist party is always alert to preserve intact its freedom and the distinctive features of its organisation.

28. When the majority of the USPD's Halle Congress voted in October 1920 to accept the Comintern's Twenty-One Conditions, it fused *en bloc* with the smaller KPD, forming the United Communist Party of Germany (VKPD). Two years later, the majority of the Italian SP voted to join the Comintern, splitting with its right-wing minority. However, the Italian CP majority rejected an organisational fusion, and the issue was referred to the Fourth Congress for resolution.

Even here, in my opinion, the majority of our party has made errors in applying this form of the united-front tactic. To be sure, the Communist Party of Italy was entirely sincere in adopting the spirit of this second form of united-front tactic. I must also add that this party was one of the first to advance the slogan of united front, in a very incomplete sense, well before it had become a slogan of the Communist International.

What is, in our opinion, the error that the majority of the Communist Party of Italy committed in these theses on the united front and on the second form of its application?

There are difficulties not only in the first form of united front but in the second. Life is always placing difficulties in our path. Is not marriage also full of difficulties? (*Laughter*) And yet we get married. Well, just as in marriage, there are also difficulties with this tactic. Bordiga believes they can be removed in a mechanical and artificial way by drawing distinctions. He says that we should enter into a united front with trade unions but not with parties, because the unions are the most natural product of the working class, and we can move more freely in the unions and compromise ourselves less. He forgets that there are just as many difficulties bound up with unions as with parties. There are just as many Social Democrats in unions as in parties. (*Applause*)

The distinctions drawn by Comrade Bordiga therefore do not stand up to reality. In the unions, we encounter the very difficulties that we sought to avoid with the parties.

It is true that there is a natural distinction between trade unions and parties. Yet the problem of the united front is not only economic but political, and, indeed, it is a political challenge of a most difficult kind. For this reason, there is absolutely no way to differentiate between unions and the party with regard to the united-front tactic.

Comrade Bordiga said that we are against building permanent committees of Social Democrats and Communists. But the united front does not involve any such establishment of permanent committees. Quite the contrary: the united front signifies repeatedly breaking off negotiations and making new attempts at convergence.

Therefore, the united front cannot be viewed as an ongoing unification that will be maintained until the final battle of Social Democrats with Communists. Such a unification would be equivalent to suicide for the Communist tactic of the united front.

Yet to limit the tactic's application to trade unions where Communists are present would also be inadequate from a union point of view. There are federations where we do not have a single comrade, for example the Christian or Catholic federations, which are quite numerous in some countries, including Italy.

And, in order to be linked to the trade unions, which is, in certain cases, essential to the realisation of the united front, it is necessary to negotiate with their leaders.

In Italy, the united-front tactic was announced in such an abstract and dogmatic manner that it has not yet taken on any concrete form in daily life.

Consider the conception regarding the workers' government. After Comrade Bordiga and I attended the May session of the Expanded Executive, we returned to Italy. I did everything in my power to explain to the comrades what a workers' government is. Certainly, it is entirely my fault, but I had the strong impression that the comrades did not understand a single word of what I was saying. (*Laughter*)

If the united-front concept has now achieved a clarity that makes any attempt at further theoretical explanation superfluous, I must say that the idea of the workers' government has also now found its finished formulation.

I have never shared Comrade Zinoviev's opinion, which initially seemed to be his belief, that the workers' government is a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. I note with pleasure that this conception has now been rectified by himself and by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. In our opinion, the problem is posed in this way: in those countries where the working class is in a position to take power, the workers' government is the result of a united front.

There exists, in fact, a part of the working class that is still influenced by Social Democracy and does not yet believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat. In order to convince them to seize power, we must content ourselves with the workers' government formulation.

We can accept the historical possibility that the workers' government is a genuine stage between the bourgeois government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this case, it is quite possible that the workers' government still takes on a parliamentary form.

This possibility is one of the reasons why the workers' government concept is so difficult for many comrades. In Italy, where the former anti-parliamentary faction of the Socialist Party plays such an enormous role in the education and organisation of our Communist party, this kind of difficulty is characteristic.²⁹ Many of our best comrades are so greatly shocked by the idea of a workers' government, precisely because they fear its parliamentary form.

But, as I have always told the majority of my party, this view is based on a great mistake.

29. Graziadei is referring here to the former 'abstentionist' current in the SP led by Bordiga.

In a country where a large part of the working class is still influenced by democratic-bourgeois or half-bourgeois ideas, it may well happen that a workers' government will, for a certain time rest, on the one hand, on a trade-union organisation – and ongoing efforts are needed to give it a constantly increasing political significance – and, on the other, still rest on parliamentary forms. We must not reject the workers' government merely because it takes on parliamentary forms for a certain time. That would be a great error. In Russia, the Communists made every effort after the March [1917] Revolution to increase the political power of the soviets, in which they were a minority, and still they did not leave the parliament, where the government was purely Social-Democratic. In Germany, after the overthrow of the Empire, both a parliament and soviets coexisted.

Of course, the Communists must stand by the affirmation that a true workers' government can only be established and secured by armed struggle against the bourgeoisie and under increasing supervision by class organisations. They must also always emphasise that if a dictatorship of the proletariat is not speedily established, the workers' government will not be able to withstand the attacks of the bourgeoisie.

I would like to close my remarks with a few words on the final part of Comrade Bordiga's talk.

Our Comrade Bordiga demanded of the Communist International a discipline that continuously increases in strictness. We fully subscribe to this part of Comrade Bordiga's talk. But we earnestly request of our comrades of the Italian party majority that they not merely view discipline as a formal matter but rather that they make the entire practice of the Communist International a living reality in the daily activity of the Party. (*Applause*)

Chair: Before we translate Comrade Graziadei's talk, I wish to point out that the list of speakers is long. We will have to work more intensively in order to conclude. The Presidium proposes to hold an evening session at 7 p.m., and then make tomorrow available to the different commissions. Any objections? (*Adopted*)

Adjournment: 4 p.m.

Session 5 – Saturday, 11 November 1922

Discussion of Executive Committee Report (Continued)

Speakers: Humbert-Droz, Michalkowski, Murphy, Haakon Meyer, Bukharin, Carr, Faure

Convened: 7:30 p.m.

Chairperson: Kolarov

Chair: I give the floor to Comrade Humbert-Droz, who will read messages of greetings that the Presidium considers to be important enough to be presented to the Congress as a whole.

Humbert-Droz: The Congress Presidium has received almost a thousand messages of greetings from every part of Russia and the world. We cannot read all these greetings here. But among them are two statements that the Presidium believes to be particularly important. The first is the greetings of the Vladivostok Soviet of Workers', Peasants', and Red Army Soldiers' Deputies to proletarians around the world. (*Applause*) (*Reads:*)

Greetings of the Vladivostok Soviet of Workers', Peasants', and Red Army Soldiers' Deputies

Comrades, warmed by the rays of the red soviet star, we send you our proletarian greetings from the coast of the Pacific Ocean. After four immensely difficult years of Japanese intervention and the atrocious havoc wreaked by White Guards, the Soviet

of Workers', Peasants', and Red Army Soldiers' Deputies met today in liberated Vladivostok. The countless victims among the working people of Russia have not fallen in vain. After a long and bloody struggle, the Red Army has taken control of the last inch of Russian territory that was previously in the power of the hirelings of Japanese militarism. The proletariat of the coastal region has greeted its liberation with enthusiasm, branding with a curse the Black Hundreds that fled in cowardly fashion.¹

For the first time, the powerful workers' and peasants' army paraded its victorious banners through the streets of the now free city. Its triumphant procession gave expression to the power of the working class of Soviet Russia and the entire world, united and invincible. The appearance of its iron-solid ranks in a city abandoned only a few hours earlier by the interventionists awakened in the hearts of working people an unshakeable conviction that the grievous time of horror is now behind them.

Now that the interventionists have withdrawn, and the peasant army has taken possession of Vladivostok, the working people no longer need the Far Eastern Republic, a buffer state that had to be set up in 1920 in order to prevent a clash between a not yet consolidated Soviet Russia and warlike imperialism.² Comrades, you know how Soviet Russia has grown in power and steadfastness during the last two years, and what successes it has achieved in international relations. You have seen how Soviet Russia's delegates in Genoa and The Hague defended the interests of their state. You know that the annexation plans of Japan at the Dairen [Dalian] and Changchun Conferences were thwarted.³ Soviet Russia has been reinforced by the enthusiastic and creative efforts of all the energy of workers and peasants, unparalleled in history. The intrigues of countless enemies have been thwarted, unrestrained violent destruction has been halted, and the Japanese policy of annexation has been dashed to pieces by the resistance of the Russian people, by disturbances in

1. The Japanese interventionist army withdrew from Vladivostok in late October. Under tsarism, the Black Hundreds were right-wing bands acting with government support who carried out violent attacks on Jewish communities and revolutionary workers. Later, the term was applied generically to groups carrying out rightist terror.

2. The Far Eastern Republic, encompassing Soviet-controlled Siberia east of Lake Baikal, was merged into the Russian Soviet Republic on 15 November, four days after this session.

3. Regarding the Genoa and Hague conferences, see p. 120, n. 4. Representatives of Japan and the Soviet Far Eastern Republic met in the northeast Chinese city of Dairen, from August 1921 to April 1922, with interruptions. Japan won no concessions from Soviet negotiators, and the Japanese army began its withdrawal from Russian territory in August 1922. The Changchun Conference was held in September 1922 to consider Japanese demands for economic rights in the Russian territory of northern Sakhalin, which Japan then occupied. Russian and Far Eastern Republic delegates gave no ground, and Japanese withdrawal followed in 1924.

Japan itself, and by the pressure of the neighbouring great powers, who have no interest in seeing Japanese influence expand.

This led to the liberation of the entire coastal region, under the banner of the definitive reunification of all the fragmented territories of Soviet Russia. The Vladivostok proletariat understood the full scope of the task assigned to it and made known its unshakeable will to unite to the motherland the coastal territory that had been torn to pieces by the intervention and the White bandits. Thanks to the revolutionary initiative of the Vladivostok toilers, elections to the soviet of workers' deputies took place this year on November 5 in all the city's trade unions. Peasants in the coastal province and the Red Army joined in this great initiative, likewise sending their delegates.

The great day has arrived in which the lofty dream of all the oppressed, the downtrodden, and the exploited becomes reality. That marks the victory of not only the workers and peasants of the coastal region, not only the working people of Russia, but also the entire world proletariat. It is your victory, comrades, for henceforth the coastal territory will be an inseparable part of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, which is the foundation and hearth of the world social revolution. From today forward, the slogans of Red October will shine over the roofs and towns of the coastal territory, which was, for long years, poisoned by a stinking fog of sinister characters.

Comrades, receive our greetings in this moment of difficult struggle with the bourgeoisie in your countries. All the sympathies of the Vladivostok proletarians are on your side. We, who have only very recently been liberated, thirst to see you free from the chains of unscrupulous capitalist exploitation. Liberation is near. That is guaranteed by the world congress of the Communist International that now meets in Moscow, first city of the revolution.

Comrades, the working class of the coastal territory has triumphed. But as long as foreign ships of war lie in the Vladivostok harbour, it has no guarantee of genuine peace or of an opportunity to embark on a road of peaceful life and the successful development of the country. The White-Guard forces, now driven from power, are inspired by hopes of continued intervention in Russian waters; this hope spurs them to try to deal new blows against the young proletarian soviets of the coastal territory. We await word from you. We are convinced that protest will arise from your breasts like a mighty volcano as you demand of your governments: Hands off Soviet Russia!

Secretary: *Pakhanitsyn*

Administrative Director: *Asanov*

Humbert-Droz: A telegram has arrived from Alexandria:

On occasion of 7 November vast assembly voted heartfelt support to International. Wish congress full success for victory of cause of world proletariat. Central Committee of Socialist Party Egypt. (*Applause*)

Michalkowski (Warszawski, Poland): Comrade Zinoviev offered the Polish Communist Party a good deal of praise, but he did not scrimp on criticism. He praised us as old revolutionaries who understood, among other things, how to combine legal and illegal activity. The most recent election campaign in Poland provided an eloquent example of how, in a country where Communists are persecuted in every way, it was possible to open the road for communism in public political work. As soon as comrades across the country read in the newspapers that a central electoral committee of the Proletarian Alliance for City and Countryside had been set up in Warsaw, local electoral committees were established within a couple of days, almost automatically, in more than forty-five districts across the country⁴ – despite the fact that signatures had to be collected to establish such electoral committees and to submit lists of candidates.

We have not yet received the final election results, and there is still no news from some of the districts. Nonetheless, in three districts, Warsaw, Dąbrowa, and Łódź, the number of Communist votes is about 100,000.⁵ Our appearance in the electoral arena was something of a surprise for both the bourgeoisie and the government. The Proletarian Alliance was therefore able to legally publish an electoral appeal. But, a short time later, everything was banned and confiscated – even leaflets with our list's ballot position, number 5. As you see, it was almost automatic for comrades to utilise the legal openings, no matter how restricted they were; it is in comrades' tradition, instincts and blood.

But Comrade Zinoviev also criticised many things in our party. To begin, I will say a few words about the united-front tactic in Poland. It is true that, initially, our comrades were a bit confused by this slogan. At a party conference held soon after the Expanded Executive session [of February–March 1922], there were three tendencies on this question.⁶ The first tendency fully agreed with the Executive regarding the united-front tactic, and it won a large

4. Proletarian Alliance for City and Countryside was the name of the alliance formed by the illegal Polish CP for participation in the country's November 1922 elections.

5. The final tally in Poland's November elections showed 132,000 votes cast for the Proletarian Alliance, compared to 906,000 from the Socialist Party, which was legal. During the campaign, more than six hundred CP activists were arrested, many of its presses and publications were destroyed, its demonstrations were broken up, its slates of candidates disallowed, and many of its ballots voided. De Weydenthal 1978, pp. 94–5.

6. The Third Party Conference of the Polish CP was held in Sopot in April 1922.

majority at the conference. The second tendency was also in agreement with the united-front tactic, but initially disagreed with making agreements at the leadership level. However, it then joined forces with the first tendency.

So, just before 1 May, our party addressed an open letter to the Polish Socialist Party [PPS] with an invitation to organise assemblies on May Day around immediate demands that were then relevant. While the proposal was, of course, rejected by the PPS executive, it nevertheless succeeded in bringing about a very large movement for the united-front tactic, in the best sense of the word, not only among Communists but among workers of the PPS and, above all, among the unorganised masses. The open appeal to the responsible leaders had the effect of placing the united-front tactic on a broader and public foundation. And, this way, the masses were able to learn more quickly the position of the parties and conclude that we are for unity and the others are against it.

We also had a third current at our party conference, which was opposed not merely to this or that way of applying the united-front tactic but to its entire conception.

This opposition, however, was linked to tactical concepts on other questions that turned it into a distinctly KAP-type current.⁷ Comrade Zinoviev judged them rightly when he said that our Polish party can handle this current ourselves, and, in my opinion, we can do this quite readily. This current advocates positions counterposed to those of the Party on the Communist Party's character and role, the use of parliamentary elections, the united-front tactic, and finally on the policies of the Soviet government and the role of the Russian Communist Party as a ruling party that also leads the Communist International. This current takes positions of a KAP-type on all these questions. It is quite weak, particularly in terms of its ideas, so we will easily be able to deal with it. Ideologically, it is even more naïve and poverty-stricken than the related groups in Germany and elsewhere. (*Interjection: 'If that is possible!'*) Of course, if that is possible – and, in Poland, anything is possible, because petty-bourgeois Poland is intellectually much more poverty-stricken than the other countries.

However, since the leader of this third KAP-type current is present in Moscow, our delegation decided to invite him with consultative vote and granted him full rights to take the floor here publicly and explain his current and its line of thinking. I hope that Comrade Schreiber will present his ideas in the same spirit and with the same openness that he did at our party conference.

7. By 'KAP-type current', Michalkowski means a party similar to the KAPD, an ultra-left formation that evolved out of a split in the German Communist Party in 1919.

Comrade Zinoviev also spoke in his report of the *agrarian question* in Poland. He said that the position of our party on this question is somewhat old-fashioned. That term is really a bit too strong. We will have an opportunity to discuss this. I am not fond of being old-fashioned. The question is now being actively discussed in the Polish Party. We are publishing a book on this question for discussion, and also discussion articles are appearing in our press. But I can tell you one thing already: it was clear at our last party conference that almost the entire party believes that, in order to carry out a revolution, the proletariat must go hand in hand with the land-hungry rural population, with the small peasants. And, in my opinion, in countries like Poland, where the small-peasant population is the overwhelming majority of the working masses, that is the most important thing. This perspective must find practical, political, and economic expression, in order to weld the workers and small peasants together into a revolutionary force. Given that our party already has this outlook, I believe that the main practical task is now accomplished, and the programmatic task will be more easily achieved.

I would like to add a few words regarding the slogan of the workers' government. First of all, I must say that we have not discussed this question either at our party conference or in our literature. The Party as such has not made any decisions, because this question is not posed in Poland at present and is not likely to be posed in the coming period. In my opinion, there is too much speculation on this question, too much haphazard speculation. (*'Very true' from the Germans*)

Criticism on this question focuses on three points. First, that it will either be a government of the Scheidemanns or a coalition government of the Communists with the social traitors. Second, such a government must be based either on parliament or on the workers' councils. Third, it is either an expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat or it is not.

Well, comrades, I do not believe we have to grope in the dark, because we have real practical historical experience. What did the Bolsheviks do in 1917 before the conquest of power? They demanded 'All power to the soviets'. At that moment, this signified giving governmental power to the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who held a majority in the soviets. It meant a workers' government made up of social traitors who were against a dictatorship [of the proletariat]. In social and political terms, that was the workers' government slogan expressed through soviets. When and how this slogan can be realised is quite another question. But, fundamentally, the Bolsheviks put the workers' government demand to outstanding use in their agitation.

In Germany, we had the same situation after the November days [1918]. The Spartacists demanded, 'All power to the workers' and soldiers' councils', that is, to the Scheidemanns and the Independents, who were then a majority

in the soviets and were opponents of the dictatorship [of the proletariat]. Thus once again, it was not a Communist government.

That's the way things were in Poland as well, and everywhere else where workers' councils were formed. And I believe that is the heart of the matter. It was a stage in our agitation, during a period when conditions produced a historically very important form – the councils – but the central issue was the workers' government. When we see another revolutionary upsurge, with the working masses once again pouring into the streets and workers' councils being formed, our historical experience will in all likelihood lead us once again to advance this slogan, demanding, 'Place all governmental power in the hands of the workers' councils!'

We will then demand the dictatorship of the proletariat. And, at that point comrades will once again criticise us, just as in 1917 and 1918, saying: 'What is this? You are demanding the dictatorship of the proletariat, and all power to the soviets, when you have no majority there!' It is quite possible that we will once again have a great revolutionary movement at a time when we have not yet won the majority of the working class. The revolution will most likely come at a time when the revolutionary ferment and the revolution itself enable us to win the masses much more quickly than we can do today. In all likelihood, we will advance the same slogan, and, fundamentally, it will be the very slogan that the Executive has already tried to formulate in various ways. It will, fundamentally, be the same government, but based on the mass movement.

And, if the Executive has not yet been able to come up with a finished formulation of this slogan, in my opinion that is because two different things are being confused. We are trying both to advance the slogan and at the same time give it a form, which is quite impossible, because the form will depend on revolutionary conditions that permit it to find a broader foundation than is possible today.

In my opinion, we would do well here to think back somewhat on what we did during the revolutionary period. We will see at once that the things that provoke criticism from many left comrades today were not then the object of criticism, even though the views of these same comrades were then much more revolutionary than they are now.

Murphy (Britain): Comrades, our party is in full agreement with the general line of the Executive report. We also believe that the diagnosis of capitalism's condition around the world is correct. We are aware of the fact that the present capitalist offensive against the working class is not the action of a class confident in its power, but, rather, represents an offensive with defensive purposes.

There is very likely no country in the world where this offensive is being carried out in as skilful a fashion as in Great Britain. But, despite these efforts and despite all the capitalists' dexterity, they have shown themselves to be completely unable to resolve their basic problems. We have just seen the fall of Lloyd George. His fall opens a new stage in the dissolution process of British capitalism, even though the current elections are being utilised to consolidate the imperialist parties. Here, too, they have shown themselves to be extremely skilled. Although the British Labour Party has placed great hopes on these general elections, I believe that these hopes will not be fulfilled to the extent that they would like. This, in itself, is a very important development, signalling a new period of more intense activity in Britain than what we have seen in the past.

Comrade Zinoviev said in his talk that the fascist movement was limited to Italy. Nonetheless, it is a fact that, while the Fascists in Italy carried out their attacks on Communists, trade unions, cooperatives, and so on, the bourgeois newspapers of London were reporting on the regularisation of the Special Police Corps, announcing that these would be the future fascists of Britain.

Given that, by and large, the same situation prevails everywhere, it is extremely important to analyse these events and determine our future policies. We have heard a great deal about the united front. It is beyond any doubt that the opposition to the united front is gradually vanishing from the ranks of the Communist International.

Its introduction in Britain led to rather remarkable results. It affected the British Party like an electric jolt. The Party was young and had little experience. So it was that, in some districts, the demand for a united front initially led to a significant loss of membership. The united-front demand reached the Party right after an internal discussion, while it was, in fact, still in a process of being constituted.

At the time of the Second World Congress [1920], we still had no Communist party. Instead, there were a number of parties, small parties of all shades of the socialist spectrum, from pale pink to brilliant scarlet. The Second Congress directed them to come together in unity, and also to immediately apply for affiliation to the Labour Party. But unifying socialist parties and naming them a Communist party is quite different from turning these forces into a genuine Communist party. The months that followed were consumed in an ongoing struggle within the Party to free it from various difficulties within its ranks. The question of affiliation to the Labour Party had divided the parties even before they came together. Now, in a unified framework, this particular issue was settled at the first conference by only a small majority.

Another whole year had to pass before this particular question could be incorporated into the Party's work and could enrich its practical experience.

In this, the Labour Party unknowingly came to our aid at its Brighton Conference [1921] by putting off consideration of this question. Twelve months went by before the question of our relationship to the Labour Party was posed in real life. Until then, it had been more a subject for theoretical debate in the Party than a focus for actual struggle with the Labour Party. The struggle reached its highpoint at this year's Labour Party conference in Edinburgh.

To enable the Congress to fully understand the difficulties we had to cope with in this regard, I would like to remind you that we were struggling not only with problems related to affiliation to the Labour Party but also with the election of our party's first central committee, which did not take place until the national conference in October. This fact in itself gives insight into the syndicalist character of many elements within the Party.

Given these disagreements in the Party itself, and also given the need to resolve the broader problem of unity in action, you will certainly understand that the task we were undertaking was no simple matter. But, once the Party had got into its stride, it learned much that was valuable, as did the workers' movement as a whole.

Both before and during the general elections, the Labour Party was shoved to the side by the capitalist parties' skilful manoeuvres. Its attempts to win the favour of the middle class resulted in forfeiting working-class support. From the point of view of winning middle-class votes, expelling the Communists from its ranks was a good move. The resolution adopted in Edinburgh drove the conflict between the Communists and the Labour Party to a climax. The two resolutions proposed there banned the affiliation of any party that runs parliamentary candidates in opposition to those of the Labour Party.⁸

We, therefore, faced the following situation. The Labour Party's conditions made our affiliation impossible. The situation was sharpened even more by the fact that the Labour Party forced all its affiliated worker organisations to expel all members of any party running parliamentary campaigns against the Labour Party. So, we responded with a counterstroke. The Party immediately withdrew its parliamentary candidates and adopted the constitution of the Labour Party. This permitted the Communists to achieve a significant victory in the workers' movement. Although we initially lost members, the Communist Party's influence in different sectors of the working class increased significantly.

8. At the British Labour Party's June 1922 national conference in Edinburgh, a motion favouring CP affiliation was defeated by 3,086,000 votes to 261,000. In addition, the conference ruled that no delegate to a party structure could be a member of an organisation that ran candidates for public office. CP policy was to run for election in districts where they would not jeopardise the election of Labour Party candidates. In Britain's 15 November 1922 elections, four CP members ran for election without official Labour endorsement, although none of them opposed a Labour candidate. See p. 475, n. 31.

In Glasgow, Sheffield, Manchester, and Birmingham, the Labour Party was completely unable to carry out its own decisions. In other districts – Barrow, Battersea, and other places – the Communists won the leadership of the Labour Party organisations.

In addition, we came up against the fact that the attempt to expel Communists from the Labour Party only landed this party in new difficulties that it was unable to overcome. For example, given that the Labour Party consists of affiliated trade-union organisations, this party was led to insist that Communist [trade-union] delegates be excluded from its conferences. But, here, it must confront the big workers' organisations, who are not all prepared to follow its lead. Already one of the workers' organisations, a large one, has refused to carry out the Labour Party's decisions. The Labour Party was then face to face with the loss of a trade union, a mass organisation. They do not dare go further down this path.

All this shows that the united-front policy is not one that weakens the Communist Party; on the contrary it is making the Party stronger.

The progress made in the trade-union movement is equally important. At the trade-union congress, for example, we advanced a programme for the consolidation of the union movement, and this permitted us to parade all the union leaders before the masses and expose their errors.

We have won significant influence in current struggles in the factories and the union movement. When the machinists were locked out, the Communists and supporters of the Red International of Labour Unions led the struggle and were the driving force everywhere.⁹

Here, I must take exception to an aspect of Zinoviev's report, namely, what he said about the factory-council movement. He said that no Communist Party can be a real mass party unless it has solid influence in the factories and workplaces, in the mines and railways, and so on. Under current circumstances, he said, no movement can be considered as a well-organised proletarian mass movement unless it succeeds, together with the working class, in founding factory and workplace committees.

To this we take exception. We believe that, when the speaker made this assertion, his eyes were too closely fixed on Germany. In Britain, we had a powerful shop-stewards' movement. But, in both the past and the future, such committees exist only under specific objective conditions, which, at the moment, are not present in Britain. How can a factory organisation be built while 1,750,000 workers are jobless on the streets? Factory organisations cannot be established in workplaces that are empty and abandoned, with such a large reserve-army of unemployed.

9. Regarding the British metalworkers' strike of 1922, see p. 794, n. 9.

Given these conditions, the movement takes other forms. It takes the form of the Minority Movement in the trade unions,¹⁰ and spurs the formation of a large movement of committees of the unemployed. It was these organisations that led the struggle during the lockout of machinists; only rarely was the lead taken by the workers who had actually been locked out from the factories.

From this, it follows that the Communist Party must adjust itself to the different forms of struggle determined by historical circumstances. In one country, conditions make it possible to go to the factories and build factory committees there; in another, the Minority Movement in the unions and committees of the jobless are on the agenda. A party that sinks deep roots in the struggles of the masses and is capable of adapting itself to the mass organisations that correspond to the given conditions – this is a genuine Communist party, regardless of whether the mass organisations take shape as factory committees or in other forms.

Consider now the international ties that flow from the policy of calling for a united front. What have we seen since the conferences of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals?¹¹ We have seen a number of struggles take place in this or that country. During the lockout of machinists, metalworkers were engaged in wage struggles in a number of countries. None of the Communist parties of these countries had any idea what the others were doing. They had no living contact with each other. They were not raising the same demands, and no way was found to create a united front among the Communist parties themselves. In this regard, the Communist International has a lot of catching up to do in order to improve the situation.

In addition, we have heard a great deal regarding the awakening of the Eastern and colonial peoples. We hear that movements have arisen in India, Egypt, and Mesopotamia [Iraq], while, in Ireland, we see a revolutionary movement in development. However, little has been done to bring the parties of the countries that rule and direct these peoples into closer contact with them and to acquaint them with the problems of the masses in struggle. If we correct the errors made in this regard, we will open the road to a broader application of the united front and a further development of the Communist International.

10. The Minority Movement, a rank-and-file organisation seeking to win the unions to a militant, class struggle course, was formed within the miners' union toward the end of 1922. Minority Movements also took shape in metalworking and shipbuilding unions. A National Minority Movement was established in August 1924 by a convention attended by more than 270 delegates, representing two hundred thousand workers; it became the British affiliate of the RILU.

11. Conferences of the Second International (18–19 June 1922) and the Two-and-a-Half International (3 September 1922) decided to seek unity of their two organisations, breaking off negotiations with the Comintern.

Haakon Meyer (Norway): Esteemed comrades, I will not say much about the Norwegian question, because it will be taken up by the Commission on Norway and will then come back to the Congress. However, I must say a few words about Comrade Zinoviev's fleeting remarks in his report on the activity of the Executive. Most Norwegian delegates whose views on this question do not coincide entirely with those of the International agree that the question here, as Comrade Zinoviev says, is one of the birth of a Communist Party of Norway. It is mainly an organisational question, but also one of party policy. These are the two main issues to be resolved in the Norwegian discussion.

The naming of the Norwegian Party's newspapers, by contrast, is not at all the main question before us. Comrade Zinoviev spoke of these names in earlier discussions with us and also here at the Congress. The Executive also raised this question again in its most recent letter to the Norwegian Party.¹²

Comrade Zinoviev says that, in Norway, all the newspapers are still called *Social-Demokraten*. The Norwegian Party is relatively strong. It did not come out of another large party, but is, rather, a large party in its own right, which has taken over almost all the newspapers. The name *Social-Demokraten* is not regarded in our language as an offensive swearword. (*Laughter*) Yes, comrades, it sounds funny, but that is a fact. But that is not the most important point.

The key fact is, as Comrade Zinoviev very well knows, that a proposal has been unanimously submitted to the National Committee of our party that the newspapers called 'Social-Democratic' should change their name. We have between forty and fifty newspapers in our party. In a country as small as Norway, to have more than forty newspapers that have now been speaking up for the Russian Revolution and revolutionary ideas for five years is a strength that cannot be diminished by these newspaper's name. As Comrade Zinoviev knows, a motion in this regard has been placed before the National Committee. It would have been considered at the party congress in September, except that the International ordered that this congress be postponed until January. And these names will be changed in January, as the Executive is very well aware.¹³

12. The ECCI letter, sent 23 September 1922, appears in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* (hereafter *Inprekorr*), 2, 209 (31 October 1922), pp. 1444–5. See also Lorenz 1978, pp. 150–2.

13. Meyer's prediction was not borne out. On 21 December 1922, the majority of the Norwegian Party's Central Committee rejected the Fourth Congress decisions on Norway. There followed almost a year of further discussion and manoeuvres, but, in November 1923, the party majority left the Comintern. The minority formed the Norwegian CP, taking with it seven of the Labour Party's sixteen daily newspapers.

I wish to say something regarding the *Mot Dag* group, which Comrade Zinoviev called a Levi group in the Norwegian party. I am a member of this group, which consists chiefly of young academics. When this group adhered to the Party in its totality, it came into quite sharp conflict with some party comrades. But none of the comrades ever called us a Levi group. That term is usually used for groups that turn against the party in traitorous fashion during an action. This group has done nothing of the kind; it has never acted against the Party in any way whatsoever. There is absolutely no cause to suddenly discover a Levi group in the Norwegian Party.¹⁴

The *question of the workers' government* has moved rather to the foreground of discussion at this congress. This issue has not been discussed very much in the Norwegian Party and, in fact, has not even been raised in the Party's discussion. But it is clear to us that a current exists in the Party whose policies aim systematically at forming a workers' government that rests on a united front – but a united front not only of workers' parties but one that also encompasses bourgeois groups. We oppose this policy, not only because we do not believe it is correct but, above all, because those who openly advocate this road are the comrades of the Party's parliamentary fraction, who have followed an entirely opportunist course in parliament.¹⁵ During the debate on the question of the Party and the government, the vice-chairman of our parliamentary fraction said the following:¹⁶

For some time now I have expressed my views on governmental questions by saying that I would not, under all circumstances, be against a bourgeois government. I was of the view – a view not shared by my party – that, under certain circumstances, we would have to recognise the much scorned

14. *Mot Dag*, a publication launched in September 1921, was initially independent of the Norwegian Labour Party, but its members joined the Party as a group in March 1922. *Mot Dag* published articles critical of the party's parliamentary tactics, which it considered opportunist, and of Comintern policies. 'Levi group' refers to the Communist Working Group (KAG) in Germany, led by Paul Levi.

15. The Norwegian Labour Party's parliamentary fraction had applied a united-front approach to Venstre (Left), a left-bourgeois party with a following among small peasants and some workers, which was then in government. In February 1922, the Labour Party deputies voted in favour of Venstre's law for compulsory arbitration of wages, in order to prevent the defeat of the Venstre government. The leader of the fraction, Scheflo, headed the Labour Party current that fully accepted Comintern policies, while the party majority, headed by Tranmael, stood closer to the party's Social-Democratic and syndicalist heritage. The majority held that, in Norway, the united front could not be applied through coalitions with other parties, and attacked support of Venstre as opportunist. The June ECCI conference disagreed with Tranmael's current on application of the united front but also criticised the parliamentary fraction's conduct toward Venstre. See p. 1088, n. 14; Comintern 1922a, pp. 101–3, 131–4.

16. The vice-chair of the Labour Party parliamentary fraction was Christopher Hornsrud (1859–1960), who became head of the Norwegian government in 1928.

ministerial socialism. When I said that four years ago, I put myself in contradiction to my party, and I expected that because I had this view I would not be accepted as a candidate in the parliamentary elections. But it depends entirely on the situation. Sometimes, the case arises and sometimes we find ourselves in a situation where we cannot simply say, 'Regardless of circumstances, we will always fight against every bourgeois government'.

As I said, however, the Party did not share this view, believing rather that it had to combat every liberal-bourgeois government.

What we see here is no accident but rather a symptom of the general policy of our parliamentary fraction. Comrades of this fraction frequently gave expression to this policy, particularly with regard to compulsory arbitration, which they supported, so that the Party had to accept this law. Given that they have repeatedly pursued this kind of opportunist policy, it is understandable that we do not believe we can carry out a policy of this type aimed at forming a workers' government without being entirely corrupted by this group in parliament. I could cite a large number of cases that show the opportunist character of this group's policies. For example, it discussed whether the bourgeois banking institute, which currently faces a crisis, should be supported with government funds, and it maintained that, in certain cases, such a bourgeois banking institute should be supported. There have been a number of other cases that show the same tendency, above all – as I said – the case of the compulsory arbitration tribunals.

The Executive's second-to-last letter to our party stated that the position taken by the parliamentary fraction in this matter was influenced by parliamentary opportunism. The most recent letter, however, said that this is a most difficult tactical question.¹⁷

If, in such a situation, this group chose the path of accepting the compulsory arbitration law for all workers, it did not do so purely out of concern for the trade unions. It was equally a manifestation of this group's opportunist

17. The first ECCI letter cited by Meyer relayed the decision of the ECCI's June 1922 conference. Referring to the Labour Party's conditional support of a Liberal government and the participation of a party executive member in the government's mission to the Genoa Conference, this resolution stated: 'These occurrences can hardly be distinguished from the old reformist policies. Although motivated by concern for certain workers' interests, they sacrifice other, more fundamental workers' interests'. The letter welcomed the Labour Party's recognition of these errors and called on it to correct them promptly. *Comintern* 1922a, pp. 131–4.

The second letter, dated 23 September, reiterated the ECCI's criticism of parliamentary tactics, specifically regarding compulsory arbitration of wages. However, it expressed scepticism of 'pretend-radical critics of the parliamentary fraction' and denied that they were 'better Communists' than the objects of their criticism. Lorenz 1978, p. 151; *Inprekorr*, 2, 209 (31 October 1922), pp. 1444–6.

policy, which had been expressed much earlier. They did so also because they wished to give indirect support to the Liberal government or, as I have said, to ministerial socialism. For this reason, this group must be viewed with some suspicion when they follow a policy aimed at achieving a workers' government composed in such a way as to include not only the workers but groups from among the bourgeois parties.

Finally, I must say a few words on the resolution proposed here. As the Congress probably knows, the majority of the Norwegian Party's Central Executive did not agree with the ECCI's most recent letter to the Party, just as we disagreed with the ECCI in several other matters. If we adopt this resolution, we are required to approve things that the majority of the Party's Central Executive, which we represent here, does not wish to accept. Therefore, we can accept this resolution only if it is modified to approve the work of the ECCI in general, but not on the specific points, which should be separated out so they can be handled by the commissions. However, we will not vote against the resolution, because that could be interpreted as a rejection of the International. That is not the case. So if the resolution is not modified, we will abstain from the vote. That applies only to the three members of our delegation who are representatives of the National Committee majority. (*Applause from the Norwegian delegation*)

Bukharin (*Received with applause*): Esteemed comrades, I would like to note first of all that it is unusual that, here, in this international communist world congress, not a single speaker has taken up the international situation, which affects all parties. Almost every speaker, without exception, dealt only with the situation in his own party. Even our fiery comrade from the Berlin organisation, Comrade Ruth Fischer, dealt almost entirely with the affairs of the Berlin organisation, or at best with those of the German Party. Yet we are, after all, now discussing the report of Comrade Zinoviev, which takes up the situation of the International as a whole. We could have expected our friends, the delegates of various sister parties, to follow up his analysis with a discussion focused on this overall situation. For, as you all know, we have separate agenda items that take up the situation in the various individual parties, where these issues can be discussed in more detail. That means that we are still too Social-Democratic, not accustomed to analysing the situation in its entire international scope. I would like to try here to analyse the policies of the Executive in the framework of the International as a whole, of groupings and tendencies seen in the International as a whole.

We are called on to answer the question of whether the Executive of the Communist International has acted correctly. This question breaks down into two main issues: (1) whether the International has correctly judged the different

tendencies within it, whether its internal political policies have been pursued correctly and effectively; and (2) whether it has set the general tactical line well or poorly. Those are the two main issues on which we must provide answers.

I see various tactical currents and tendencies within the International. Let me enumerate them: First, the *centrist* tendencies; second, the *half-reformist* tendencies that, however, wear a 'left' mask and whose phraseology strikes a left pose; third, the various transitional formations that are partly syndicalist, partly reformist, or that incorporate both currents at the same time; and fourth, the true Lefts. By Lefts, I understand the groupings that have made so-called left errors. And, then, we have the actual core of the International, which we hope is following a correct policy.

The centrist tendencies are represented in the activity of the International as a whole and also here at this congress in the most blatant form by the representatives of two parties: first, a part of the French Party, and second, a part of the Norwegian Party, a representative of whose majority has just spoken.

The French centrist tendencies are a relic of earlier Social-Democratic ideology. *They also wear a mask.* Their mask consists of the fact that they accept everything that is asked of them. Establish Twenty-One Conditions, and they accept them all. Propose to them excellent resolutions on party activity; these excellent resolutions are immediately and unanimously adopted. (*Laughter*) It's always like that. They approve everything asked of them by the so-called decrees of Moscow. Later, of course, they heap abuse on these Moscow decrees with all their Communist energy, but they sign everything that is asked of them. On the surface, that seems at first to be very loyal, but the great danger is that all this is just on paper. Good resolutions of this type are adopted, and then one does nothing whatsoever. The tangible deviations in policy are never formulated. No attempt is ever made to clearly formulate the alternative point of view.

One of the French comrades was quite right – it was perhaps one of the few correct points in his talk – when he said: 'We Lefts speak always to the matter at hand, while these centrists take precautionary measures, and one can never grasp what they really want.' That is what is most dangerous. When we examine the French centrists, we can define their policy as a struggle for the conquest of power, but only within the framework of the Party. (*Laughter*) As regards the face that the Party turns toward the masses, we are forced to say that no step has been taken that genuinely supports the workers' movement in France. Its most important aspect is the struggle of the trade unions, which actually constitute the essence of the social life of workers in France. But this is carried out independently of the Party. The Party does not concern itself with

that. That is visible in the work of all the districts, in the French Party's centre, and in its official publication, which, we must say to our French brothers, is not yet a Communist newspaper. *L'Humanité* has great possibilities to influence workers toward communism, but it is not yet a Communist paper. If the French comrades would concern themselves more with the life of the working class, we would be able to increase our influence among French workers considerably beyond its present level. There is also a well-defined pacifist current within this tendency of the French Party, with a humanitarian colouration; its only virtue lies in carrying forward France's bourgeois traditions.

One further point. Inside this current, there is also an anti-Communist tendency, that is a tendency aimed directly against the discipline of the Communist International. That is one of the greatest dangers in the International, and we need to combat this rightist danger.

As for the Norwegian Party, we have just heard one of the comrades from its right wing. What did he say? The name of the Norwegian paper, *Social-Demokraten*, is like any inscription: nothing more than a few letters that one arranges in some sequence. (*Laughter*) But why do we not call ourselves Social Democrats? Perhaps because of our love of particular letters? That's the view of our Norwegian comrade. But we say that the name is a symbol that defines our line from the outset. We have put up with these Social-Democratic newspapers for two years, and wouldn't you say that their name is not without influence on their contents? We can show here – and we will do it – that the contents of these papers is also in part half-Social-Democratic. You can read some articles in these papers directed against the Communist International that are quite nasty in tone.

That is the plain truth. And the comrade says here that this is a trivial matter; in January we will – after two and a half years – straighten out the newspapers. I can only answer that this has already been promised many times but not carried out. And what of international discipline? The comrade omits that entirely. We have often said plainly that, according to the decisions of the International, its Executive, and its earlier congresses, such a situation cannot be tolerated, and still we are told here that this is a trivial matter. Such is discipline. Once again – a mask. I will speak of this matter in a moment, but in another context.

Some of the centrist and half-centrist forces form a special category because they always appear behind a left mask.

We have two critics of our programme, who take up the agrarian and national questions. On the agrarian question, our friend Serrati criticises us very sharply from the left. He says, what kind of Marxism is it when a part of the land is given to the peasants, to the petty bourgeoisie? That is a concession

to the petty bourgeoisie. We are genuine revolutionary orthodox Marxists, and we wage war on the petty-bourgeois scoundrels.¹⁸ It has a good ring. But experience has shown that it is only a cover. And I hope that Comrade Serrati too will not dispute that fact. In its kernel, it was somewhat rotten.

The same thing on the nationalities question. Here, we also had a principled opponent – that was Levi. He said: ‘Well, look at the nationalities question. Look at all the different concessions that you are making there! What is left of your orthodoxy? Nothing.’¹⁹ And, then, we experienced the so striking evolution of Comrade Levi. He demonstrated before our eyes what lies hidden in the core of this business. It was just a mask, which bore orthodox features in order to hide the opportunist core. Our Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries are shouting from the rooftops that they oppose the New Economic Policy and defend the workers’ real interests. That is a ruse of war, and we will expose it.

Now let me speak of various specific things. Take the French comrades. The distinguishing feature of their politics is sheer passivity, as in not supporting any strike, and so on. But they have camouflage: the dangers of the united front. They say: ‘Why should we negotiate with such scoundrels, who are not even socialists?’ You heard an example of that here from Comrade Duret, who stands more to the left. He spoke a few days ago against the expulsion of Verfeuil and company. He was, and is to this day, for the autonomy of the unions,²⁰ and then he comes to us and accuses us of opportunism. A few days ago, he was still against the expulsion of Verfeuil, who is nothing but a bourgeois rogue. And then Comrade Duret asks: ‘What kind of an opportunist

18. See Serrati’s remarks in the Second Congress, Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 653–4.

19. The ‘concessions’ referred to here consist of the Soviet government granting self-determination and broad-ranging national rights to the subject peoples of the tsarist empire, policies criticised by Luxemburg in 1918. (Luxemburg 2004, pp. 293–9.) Levi had published Luxemburg’s comments in 1921, but no record is available of a statement by him on this question. On the related issue of Turkey’s independence struggle, Radek criticises Levi’s position on p. 728.

Levi did write on the national question in the context of Germany’s subjugation under the Versailles Treaty. ‘[T]his is the most burning question for all those middle strata in Germany,’ Levi wrote in his 1921 pamphlet, *Unser Weg [Our Path]*. Communists should advance ‘slogans that signify to those middle strata a solution of their national pains’, he stated. Alliance with Soviet Russia ‘would have been such a slogan’, under which workers could unite with middle strata ‘in a struggle against the Junkers and the bourgeoisie’, who betray the country to the ‘Western bourgeoisie’. Levi 2009, p. 117. For the Fourth Congress statement on this issue, see p. 1146.

20. Regarding the expulsion of Verfeuil, see p. 985, n. 27. The Comintern view on union ‘autonomy’, referred to here by Bukharin, is elaborated by Lozovsky, pp. 546–50, who denies that Communists seek to ‘subordinate the unions’ but affirms the need to ‘fill the trade-union movement with a communist spirit’. See also Sections III–V of the trade-union theses, pp. 1200–3.

International is this, telling us to make a united front, to recruit Serrati, and so on? What does that tell us?' It tells us, Comrade Duret, that in this International we have a reformist hangover in your very person, and that you are trying to use words to trick us. (*Applause*)

But we also read the French documents. We are very glad that the French Party is on the road to recovery (*Laughter*), but there is more to politics than signs of recovery, and this business requires a bit of supervision (*Laughter*), as to how things will develop. We must have the test of practice and considerable evidence in life before we completely believe them. We know how people fluctuate this way and that, and, when a comrade comes and speaks to us of the International in such a sharp tone, almost one of contempt, we say the same thing that Comrade Radek said to a comrade: 'You should display a little modesty,²¹ and first you must give us evidence of your own genuinely revolutionary activity.'

As for Comrade Duret's factual arguments, they can be laid out as follows. I have drawn out his most important points. The first argument is: 'Our party cannot carry out manoeuvres; it is incapable of manoeuvring.' That was his first argument against the united front, and our friend Bordiga picked up on that. But, in my view, it is completely incorrect to think that the party is first constructed, right down to the last man, and only then begins to manoeuvre. That is not how it is done. For us, parties begin to manoeuvre when they are still unfinished, and only in the process of manoeuvring can genuine parties be built. However, if you wait until you have this party, and remain in a stance of expectancy in the eternal hope of one day acquiring this party, that signifies precisely the policy of passivity that you always criticise in the French Party. You shake your finger at the centrist comrades and say: 'They are passive people who don't want to do anything.' But you yourself make the same error by waiting until you have the party. No, the party is forged through struggle, and that must be the case in France as well.

Comrade Duret has an additional argument: 'The Socialist opportunists are not willing to march together with us.' What a striking argument! If the Socialist opportunists are not agreeable to marching with you, you surrender your Communist innocence. What kind of argument is that? If they are not agreeable, then you must expose them, write against them, direct your agitation against them. That is your duty. That is raw material to be utilised fully in taking advantage of the sins of social patriots. Here, again – the same accursed passivity. You are too lazy; that is what I would like to say to you. (*Applause*)

The third argument, a quite humorous one, is that the united front is, of course, just right for Germany. That's what opportunists always say. So during

21. See Radek's comment on p. 162.

the war they said in Germany: 'Revolution in Russia? Of course! We're all for that. But in Germany? That is quite another question.' That's exactly what you are saying. 'In Germany the masses are organised; here they are not. So we can win the masses with the united-front tactic in Germany but not here.' Why? Where is the evidence – even a scrap of evidence – to sustain this argument? First, we are not dealing only with organised comrades, and that is exactly the same as in Germany. You need to win over the unorganised as well. And, if you manage to win a few more organised comrades, and this process of accumulation continues, you will win the unorganised layers much more quickly. So what is your argument? In Germany, that is called *Klugscheisserei* [being a smart-ass]. (*Laughter*)

Zinoviev: But that is unparliamentary language.

Bukharin: Comrade Zinoviev says I am using an unparliamentary language. I must admit I was speaking somewhat frivolously. (*Laughter*) But I am no parliamentarian.

Now, comrades, please permit me to pass over to another category in our world of riches, namely that of what can be called a transitional stage to the left and the reformists, both at the same time. Here, Comrade Vajtauer is a typical representative. He says: I am with the Left. There is a left opposition. I differentiate among the different forces inside the Czech left opposition, and I select Comrade Vajtauer as the one who is devoting all his energy to turning this left opposition into an ideology: 'I maintain that all criticism should come not from the right but from the left.' To start with, what Comrade Vajtauer is proposing has nothing in common with communism but a great deal in common with petty-bourgeois Proudhonism – from beginning to end.

There are some oddballs in the workers' movement. In Germany, for example, a certain Dr. Bernstein proclaimed that the struggle against capitalism should be conducted with a childbearing strike: no woman should bear a child, because, without children, militarism could not exist (*Loud laughter*). Now Comrade Vajtauer comes and proposes building into the programme a method that will break the backbone of capitalism through one single action: no one should buy from capitalists who act mercilessly toward the working class.

That is just brilliant. I do not know what Comrade Vajtauer proposes for the struggle against capitalists who are not merciless toward the workers. This terminology is philanthropic, as if Comrade Vajtauer was of the female gender (*Laughter*) and also of aristocratic origin. (*Laughter*) But, comrades, this is actually a serious matter. That is not Marxism. It is theoretically false from beginning to end. The theoretical proposition here, that workers are exploited more by commercial capital than by productive capital, is so appalling, that I would advise Comrade Vajtauer to sign up for the initial course in a Marxist

preparatory school. (*Laughter*) I do not mean to say by this that the theory is first-class. (*Renewed laughter*) The point is that the theoretical basis is completely false. The policy is absurd, and not just absurd but opportunist, entirely opportunist. Instead of proposing a mass uprising, strikes, and the like, this provides fresh milk for the bourgeois world, not for the revolutionary proletariat. And then people will say: 'This International that carried out the Russian October Revolution is really so peculiar!' Comrades, this cannot be taken seriously. The serious side of it is that such absurd thoughts have a certain echo, such that even our friend Bordiga applauded during Vajtauer's entire speech. What does that tell us? That, in this internal political manoeuvring, people are acting in a quite incorrect way. Of course, I am not saying they do this consciously, but, whether it is done consciously or unconsciously is absolutely secondary. What is decisive here is the objective effect.

What I have said about Comrade Vajtauer can be generalised.

I hear that Vajtauer is a philosopher. But, far from being an embodiment of pure reason, his philosophy is the dialectical negation of this reason. (*Laughter*) The question here is whether or not the Executive acted rightly. The Executive grasped at once that some honest working-class forces were involved.

Where France was concerned, the Executive carried out an energetic struggle against the right wing and demanded its expulsion. Regarding the Centre, however, it advised patience – of course, only to a certain degree. Was this correct? Yes, it was correct.

In the Czech question, we knew that behind the foolish ideas of Comrade Vajtauer stood a number of workers. What did we do? We exercised caution. The Czech Party was asked to attempt to let the workers aligned with these foolish ideas stay in the Party. It was asked to try. And now you must decide here whether that was correct.

I would also like to say a few words over the so-called left errors, taking up first of all the talk by Comrade Ruth Fischer. Her main error is to exaggerate certain dangers. In some cases, her criticism was correct, and Comrade Radek, who certainly does not belong to the Left, has said here – not officially but semi-officially – that this criticism was justified. The error begins when Comrade Ruth Fischer says that here we have reformism and revisionism in full bloom. That is an exaggeration. That is a quite undialectical evaluation of situations and actions that are quite concrete. That is their error, and we want to say it candidly. A second important error I noted in Comrade Ruth Fischer's speech was the following sentence, which I noted down: 'Organisational strength is a relic of Social-Democratic thinking.'²²

22. The proceedings record Fischer as having referred to an illusion embraced by Social Democracy that 'organisational strength... could be the main factor in defeating the counter-revolution'. See p. 146.

By no means is that a relic of Social-Democratic thinking. We must not frame our political stance on the basis that organisation means very little to us, at the very moment when the entire bourgeoisie is adopting new organisational forms. Fascism is not merely an organisational form that the bourgeois had in the past; it is a newly discovered form that is adapted to the new movement by drawing in the masses. Among other things the bourgeoisie understands that it too requires a mass party, something that Bordiga, unfortunately, does not grasp. It is an entirely new organisational form. Of course, we do not want to say that organisational forms count for nothing. No, exactly the opposite. Of course, the masses are the decisive factor, their action is decisive, but at the centre of it is the organisational form, and that is true not only of a Social-Democratic party but of any party of struggle. (*Interjection: 'Very true!'*)

Now the third point. Comrade Fischer says that quite a struggle was carried out against the German Party because of its putschist policy, and that this has resulted in a somewhat depressed mood. Quite possible! But in life, as we know, not everything can be determined and outlined in advance. And it would be much worse for the Party if we had not carried out an energetic struggle against putschism.²³

Now regarding Comrade *Bordiga*. He opened by saying that he accepted the spirit of the united-front tactic. That was said in a noble, idealistic, and spiritual manner. But Comrade Bordiga, your spirit lacks substance. (*Laughter*) We need a spirit that is not so ephemeral but rather something more tangible. The main error of Comrade Bordiga is that he rejects the living dialectic in an attempt to grasp the unknown using fixed categories. First, we want to take account of every eventuality, he says, and then we will work out various protective measures to ensure that we commit no sins. (*Laughter*) But life is complicated and nothing can be determined in advance. So Comrade Bordiga stands around in his big galoshes (*Laughter*), as we used to say in Russia – that is, in total perplexity.

Comrade Bordiga also speaks of flexibility and eclecticism.²⁴ He uses these words as synonyms. What does that tell us? Comrade Bordiga regards what the Russian Party considers its greatest acquisition as nothing but lack of principle and petty-bourgeois cynicism. That, of course, is a major error. You can't make it through life's hardships with such an approach. Then, continuing his remarks against the united-front tactic, Comrade Bordiga says the party must come first, and only then the action of the party. That is exactly the error of which I just spoke.

23. Bukharin is referring to the struggle at the Third Congress (1921) against the ultra-left tactics employed by the German CP in the March Action. See p. 78, n. 17.

24. See comment by Bordiga on p. 184.

Comrade Bordiga also uses his spiritual capacities to explain international discipline in a peculiar fashion. He tell us: 'I am a centralist. Indeed, I am against a federated central body formed of representatives of parties. I am for an absolutely centralised Executive.' Then we come to his 'but': 'We are not soldiers, and the International is not a barracks, and military regulations cannot be applied mechanically to the International.' What he is demanding, in reality, is greater autonomy of the national parties. Comrade Bordiga has spoken much about dialectical contradictions, but what he is presenting here is not contradiction but sheer nonsense. It is decked out in a little cloak of much finer texture. International discipline cannot be interpreted in this fashion – as meaning that the International has full power, but we are autonomous and will do whatever we like.

I have a few more things to say. Look at the situation in Italy. Everything cries out for a unification of proletarian forces. In Italy, the most important challenge is that of organisational unity with the Socialist Party. And Comrade Bordiga comes here and says not a word about this important challenge. His entire speech is an attempt, in the manner of Bergson, to establish an abstract philosophy of action, that represents no action whatsoever. But not a word about the concrete problems. Here, we see, once again, the result of this insubstantial spirit that is not in fact a sound tool of proletarian struggle. These are relics of an entirely dogmatic and sectarian point of view. The Italian Party, which has accomplished much, has also committed errors with regard to the agrarian question, the Arditi del Popolo [People's Commandos], etc.²⁵ All the errors the Italian Party has committed are results of and are logical expressions of the errors found in the speech of Comrade Bordiga.

Comrades, as regards the conduct of our international organisation's Executive toward these matters, we have corrected these left errors not from the standpoint of 'right' or 'left' but of a *correct proletarian policy*. This policy does not need to be left or right; it needs only to conform to the concrete situation in which the proletariat of one or another country finds itself. Therefore I call on you to adopt the policies of the Executive as your own and to continue to pursue these policies until we have on our side the real power – the proletariat as a whole. (*Applause*)

Carr (Katterfeld, United States of America): Comrades, sisters and brothers: although Comrade Bukharin views it as an error for delegates of different parties to deal only with the affairs of their own parties under this agenda point, I propose to make the same mistake. Perhaps that is for the best, or at least the most modest course for a party as small as ours, which has so

25. Regarding the Arditi del Popolo, see p. 1053, n. 19.

little revolutionary experience, as Comrade Zinoviev said here with complete accuracy.

Let me say, at the outset, that I will speak this evening on behalf of the delegation from my party. In the name of the American Communist Party, I say to you that we are in complete agreement with the policies of the Executive during the last year – not only in general, but in terms of the specific decisions it took regarding the United States.

I will begin with the general questions. The Third Congress gave us the slogan, 'To the masses!'. It is true that an incorrect conception of the tasks of a Communist Party was long dominant in the United States. But now, as a result of the excellent propaganda carried out with this slogan, there are very few comrades in the United States who still maintain it to be a virtue, as Comrade Radek would say, to wander lonely and alone under the stars until the great morning when the red sun of revolution shines forth. Now almost every party member understands that the Party's task is to work among the masses, and that it must not limit its entire activity to party members but rather reach out to the diverse organisations of the working class. No one in the American Party persists in opposing this slogan.

The second slogan, that of the united front, was a good one for the United States. The situation there is somewhat different from that in the European countries. That is quite natural, because in the United States there is no workers' party, no socialist party, that enjoys mass support. The yellow socialist workers' party still haunts the land like a ghost, but no one pays it any attention to it and the masses do not support it.²⁶ When this slogan of the united front reached the United States, some disagreements about it in the Party were to be expected. There were comrades who interpreted it as a command to get together with politicians and leaders of the Socialist Party and other organisations in small meetings, and this went so far that a suggestion was even made, where we had fielded a candidate for election, that he should be withdrawn in favour of the yellow Meyer London, whom we were then to support in the elections.²⁷ But this viewpoint is no longer held in the Party, and everyone now understands that things of this kind are not the point. Rather, the goal is

26. By 'yellow socialist workers' party', Katterfeld probably means the Socialist Party, the dominant US workers' party before the Russian revolution. It received 913,664 votes (official tally) in the 1920 presidential elections, but, in 1922, its strength was in decline. In the socialist idiom of the time, 'yellow' referred to strikebreakers or collaborators with the bourgeoisie.

27. London was the Socialist Party congressman for the Lower East Side district in New York. The CP did in fact withdraw its candidate in his favour for reasons explained by Marshall (Bedacht) on p. 256.

to bring about actions in which we can make common cause with all workers and organisations against the bourgeoisie.

I now come to specific issues. As you know, we have an illegal Communist Party in the United States, whose branches are organised underground. Earlier, we had two parties, which unified in May 1921. After this fusion, the question came to the fore of how to work with the masses. How should we act on the slogan that came to us from the International, whose necessity was understood by all?

At that point, very many saw that it was necessary to organise a legal party, in order to penetrate deeper into the masses and work among them. But the Party split over the question of how the legal party should be organised. The matter was discussed here in Moscow. Theses were drawn up, which recommended the organisation of a legal party. Slogans were adopted. It was also specified that we should not give way to the danger of liquidation, but, rather, should maintain the underground party effectively and strengthen it. The legal party was to be an instrument of the Communist Party, in order to work among the masses more effectively.²⁸

These theses were sent to the United States, where they were greeted with joy by the vast majority of members. However, voices were raised in opposition from both ends of the spectrum. The left opposition, which was outside the Party, came out against the theses, which were, in fact, a condemnation of what it had been saying. But, inside the Party, too, the theses were not greeted with universal joy. There were comrades who held them to be fundamentally wrong, saying that the theses were based on incorrect information and that the Executive was not correctly informed about the situation in the United States. They sent us theses along these lines. Nonetheless, the theses were adopted officially after a debate of many months over the points made in them.²⁹

Perhaps that is the reason for Comrade Zinoviev's remark that there are serious factional struggles in the United States. These struggles are now over. The questions that shook the Party in the summer were resolved at a convention with much assistance from the Communist International representative

28. In 1919, the US Communist movement was driven underground by a wave of government repression. By late 1921, the 'red scare' had eased, and the Third Comintern Congress had issued its call for effective mass work to win a majority of the working class. The majority of the US leadership took steps to found a legal, open organisation, the Workers' Party of America, existing alongside of and controlled by the underground party. This plan was approved by the ECCI in November 1921, and the Party was founded in December.

29. Katterfeld was speaking for a faction in the US CP, the 'Geese', that insisted on maintenance of the underground organisation as a principle. Another faction – the 'Liquidators' – argued that the underground party was redundant and should be dissolved. At an August 1922 party convention, the Geese held a narrow majority.

[Walecki] who took part. Perhaps more about that will be said here. It is as if we are listening to the thunder and lightening of a storm that has already passed us by and is fading away. The actual storm over these questions is over. The theses sent to us by the International on the immediate tasks of the Communist Party of the United States, which take up the question of the legal and illegal parties, have now been adopted as correct by the overwhelmingly majority of the members – I would say by at least 90% – as corresponding to conditions in the United States and representing a correct line of work for that country.³⁰

Last winter, the International Executive urged the Party to unite once again. The comrades of the left opposition who came here in order to achieve recognition as the Communist Party of the United States received the directive to rejoin the Party, and the Party was told to take them back in. The Executive ordered the Party to unify. Here, too, it acted correctly, and that is now the opinion of the Party's overwhelming majority.³¹

Yet some objections were raised against this directive by both oppositions. The Lefts, who had split the Party, did not want to come back, and many of the 'right' leaders of the Party did not want to take them back. Officially, they said: 'Yes, we will take them back.' But, in reality, those who returned were not met with the appropriate enthusiasm. And a big argument flared up between those who really wanted the unity of the entire communist movement in the United States, so that all those with the right to call themselves communist would be in a single party, and those who thought the Party could be better served if all these left forces were kept outside the Party. After many months of struggle the Executive's order was finally implemented, and, last month, the two factions reunited, with no conditions and with the help of the Communist International representative who was then in the United States

30. Whether the US Party should function publicly or underground was the main preoccupation of US delegates at the Fourth Congress. Supporters of the Geese and Liquidator factions argued their case in the US Commission but – aside from Katterfeld – did not speak to the issue in plenary session. The Commission, badly divided, was unable to deliver its report until after the Congress (see p. 1094).

The ultimately adopted position was based on a memorandum prepared by James P. Cannon, Max Bedacht, and Arne Swabeck presenting the Liquidator case to the Comintern leadership (see Cannon 1992, pp. 95–7). The resulting resolution is summarised in Palmer 2007, pp. 163–4 and printed in *Spartacist: English Edition*, 40 (Summer 1987), pp. 27–8. The decision was announced in *Inprecorr*, 3, 17 (3 May 1923), p. 317. For an insider's description of the leadership discussions in Moscow, see Cannon 1973, pp. 64–72.

31. Katterfeld is referring here to a left opposition in the US Party that objected to steps toward launching a legal party. The ECCI rejected its appeal in November 1921. The opposition split to form its own organisation, also called the CP of America, in January 1922. The ECCI called on the opposition to rejoin the main party, which it did in September 1922.

[Walecki]. In this matter, too, the American Party now says that the International's Executive acted rightly.

Now I must refer to one or two points in the report of Comrade Zinoviev.

Comrade Zinoviev says that we have a very small party. That is true. He also says that there is no broad left movement among the workers in the United States, and it seems that he is not entirely sure whether we in the United States are following the right path. The left-wing workers' movement today is largely the result of our party's work. Our comrades work in cells in the trade unions, and some major union leaders who came here to Moscow were driven to do so by the work of Communist cells in the unions. So it is not quite correct to draw a line and say here is the Party, which is small, and there is the broad left-wing trade-union movement. That is not correct. The Party's work in the unions is not yet as skilled as we would like. But we are learning day by day to influence them more effectively, to organise the entire left-wing union movement against the right-wingers led by Gompers, and gradually to revolutionise the workers' movement.

Comrades, thanks to the correct line suggested to us by the international Executive this year, we now have in the United States, for the first time, a genuinely unified party, in which the great majority of members are united on the issues facing the Party. We say to you that the Party approves the work of the Executive, and that it hopes and believes that in the coming year work will be continued along these lines.

Faure (France): Comrades, in the spirit of the Executive's quite correct decision that all questions under dispute in the national sections should be dealt with in the commissions established for that purpose, I must explain that I am not so much speaking on behalf of a tendency, but am rather utilising the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Communist Party of France in the discussion of Comrade Zinoviev's report.

By and large, there is full agreement with the report of our Comrade Zinoviev. The fact is that, in all the most important countries of the world, the condition of the working class, after a period of great turmoil and major crises, now seems somewhat better, and that is true for our country as well.

What is the state of our country? I am quite aware that Comrade Bukharin has just said that most speakers taking the floor here report only about their country. But, on the basis of all the remarks made by the speakers, one after another, about their countries, it is possible to make a synthesis, giving us a well-founded and correct appreciation of the international situation. I do not see how I could personally give information on the neighbouring sections, since those who belong to these sections are so much more qualified than I am.

I will attempt, to the degree possible, to give you some information regarding the situation in my country. We are talking here, of course, about the conditions of the working class.

As I said, these conditions seem to have improved somewhat. I say 'seem' because the improvement, to the extent it has occurred at all, consists in reality only in the fact that joblessness has pretty much disappeared. True, there are unemployed in France. But, after the dreadful crisis that we experienced about two years ago, we can now say that the crisis is over. At present, we can say that there is only an extremely small number of jobless in our country. This crisis affected hundreds of thousands of workers. And this situation enabled us to make an assessment of the fact that, at least in France, Communist activity in the fields of propaganda, action, and organisation has been beneficial.

This is, in fact, the country where, in the past, jobless workers advanced a slogan that has won eternal renown: We will live working or die fighting.

At the time of this unemployment crisis, we were able to note that the bourgeoisie felt strongly that its privileges might be endangered if joblessness did not merely continue but became worse.

Personally, in the workers' centre where I am active on our party's behalf, I carried out vigorous propaganda to open the workers' eyes to the true causes of this joblessness.

What kind of propaganda would we develop if a new unemployment crisis breaks out? We would say to the workers of France: Your rulers told you all throughout the War that yours is the country of victory. They told you that you must absolutely secure victory, because if your country is defeated, that would mean destitution for the workers in the postwar period. They added that if you remain firm and emerge victorious, then there will be a time of prosperity and intensive work. France would become a genuine land of milk and honey.

But here is the reality: You achieved victory; you held firm. The result was 1,500,000 dead and 800,000 cripples, and, for you, destitution and unemployment.

You see, comrades, how we develop our propaganda. As a result of the War, there was no demand for workers. Even with 1.5 million dead, there was no work for the survivors. That was clear proof of the chaos of the capitalist system. That was convincing evidence for all workers influenced by the spirit of our propaganda, even if we did not have concrete facts like these at hand.

We have emphasised this question, and I can assure you that our propaganda has been fruitful.

We are now experiencing a crisis of inflation and workers' wages. We maintain that wages in our country have been driven down greatly. Thus, in the

miners' union, wages have been reduced by three francs a day, and further reductions are under consideration. The cost of living is officially estimated to be approximately 350% of the prewar level. Wages were then approximately six francs daily, and, by that measure, a normal wage today would be about 18 to 20 francs a day.

Overall, we can say that the average income of workers, at least in the area where I am active, is about 12 francs a day.³²

To be sure, this does not produce the state of destitution comparable to that of the workers in Germany, Austria, or Italy, but it is still a condition that approaches destitution. If the capitalist offensive is continued, leading to another reduction in wages, the lives of workers will become increasingly burdensome, creating a much more favourable environment for our propaganda.

These wage reductions are sharpened still more by the high cost of living. The immunity of racketeers and profiteers, contrasted with the reduction in wages across the entire country, makes the economic conditions of workers ever more onerous, while our propaganda achieves better results.

The lack of housing also presses down hard on the working masses. Rents rise higher and higher, but there is no new construction. In Germany, 170,000 houses have been built, and Britain has allocated ten billion for the construction of inexpensive dwellings, while victorious France has spent only three hundred million for this purpose. But we live in a republic, and it is sufficient for us to have this word without receiving its substance. The state does not act to protect the working class.

All these considerations lead us to say that, in the near future, the French working class will share the unfortunate and wretched fate of the entire working class of Europe and the world.

This situation will be worsened by the financial crisis that Comrade Zinoviev referred to in his report, a crisis that will lead to a situation where – as Comrade Cachin put it very well in *L'Humanité*, in presenting the views of Bokanowski, a worthy financial figure in the French assembly – by 1929, we will have a debt of 430 billion, and the entire budget, even if Germany would pay,³³ will be insufficient to cover all the needs of administration, the public debt, and interest.

You can also see where we are headed, even if Germany pays. It can now truly be said that, in France, no one believes in this miracle, no one believes the stones will bring forth flowers. We recall the proverb: Where there is nothing, even the emperor's power counts for naught.

32. At the time of the Fourth Congress, the French franc was worth about US\$0.07.

33. Faure is referring to payment of the reparations imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles.

Recently, in the French assembly, when someone spoke the words, 'Germany will pay', all the deputies broke out in laughter. No one wants to speak these words again, so clear is it for everyone that Germany can never pay.

No one will pay. The French bourgeoisie no more than the others. The bourgeoisie is counting on the French proletariat, which explains capitalism's offensive, and the same is happening in every country of the world. We see an offensive targeting wages, hours of work, income taxes, sales taxes – heavy burdens that weigh more and more heavily on the working masses.

Without any fear of error, we can declare that the situation in our country is revolutionary, and is becoming more and more revolutionary. The International's proposals for the unity of revolutionary forces and the united front come at just the right moment for our country. We must grasp all the possibilities that the future offers us.

Much has been said against the position of the French Party. I am not annoyed by that, not even by those who have expressed the sharpest criticism. What this shows, in my opinion, is that those who criticise us so sharply also count on us very much, and they are right to count on us.

Still, we must not forget that we in France have the dubious good fortune to be ruled by the National Bloc and by Poincaré and his ilk, based on a strong army. France, they say, has become the mad dog of reaction, threatening every revolutionary opening in the world and, above all, in Germany. France originated the project that Poincaré termed erecting a barbed-wire fence around Russia. But while all this is true, it is not our fault. You must not think that our army contents itself with threatening Germany. It also weighs down on us, and I ask you not to forget that.

That does not mean that we will lack the courage to carry out our duties. But, considering the situation that could arrive tomorrow and the efforts of a bourgeoisie fully aware of the dangers that threaten it and imperil its interests, we have the right to ask the International to have confidence in us and correctly gauge the great difficulties before us. We also ask that you recognise the efforts we have made in order to carry out the adopted resolutions to the greatest possible extent. In this way, we aim to advance toward becoming in the near future one of the best parties of the Communist International.

By the way, for us this is not only a duty of obedience but also an instinct of self-preservation. Let us assume that there had not been a Russian Revolution or a Communist International, but rather only this imperialist war, whose after-effects are now the central issue. Do you believe that we would not have had to think out on our own what kind of action had to be carried out? It would have been enough to observe the activity of our bourgeoisie against us. There has been talk here of Fascism and of similar organisations that exist

in Germany, but we too have not been spared this in our country. Under the Bloc National, the French bourgeoisie is getting organised. It has created the so-called 'Volunteer Militia for Order', which stands under the protection of the president of the government. These volunteers played a role for the first time in the strikes of 1920, when they took the place of the locomotive engineers and the drivers of automobiles, thus beginning their wretched capitalist mission as strikebreakers. As official documents show, they are armed with the most up-to-date weapons. In order to make their task clear beyond any doubt, they have each received eight packages of cartridges.

That is what we face in the immediate future. Also, a whole organisation is being created of mobile gendarmes. In the Saint-Etienne district alone, two hundred gendarmes are to be stationed, and we know well what that means in such a workers' centre. Beyond these different measures, the bourgeoisie also currently has a plan to put the city police under national administration.

There can be no doubt that the bourgeoisie knows very well what presently awaits it. It believes that, given these precautionary measures, the working class, seeing these preparations, will not set in motion the measures dictated by its instinct for self-preservation.

In France, the capitalists are defending their strongboxes with all their united power.

This elementary overview of the situation shows that the working class of our country is coming on its own to the idea of a united front of all revolutionary forces. We believe that it is necessary to bring about as rapidly as possible such a unification of all proletarian fighters, trade unions, and political organisations, in order to effectively resist the bourgeois counter-revolution.

The first task before us is unity of the revolutionary front. If we fail in this, we will be unable to defend ourselves, because when the house is burning it is too late for unity. What cause is there for the slightest hesitation?

Can we persist in making long speeches concerning the greater or lesser revolutionary merit of this or that organisation?

Time was not found in France to accustom ourselves to the idea of organisational ties. But, in Le Havre, this organic connection has been created.³⁴ In the prisons of the French Republic, Communists and syndicalists learned the advantages of being linked organisationally. Achieving this in the interests of defence is better than suffering the brutality of our government. And, in any case, the need for this is proven by earlier events in history.

34. Regarding the June–October 1922 strike movement in Le Havre, see p. 581, n. 15.

We need only consider the bloody experience of the Commune, in order to avoid any illusion regarding where the bourgeoisie stands.³⁵ Their gendarmes, their militia, and their army show us that we must be prepared.

We therefore believe that there will soon be complete unity in our French party, and that a united front must be created of all revolutionary forces.

Once we have created the united front, we will, of course, be better placed to go to the masses and explain to them that the workers are uniting to defend their interests. That will be advantageous for us, because we will have the opportunity to take a clear position and compel the reformist leaders to show what they are thinking.

That is our position, in a few broad strokes – the position of the International regarding both the relationship of the Party to the unions as well as the united front of all workers.

This explanation was necessary. I must repeat that I have chosen not to accede to the requests that I reply here to the attacks made against the French Party. But I must say that I regret them. It seemed to me, in the decisions that were forwarded to us, that the disputed question was reserved for the appropriate commission. There was no avoiding the fact that this question would be discussed from this platform, but regardless of the general conclusions arrived at by the French Commission, we do demand that justice be done to all our efforts. We want to remain true soldiers of the Communist International. I see our Comrade Souvarine smiling, and I do not know if it is because of this statement.

Rieu: No, it is because of your speech.

Faure: Because of my speech? Well, then I must say that your attitude is quite odd.

Some comrades labour under the illusion that our party is still too imbued with a Social-Democratic spirit. There are others who make desperate efforts to bring to us all the forces that can be won. And, now, when comrades who have long since perceived the truth – and even if they did that not so long ago, it is all the more to their credit that they have done so at last – when such comrades come up to the platform of this congress to express their deep conviction, whether recent or of long date, people smile. The comrade says, ‘Your speech makes me laugh.’

Rieu: This is a speech for a public meeting, not for a congress of the International.

35. The Paris Commune of 28 March–28 May 1871 was the first attempt to establish a revolutionary workers’ government. More than 10,000 working people of Paris were executed in the subsequent terror.

Faure: That may be your view, because you would have preferred to drag in here all the gossip-mongering of Paris. I have preferred to inform the International concerning developments in my country. When you adopt such an attitude you do not display a sincere desire to draw in new forces.

You claim that you have the International's moral support. Permit me to say that this leaves the impression that you are defending a commercial trademark. I tried to refrain from such statements, but your conduct makes this impossible. That will not alter our resolve in the slightest.

I am among those – and perhaps you will laugh again – who have stood firm at my post since I was twenty-five years old. I have never abandoned my organisation; I have never changed from one party to another; I have come to the Communist International and will stay there. When I came here, it was for good, just as in the past. Please believe that, despite the petty slanders spread here about our Social-Democratic spirit, we still have enough youth and determination to carry on our activity along the lines of the results of this congress.

In France, you claim to be the representatives of the Russian Revolution, and that surrounds you with a halo of heroism that benefits you greatly. But I respect the struggles of the Russian Revolution, and I must say that the lion's pelt does not suit you at all. You have no right to view the scene of our labours as conquered territory. We view it as a focus of danger and struggle.

We, in France, know very well to what point we can be driven. We know very well the game that we will play, and you know it as well as we do. When comrades speak to you with deep conviction – comrades whose entire activity is at least deserving of the respect that comrades owe each other – you should not laugh. Laughing means nothing, and it would be more appropriate for you to put forward resolutions and cogent arguments. In order to end this incident – and I very much regret having prolonged it – I emphasise again our firm resolve to remain true to the Communist International.

This was shown at our [15–20 October] national congress by our entire past activity, and our future work will do so as well. We will see who has the right to claim purity. We do not ask for any reward. It is enough that we have fully discharged our duty. (*Applause from the French Centre*)

Adjournment: 11:45 p.m.

Session 6 – Sunday, 12 November 1922

Discussion of Executive Committee Report (Continued)

Speakers: Rosmer, Radek, Peluso, Ravesteyn, Landler, Acevedo, Donski, Kolarov, Seiden, Bukharin, Katayama, Rákosi

Convened: 12:30 p.m.

Chairpersons: Kolarov, later Marchlewski

Chair: There are still about twenty comrades on the speakers' list. I believe that is enough, and the list must be closed. Are there any objections? The list is closed.

The Presidium proposes that a commission be established to draw up a resolution on the Executive Committee report. The different delegations have proposed the following comrades: Bordiga, Ruth Fischer, Renaud Jean, Roy, Welti, Grepp, Stern, Penelón, Acevedo, Ravesteyn, Michalkowski.

Bordiga: Will this commission take up both parts of Zinoviev's speech?

Chair: No, we are talking here only about his report.

Schüller: We propose Comrade Vujović as representative of the youth.

Chair: Anyone opposed? Adopted.

The Commission is asked to meet right away so that the resolution can be proposed at the conclusion of this debate.

Rosmer (France): I have no intention of using the Executive Committee report to polemicise against another comrade of the French delegation. We will have plenty of opportunity for that in the discussion of the French question, and there is no need to start that now.

Nonetheless, at the end of his speech yesterday evening, Comrade Faure made a statement that I consider so important and serious that it must be examined immediately.

At the end of his talk, Comrade Faure expressed his deep regret regarding attacks that various speakers had made against the French Party. This is a very serious statement, because it represents not only the point of view of Comrade Faure. We are well aware that this point of view is quite widely held in France, even among comrades responsible for the party leadership. Speeches by members of the Communist Party or representatives of the Communist International are routinely regarded as impermissible and intolerable interventions in the life of the French Party.

This entirely erroneous and dangerous conception of the Communist International is the source of all the difficulties that have arisen in the course of the last fifteen months between the Communist International and its French section.

We are Communists here, discussing and investigating the international situation. The specific problems that have arisen for the French comrades concern not only them but also comrades of other countries, all the more given the extremely important position of France since the imperialist war. Everywhere, the French army stands as the tool of counter-revolution, and our comrades in the other parties have good reason to express whatever criticisms of the French Party's activity that they consider appropriate.

Thus Comrade [Ernst] Meyer is right to say that the conduct of the Communist Party of France has seriously obstructed the activity of the German Communist Party. We know that this is true. We can quarrel over the opinion of our German comrade, but we know that he is right. We know that, when it was necessary to support, through action, our German comrades in their daily struggle, the Communist Party of France did not do its duty.

Our Comrade Meyer adds that, not long ago, a conference took place in Cologne that brought together representatives of the Communist Parties of France and Germany.¹ This conference took decisions that could not be carried out, because of the disputes that had arisen within the Communist Party of France.

And, in conclusion, he says: 'We insist that the French question be settled here once and for all.'

1. Regarding the Cologne Conference, see p. 141, n. 22.

For my part, I believe that this is an entirely justified demand.

If there is still any need to cite other examples where comrades from other countries have had the right to criticise the activity of the French revolutionaries, I would like to point to another very serious occurrence: the general strike that representatives of the French, Italian, and British organisations set for 21 July 1919.²

Renaud Jean: At that time the Communist Party [of France] didn't even exist!

Rosmer: You know very well what happened then. The French CGT entered into a commitment and promised to proclaim the slogan of general strike. Yet, at the last minute, another decision was taken stating that, given the difficult conditions in which the French CGT then found itself, and given the threats of the government, it was not in a position to stand by the agreed-on commitment and to take part in the announced strike movement.

We saw the results immediately.

As soon as this demonstration failed, the French bourgeoisie felt strong enough to proceed in the most brutal fashion in the struggle against the Hungarian soviet republic,³ to mobilise the French armies against them, and to demolish the soviet system in Hungary.

Comrade Renaud Jean says that the Communist Party did not exist at that time. This is correct. The Communist Party of France already has enough liabilities on its account that there is no need to add to them. But I am not speaking merely of the Communist Party of France; I am considering the French workers' movement in its entirety.

I stress that the comrades from other countries are fully justified at a congress like the present one in demanding an explanation and asking us: Are you doing everything possible to get ready? Are you fortifying your organisation to create a Communist Party capable of carrying out the tasks laid on it by current conditions?

Dormoy: That's exactly what we say.

Rosmer: What Comrade Ferdinand Faure said yesterday evening was not exactly suitable for awakening in our comrades from other countries the belief that this is the unanimous opinion of the French delegation. If I again

2. The strike was called to protest armed attacks by Entente powers against the soviet republics in Russia and Hungary. In the German text, the date of this strike is incorrectly recorded as 21 July 1920.

3. In the final days of July, Romanian troops, acting in concert with other Entente powers, defeated the Red Army of the Hungarian soviet government and took Budapest. The revolutionary régime fell on 1 August, after ruling for 133 days.

take up this statement by Comrade Faure, this is also because I believe that a completely impermissible nationalist spirit prevails in the Communist Party, which we must eradicate. Comrade Dormoy knows that there are French comrades, including influential party members, who consider it impermissible for a comrade from another country to pass judgment on or criticise the policies of the French Party. When a comrade comes to us from Italy, Germany, or Russia, they come not as a foreigner but as a Communist. But, as Comrade Dormoy well knows, for members of the French Party, such a comrade is seen above all not as a Communist but as a foreigner, come to interfere in matters that do not concern him.

I would now like to pass on briefly to matters related to Comrade Zinoviev's report regarding the united-front question, Clause 9 of the Statutes,⁴ the crisis of the French Party, and the conduct of the Executive Committee.

Comrade Duret said yesterday that, as soon as there was talk in France of the united-front tactic, what can be called generalised indignation broke out among all French workers. He added that this was, in the final analysis, a quite correct reaction to a dangerous tactic.

I believe that Comrade Duret's remarks on this point deserve to be expanded. Why was there this supposedly unanimous indignation among French workers?

The explanation is very simple. It is enough just to recall the way in which the united-front tactic was described to French workers. It was described to them as a policy that denied communism, returned to reformism, and abandoned the principles that the Communist International had previously upheld. There was talk of disarming the revolution and other things of similar import. It's not at all astonishing that the French workers were uneasy and concerned and said to themselves: We absolutely reject involvement in a policy that leads to reconciliation with the Dissidents [SP] and abandonment of communism.

How could such a fanciful description of the united front take hold so readily in France?

Because of the ignorance there regarding all questions that interest the working-class movement around the world. The united front was not a new question. It was possible to be quite familiar with it. It was first applied in Germany, but, in France, it was something new. It seemed as if the proposed policy would in fact mean a break with the entire policy followed up to that point.

4. Clause 9 concerned the powers of the ECCI with regard to national sections. See p. 233, n. 9. For the statutes, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 694–9.

The comrades that presented this dangerous fantasy about the united front were doubtless sincere. The fact that they could respond with such sincere consternation to the proposals of the Executive Committee was due to their ignorance of the international movement.

If we wanted to summarise all that was said about the united front in France during this initial period, we could do so under the heading: Everything that has nothing to do with the united front.

The Communists who misrepresented this policy so dreadfully drew support from the syndicalist comrades, who were similarly lacking in astuteness and understanding regarding the policy. To be sure, the Executive's proposal was made in France right at the moment when the trade-union organisation was splitting.⁵ At the moment when this breakdown took place and the workers' movement was split because of its reformist leaders, it was naturally difficult to apply the united-front tactic immediately. The opposition to the united front did not focus, however, on individual aspects or on the way that it should be applied. The entire united-front tactic was rejected as a dangerous proposal coming from the Communist International.

So, they won over a large majority of French workers against the united-front tactic. And, after this was done, they utilised this fact to declare to the Communist International that it would be impossible to apply this tactic in France. They said: 'We will have all the workers against us, because the workers do not want to have anything to do with the united-front tactic.'

The French Party sent a delegation to the February session of the Expanded Executive, and it is perhaps helpful to recall that this delegation included members of all tendencies, except the Left. Comrade Cachin was there for the Centre, Comrade Daniel Renoult represented his current, and another comrade represented the Far Left.⁶ All these comrades were in complete agreement regarding the united-front tactic. Nothing was heard of the explanations offered yesterday after the fact by Comrade Duret, namely that the Communist Party of France was too young a party; that it had no revolutionary past; that it could not take upon itself the risk of venturing into a mass action. These comrades said nothing of the kind. What they said was: 'Form a united front? With whom? With the Dissidents? They don't exist any more. They are a completely insignificant faction. It is not worth wasting even word over them. The

5. In the second half of 1921, the reformist current in the CGT of France, which held a narrow majority, drove the revolutionary minority out of the organisation. The left forces established the CGTU in December 1921, the same month that the ECCI adopted the united-front tactic.

6. In addition to Cachin and Renoult, the French CP delegation included Henri Sellier for the right current and Roger Métayer for the Far Left. Souvarine of the Left was present as an ECCI member.

CGT in the rue Lafayette? It is completely disintegrating. Their trade unions are hollow, and it would be absurd to look for any reinforcements there.'

Those were the grounds on which these comrades based their opposition to the united front.

I repeat: These were comrades of all shades, except for the left wing. They were unanimous; they formed an impregnable block and were determined to keep aloof from everyone.

The French comrades – at least, those who were there – argued with an energy that would be eagerly welcomed under other circumstances, when it is a matter of acting as genuine Communists. The energy they displayed regarding the united front is worthy of recognition. There was a discussion. They saw that not a single other section of the International shared their opinion. Yet they found a point of support among the Italian comrades, who had no distinctive opinion of their own regarding the specific character of a Communist party. The Italians signed a joint declaration with the French delegation, which provided them with some degree of support.⁷ This led the French delegation to stand firm in its hostility and stick by their position on the united front.

After the delegation returned to France, the National Council met and looked into the united-front question once again. The discussion led to the adoption of a resolution that is surely as extravagant as one could possibly imagine. Not only did the Communist Party of France show that it did not understand the united-front tactic. It also declared that the Communist International and the Communist parties that were applying the united front were no longer revolutionary and were leaning toward reformism, toward Social Democracy.

It was the Communist Party of France that was speaking in this manner.

Comrade Ferdinand Faure laments that a German comrade is criticising the French Party. But he has forgotten too quickly what the French Party did then. It is no small matter to play the role of leftist communists. There are parties and groups who can with good reason occupy that position. The French Party however, is the last one that should permit itself to play the role of leftist communism. Now that the French question has been so often discussed in the Communist International, and all comrades are familiar with this question

7. At the Expanded ECCI conference of February–March 1922, delegates of the French and Italian CPs, together with the delegate of the much smaller Spanish Party, joined in opposing the majority position on the united front. The minority resolution stated that united working-class action must be carried out 'without any formal rapprochement with the political parties, who are equally incapable of contributing to even the most urgent demands of the working classes'. Comintern 1922b, pp. 146–7.

in the greatest detail, there is a unanimous opinion that the French Party not only is not located all that far to the left, but that it is much too far to the right to be a genuine Communist party.

Subsequently, this unconditional hostility to the united front abated. The French Party was, despite everything, inclined to stand by its hostility, but meanwhile the united front was being achieved more or less everywhere, including in France. At the same time that the tactic was declared in France to be completely unacceptable, examples of it could already be seen, especially in the trade-union movement. The CGT in the rue Lafayette was regarded as a now nonexistent force, with which one no longer needed to reckon. It was harmful for us to fall into deception regarding the real forces at our disposal. When the comrades from the first delegation arrived here, we had just left Paris.

For a few days, nothing happened that could alter the picture. We must not exaggerate. The rue Lafayette remains a force. We said that to the comrades, and they responded, 'No, no, there is nothing there at all. There is nothing but split, dissolution, dispersion, and decomposition.'

The same policy was pursued further in France. False and absurd assertions were strewn about regarding the strength of the CGTU and the CGT. Of course, it was hard to obtain exact figures, but it was not necessary to establish exact percentages. It was clear that, in some federations, significant forces had stayed with rue Lafayette, and that this must not be underestimated. In certain trades, certain industries of great economic importance, such as the miners, they still have significant forces. And no working-class campaign can be undertaken without them.

The resistance to the united front has ebbed somewhat, although not very quickly. But we had to note the unusual fact that, at the moment when the united front was being realised, proposed by organisations that had seen its necessity in given situations, the French comrades said, 'No, that is not important. Let us see in six months.'

First, they said that the united front could not be realised. Then, as it became reality, they said, 'We'll see about that later.'

What was the outcome of this policy? The French Party not only fell into passivity, as Comrade Bukharin pointed out, but also deepened this passivity. Comrade Duret is still searching for mass actions and is quite right to want to lead the Party into mass actions. He wishes to draw the Party out of its present stagnant condition, but as soon as the opportunity presents itself, he pushes it away. He tells us that the united front is impossible, but if we could create factory councils, if they became possible, we could build on that. So we should create factory councils first, and then the united front and mass action.

After the second session of the Expanded Executive was over, Comrade Frossard came back to France.⁸ I cannot say that he was convinced that the united-front tactic was opportune, but he was determined to accept it. But he said, in this regard, that one should have no illusions about the opinion of the International. The French Party was completely isolated, and it was impossible to cling to this isolation and equally impossible to wait for the decision of the Fourth World Congress. In fact, it had been said that the Executive had neither the qualities nor the authority to impose discipline in a question of this importance, and that only the Fourth Congress could decide on it.

After his return to France, Frossard said that we should delay no longer but should accept the united front. He succeeded in winning over a large number of comrades, and the united-front tactic was approved at the Congress by a large majority.

What we saw, therefore, was endless discussions in order to arrive at the smallest action, while the united front asserted itself in life. It did so against the Communist Party, which had always been opposed to it.

So the campaign came into being. The Party not only did nothing to promote it but created the impression that it was opposed but had no alternative proposals. The opponents of the united front were in an ideal position if they had something better to propose. But they made no proposal.

What kind of position would the French Party have been in if had realised from the start what role it has to play as a section of the Communist International? If the French Communist Party had understood the united front rightly, it would not have been imposed on the Party overnight. A period of time, shorter or longer, would have been allowed during which the united front that must now be achieved would likely have been successful more quickly, bringing the Communist Party many benefits. It would have won the trust of the masses and strengthened the Party's still insufficient and weak ties with the working class.

Now, as to the dangers of the united front.

Of course, the united-front tactic, like all other tactics, harbours many dangers, against which we must protect ourselves. There are democratic traditions in France that hold the danger for the Party that it may reunify with the dissidents and restore unity. But even if we did not propose the united front, would we escape from these dangers? They crop up so frequently that we ought to be familiar with them.

Comrade Ruth Fischer, who tried to claim the French opposition to the united front for herself, showed us that its stance, in fact, had nothing in common with hers. She pointed out some dangers of this tactic using specific

8. The second Expanded ECCI conference was held 7–11 June 1922.

examples. This is very useful. We must constantly carry out criticism of our activity, showing up how far we have gone wrong and the degree to which we have entered on a false path, in order to draw from our experiences useful lessons for the future. But that is not the end of it. It is impermissible for us to abandon the entire tactic.

In 1920, the Communist International saved the international workers' movement by forbidding revolutionaries from leaving the reformist trade unions. Through the united-front tactic, it has once again saved the workers' movement, at a moment when circumstances had changed completely and its forces had been dispersed.

There were many comrades, good revolutionaries, who thought, in 1920, that the trade unions' time had passed. They believed that it was no longer necessary to undertake to win over the reformist trade unions. But, so long as the unions have not been won, we will not be able to show that we are capable of making the revolution. This is the first task before revolutionaries, and it is far from the least important.

The Communist International has performed the same service for the working class through the united-front tactic.

The split was consummated, and we had to find a way to unite forces of the different organisations for a united struggle.

When we took this position, workers' actions themselves benefited greatly. United action was absolutely necessary in order to counter the results of the split, which had already caused great damage, and to bring workers together against capitalism.

Let us now consider Clause 9.⁹ It is astonishing that this question has been brought up by the French Party, of all things, and that it has indicated such an interest in the Statutes of the Communist International. Usually, the documents of the Communist International are not read in France; indeed they are unknown there. Clause 9 was discovered because of the Fabre affair.¹⁰ It was hard to mount a struggle over the Fabre affair, so Clause 9 was chosen as the bone of contention. The text seemed not to be entirely clear. In the text, it reads that the Communist International can expel a section. Obviously, if a section

9. Clause 9 of the Statutes includes the sentence, 'The Executive Committee of the Communist International has the authority to demand of its member parties the expulsion of groups or individuals that breach international discipline, as well as the authority to expel from the Communist International any party that contravenes the resolutions of the world congress'. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 698.

10. Henri Fabre was a leader of the French CP right wing and editor of a non-party newspaper, *Le Journal du peuple*, which the ECCI judged an 'instrument of bourgeois public opinion' hostile to the Comintern. (Trotsky 1972b, 2, p. 160) The ECCI expelled Fabre from the Comintern in March 1922, but the French CP did not ratify this action until October. See discussion by Trotsky, pp. 982–7.

can be expelled, then this can also be done to an individual member. But the French comrades said, 'No, the Communist International cannot do this, and besides, Clause 9 gives too much power to the Executive, and this must be changed.'

The very same comrades who have brought up the question of Clause 9 have also raised objections to the proposal that national congresses will, from now on, be held after the international congress. They say that the Communist International wants its congresses to take up the affairs of the national sections, leaving them without any say in the matter. They say that, if they gather only after the international congress, there will be nothing left for them to do but to implement the adopted decisions. This is impermissible, they say. The Communist International belongs to the masses and the masses must lead it.

That is what they said in France. The French Communist Party is made up of segments that come from different origins, with different viewpoints that have been only weakly welded together. Only the link with the Communist International can keep the French Communist Party alive. And it is precisely this link that has been fractured, disparaged, belittled, and presented as something intolerable, and condemned as reducing the national sections to a passive role in the International, be it in drawing up principles or in carrying out the tactical line.

Comrades who have put forward this point of view in France surely realise today that they have gone down a road that is very dangerous for French communism. Comrade Duret has changed greatly since he left Paris. We hardly recognise him. But Comrade Bukharin, who had never seen him before, recognised him very well and characterised his position in a fashion that makes it superfluous for me to say anything further on the matter.

Duret: Why?

Rosmer: Because the chair has just informed me that my time is exhausted.

I'd like to say a few words about a question that is not clarified in Comrade Zinoviev's report: the factory councils.

The French translation of this text reads that a Communist party cannot be taken seriously until it has created factory councils. Comrade Murphy was right to point to this question, saying that it is not enough for a Communist party to want to create factory councils; a number of conditions must be present in their totality. He showed us how the question is posed in Britain. The same question was posed in France, and it is clear that it is just as difficult to create factory councils in France as in Britain, although the reasons are different. The efforts that have been made to do this have remained isolated, and it cannot be said that we are on the road to resolving this question. It is impos-

sible to predict the formation of factory councils with a precision that would let us speak of building them as a task posed for the entire party.

Several voices: We will build them.

Rosmer: Of course, but this point still needed to be emphasised.

The draft resolution before us reads: 'The Fourth Congress of the Communist International approves the decision taken by the Communist International Executive regarding the internal crisis of the French Communist Party.' I have no time left to take up the crisis of the French Party, even if only summarily. This matter will come up for discussion later. Then we will show why the decisions of the Communist International Executive could not resolve this crisis, and why the crisis that broke out so acutely at the last congress of the French Party is so important. (*Applause*)

Chair: The Dutch delegation has presented a motion proposing that the speaking time for each speaker on the list be reduced to five minutes. There are still twenty speakers on the list, including representatives of parties that have not yet taken the floor, while, in other cases, the only speaker from a party represents an opposition grouping. We must vote on this motion, or some other proposal, in order to shorten the discussion. Otherwise we will need another three days to finish it and we do not have enough time. Something must be done.

Radek (*on a point of order*): I would propose that speakers from parties that have already taken the floor perhaps be removed from the list unless they represent a minority of their party, and that all other speakers be given ten minutes. It is absolutely impossible to say anything in five minutes. In that case, it would be better to close the discussion entirely.

Chair: Is there any other proposal?

Peluso (Italy): Will an exception be made for written statements?

Chair: It is always in order to submit a written statement to be read.

Ravesteyn (Netherlands): Comrades, the Dutch delegation proposes to reduce the speaking time for those still on the list to five minutes. In our opinion, it is impossible to go on meeting like this, given that Comrade Kolarov said that we would then need at least two more days. But we have also made the proposal, comrades, that the representatives of the Eastern peoples, who have hardly taken the floor as yet, be given a longer speaking time. We propose to give the regular speaking time to representatives of the Eastern and colonial peoples – perhaps there is a better term, but the Congress knows what

we mean. Comrades, if we continue our discussion in this fashion, it will be perhaps possible – of course I do not know the order in which the different comrades appear on the list – for representatives of the Eastern peoples to take the floor under the same conditions that existed previously for the representatives of West European delegations. That is the Dutch proposal, and I would ask that it be put to a vote first as a whole and then in terms of its different parts.

Landler (Hungary): Comrades, Comrade Zinoviev took up the Hungarian question and attacked the Hungarian comrades in emigration very energetically. In Hungary, more than two hundred comrades have just been arrested, and some of them may possibly be condemned to death today or tomorrow. Although Comrade Zinoviev said very little about the Hungarian movement, he still asked the Congress to take a very strong position about this matter. In my opinion, there is no way this issue can be discussed in five minutes. The Congress will not be able to form an opinion based on a report of five minutes. I ask the comrades to give me a speaking time of half an hour, the same as for comrades of other parties.

Chair: The Presidium proposes to reduce the speaking time to ten minutes. Is anyone opposed? Adopted.

Acevedo (Spain, translated by Comrade Stirner): I am sorry that I am not able to speak in any language other than Spanish. Nonetheless I hope that enough delegates will stay in the hall and listen to what I have to say.

The Spanish delegation is fully in agreement with the presentation by Comrade Zinoviev, except with regard to the workers' government. I am particularly pleased that the Executive has expressed an entirely justified and strong criticism regarding the French, Italian, Norwegian, and Czechoslovak Parties. The Communist International can only maintain its policies if it engages in such criticism in a steady and enduring fashion.

Although we were earlier opposed to the united-front tactic, our representative in the Executive Committee of the Communist International signed a resolution, along with the Italian and French Parties, committing our parties to carry out the united-front tactic in every country. Nonetheless, in France, the united-front tactic has been systematically sabotaged, while the Spanish Party has done everything possible to carry it out faithfully – even though the difficulties in Spain are much greater, especially with regard to the syndicalists.

When Comrade Humbert-Droz was in Spain, the Communist Party of Spain sent an open letter to the socialists, the reformist syndicalists, the syndicalists, and the anarchists, with the goal of bringing about a united campaign with regard to a miners' strike. The miners were threatened with a twenty

per cent reduction in pay. The secretary of the miners' union then proposed to the employers that, instead of the wage reduction, there should be a one-hour increase in the working day. That meant giving up the most cherished achievement of the working class, the eight-hour day. This led the Spanish Communist Party to engage in a struggle in line with the united-front tactic, and a strike was carried on for three months. The result of the strike was that the miners accepted a five per cent reduction and returned to work. That shows quite clearly that the united-front tactic can bring victories, first of all in halting capitalism's offensive, and also in countering reaction, which has spread across Spain in recent years.

Unfortunately, I do not have time to explain the way that the united-front tactic has been used in Spain to combat reaction.

As for the question of the workers' government, let me say briefly that we regard it as a reformist illusion. Unfortunately, I do not have the time to expand on this, because I have been warned by the chairman's bell. I will try to make up for that later on in the agenda. But we do believe that the question of the workers' government will lead many parties of the Communist International down a reformist path.

Whatever the resolutions and decisions of the Congress, the Spanish Party will stand by the Communist International, whatever happens and in every respect.

Zinoviev: What is your view on what Lenin has to say about infantile disorders of the party?¹¹

Acevedo: Lenin's comments about infantile disorders of the Communist Party must be taken together with the question of the workers' government. But I cannot speak to this in more detail, because I do not have the time.

Domski (Poland): Esteemed comrades! I mainly want to respond in a few words to the remarks of my valued Comrade Michalkowski. He said that the Communist Party contained a faction of KAPD people that made up a quarter of the delegates to the last party conference. I am certain that Comrade Michalkowski had no intention of slandering our party. Nonetheless, it is a slander of this party, which Comrade Zinoviev said was among those in Europe with the best revolutionary education, to claim that it would supposedly tolerate for years the presence of KAPDers and regularly, for six years now, elect the leader of these KAPDers, Comrade Schreiber, who is with us here, to the Central Committee. It would be a scandal for the Party if these

11. Zinoviev is referring to Lenin's pamphlet, *'Left-Wing' Communism – An Infantile Disorder*, written for and distributed to the Second Congress in 1920. Lenin 1960–71, 31, pp. 17–118.

were truly KAPDers and if we had not long since finished with them. But that is not the case. These comrades are not KAPDers. I do not agree with Comrade Schreiber's anti-parliamentary point of view. But even he is entirely opposed to the KAPD's outlook regarding putschist policies, trade-union work, centralism in the organisation, and so on. And he has proven in action a thousand times that he is not a KAPDer but a Communist.

Radek: KAPD is not a swearword!

Domski: I do not speak here directly on behalf of this opposition, because the circumstances of illegality make it difficult to represent individual currents within the Party.

Zinoviev: That's the one good side of illegality!

Domski: Yes, this good side has brought with it the fact that formally I am speaking here only in my own name.

As for the questions touched on in Comrade Zinoviev's report, I have this to say: this matter of the united front has been intensively tested during the last half-year. We have gathered important experiences, which are not exactly encouraging for the supporters of the united-front tactic, in the form in which it has recently been applied. Of course, when you speak up anywhere against the united front, you get the answer: 'Well, you just do not understand that we must have the majority of the proletariat with us.' And, in Moscow, this is put much more harshly: 'You'd have to be a donkey not to get this.' Of course that argument is very telling. Effective enough to slay an elephant. (*Laughter*) Still, it misses the mark. True, we must win the majority of the proletariat, but we must win them for a Communist party and not for a mishmash created on the basis of confused and nebulous slogans.

We have had such experiences with the united front everywhere, above all in Germany but also in Poland. Comrade Ruth Fischer said a great deal about the united front in Germany and characterised quite correctly the errors made in applying this policy.

I'd like to add something to that. When comrades of the German Central Bureau defend this policy, they say: 'By God! What victories it has brought us!' This refers above all to the strengthening of our party through this policy. Comrades, look at the situation in Germany: the compromise on taxes, the currency crisis, the inflation.¹² Given that, we have to be very cautious about saying that all the Party's successes were won entirely by our policy. No, it was entirely different, objective conditions that brought about the gratifying growth of the German Communist Party. And, if we continue the united-front

12. The value of German paper currency fell 90% between January 1920 and July 1922, and fell 90% again between July and October 1922.

tactic in the present fashion, we will see whether it contributed to the successes in Germany or diminished them.

Comrade Radek cited another 'success' of this policy. He said: 'Our clever tactic during the Rathenau campaign prevented Social Democracy from attacking us, as they did during the Kapp Putsch.'¹³ This was prevented by our policy. At least, that's how I understood him. I believe, however, that our policy during the Kapp Putsch was much more harmless than it was during the Rathenau campaign, when it still did not prevent the Social Democrats from openly linking up with reaction. Why was that? It was because our policy during the Rathenau campaign was simply not revolutionary, and the situation was much less revolutionary than during the Kapp Putsch. If we once again face such a revolutionary situation and act in a revolutionary manner, no clever tactic will prevent the Social Democrats from allying with the reactionaries and hurling themselves at us.

Radek: What is reaction?

Domski: Well, if you do not know –

Meyer made reference to another such 'victory'. The USPD has united with the SPD. Yes, a great victory, but it was not ours. It was a victory for the Social Democrats, and we should not dispute that. They had yet another victory. The USPD workers did not protest at all against this unification. A large majority of the USPD workers went over to the SPD quite willingly. And that was because our united-front tactic had prepared the ground so well that the USPD workers slid over to the SPD all unawares leaving Ledebour isolated. (*Interjection*) If that is what you call a victory, then I wish you fewer such victories. More victories like that and you're done for!

Fortunately, the Communist Party recognised this error, with the help of the Executive. Now, the united-front tactic is being applied in quite a different way. Every Communist can approve the way it is being carried out now. I think of the factory-council movement in Germany. This is the right policy.

We, in Poland, have also had much experience with the united-front tactic. Comrade Michalkowski has already spoken of this. We turned to the social patriots regarding a united demonstration. What was the result? In Warsaw, we gave up having our own demonstration. In Kraków, the Polish Socialist Party brutally mistreated fifteen of our comrades. Truly, that was a very encouraging success. It was fortunate that our central committee was not

13. Regarding the Rathenau campaign, see p. 78, n. 19, and p. 137, n. 18. The right-wing military coup in Germany on 13 March 1920, led by Wolfgang Kapp, triggered a general strike, initiated by the SPD, and widespread workers' armed resistance. The KPD leadership initially stood aside from this struggle but soon corrected this error. The coup collapsed on 17 March.

there. (*Laughter*) This policy also proved to have theoretical consequences. There was a change of government in Poland that brought to power a puppet of Pilsudski's, Sliwinski. The Communists in Warsaw then perceived that this signified a danger of war with Soviet Russia. In terms of theory, however, this was expressed in quite another way. I must quote here word for word, because otherwise it will be said that I am reading between the lines. 'The first duty of the Social-Democratic party must be the demand for an immediate political amnesty and freedom for the revolutionary sector of the working class.... This is where Communist agitation against the Sliwinski government must start.'

So, since we have a new Pilsudski government, which was fundamentally a war government, we start with the demand for political amnesty.

Radek: That was not a war government at all.

Domski: It was only prior to the elections that it was not a war government. I quote further:

A democratic government, well and good. But, judging from the Sejm [parliament] and given its previous methods, this government has no basis for democratic actions. Nor could this be so. Only the struggle of the broad masses for democracy could create preconditions for this. If Sliwinski had the courage to base himself on the masses, and if he had acted in this spirit on taking office through an amnesty and by proclaiming political freedom for the working class, the Communist Party would have won a great deal. And it is just as certain that, by doing so, the democratic government would win just as much, attracting the masses for a certain time and finding in them a broad and solid support.

That is certainly an assessment that looks very much like an offer by our party to support this government.¹⁴

Interjection: He too is interpreting dreams.

Domski: These are the experiences that we have had in Poland. Fortunately, they are few in number –

Chair (*ringing his bell*): Your speaking time is over.

Interjections: Extension!

Domski: – because we, in Poland, had no basis for this united-front tactic. In Germany, there was a basis for it, but, in France, the united-front tactic

14. This sentence is marked in the German edition, apparently in error, as an interjection.

only made the crisis in the Party worse and brought it no benefits, at least, not yet. (*Interjections*)

Chair: Your time is up.

Interjections: Extension!

Heckert: I move an extension of five minutes.

Chair: Is there anyone opposed? That is adopted.

Domski: I must cut back my remarks and go directly to the question of immediate demands and the workers' government, which is now before us. As for the workers' government, I had the same problem as my friend Duret. I could not understand what this workers' government means in our policies. But now I have at last got to hear a clear definition of this government. It is a government that can rest on a parliamentary majority just as easily as – Comrade Radek confided to me privately that such a government would not be considered for Poland.

Radek: I did not say that.

Domski: So, Poland too is going to be punished with this government. Obviously, it is an international problem.

Comrade Radek says that a workers' government is not a necessity but a possibility, and it would be nonsense to reject this possibility. But the question is whether we write this possibility on our banners and thus hasten its realisation. I believe it is possible at the last moment for a so-called workers' government to appear that is not yet a proletarian dictatorship. But I believe that, if such a government appears, it will be the outcome of various forces: our struggle for a proletarian dictatorship, the struggle of the Social Democrats to prevent that, and so on. Is it right to focus on that? I do not think so. I believe that we must continue now as before to focus on the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. And, if a workers' government comes to be, this can happen just as easily if we have been agitating and fighting for our full programme.

Our struggle can lead to various results. It can happen that the working masses leave the national party of labour and workers' party and pour into Polish Social Democracy, as happened in Upper Silesia. That is still a step forward of a sort. But it is not our duty to agitate for such a step forward. We must continue now as before to recruit to our Communist party and, in this way, encourage such a step forward.

Many comrades have another interpretation of the workers' government slogan. They think that our struggle is for the proletarian dictatorship, but this cannot be said. The working masses are afraid of Communist dictatorship,

and they do not believe us when we say that the proletarian dictatorship is not a dictatorship by the Communists.

Now here is what I think. If, while struggling for the Communist dictatorship, we encounter an opponent who paints this 'dictatorship of the commissars' in frightening colours, we do not counter that by advancing slogans that are a pseudonym, as Comrade Zinoviev quite correctly said. We will not achieve anything in the struggle by using pseudonyms; we will just create illusions. We must advance our revolutionary slogans in the clearest manner. Of course, we must also advance immediate demands, and we did so in every struggle, to the degree that was needed in the proletarian masses' struggle to improve living conditions and loosen their chains. Such demands must be advanced, formulated, and supported. But we must not advance slogans that we do not ourselves believe in – slogans aimed at exposing or manoeuvring. We must advance immediate and final demands that we ourselves believe in and want to fight for.

To conclude, I would like to say only the following. The working class is not as dumb and not as cowardly as some think. The working class will fight for the revolution. Anyone who talks to the working class in their language will, over a shorter or longer time, be understood. To view the working class as an army that can be ordered about, uncomprehending, today to the right and tomorrow to the left – this is a misjudgement of proletarian struggle. This struggle can be led to victory only if every soldier understands us, if our slogans and ideology are crystal clear to every soldier. Therefore: no slogans to expose and manoeuvre, which lead the workers astray, but rather genuine demands that express our real goals. Only in this way can the working class carry out its struggle consistently.

Kolarov (Bulgaria): I am speaking on behalf of the Balkan Communist Federation.¹⁵

Comrade Zinoviev made the remark that our federation ceased functioning almost completely during the last year. Our efforts to make the federation a political focal point for the Balkan parties was only partially successful. The work is still in its early stages, and it will take the ongoing efforts of all Balkan parties and the energetic collaboration of the international Executive to bring it to a successful conclusion. At present, the Romanian Party is back on its feet, and the Yugoslav Party is in the process of re-organisation, as it adapts itself to the conditions of illegality in which it operates. This gives us the right to hope that the Communist Balkan Federation will very swiftly become an important factor in the Balkan revolutionary movement.

15. Regarding the Balkan Communist Federation, see p. 113, n. 36.

I want to emphasise that the Balkan Parties fully approve the general political line that the Executive Committee has followed since the Third Congress. They believe that the decisions of the international congresses have been rightly interpreted and appropriately implemented. As for the united-front tactic, the Balkan Parties accepted it from the outset. At its first congress, the Communist Party of Bulgaria analysed and adopted an extensive resolution on the conditions for applying this policy in that country. The recent conferences of the Yugoslav and Romanian Parties did the same.¹⁶ This policy has also been adopted by the Communist Party of Turkey (Constantinople). In addition to approving the united-front tactic on the level of theory, the Balkan Parties have also tried to apply it in practice. The Communist Party of Bulgaria has had repeated opportunities to do so and achieved good results. Thanks to this policy, it was able to set in motion the bureaucratic part of the proletariat, its most sluggish segment, and to bring it under effective Communist leadership. The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties that have always condescended to these proletarian layers now see that their entire influence on them is dwindling away. In Yugoslavia and Romania, the Social Democrats have categorically refused to establish a united front with the Communists, which does not prevent the Communist parties from persistently calling on the masses of these countries to engage in united struggle. Experiences in the Balkan countries show that the united-front tactic, correctly applied and implemented, can serve effectively to revolutionise and unite the masses, even in industrially backward countries.

The workers' government is not posed in agrarian countries like the Balkans, and I will therefore not linger on this question.

As regards the very important steps taken by the Executive to involve itself in the internal affairs of the French, Italian, Czechoslovak, Norwegian, and other Communist parties, I must say that the Communist parties of the Balkans approve in general of the point of view taken by the Executive in its interventions.

Such interventions, however painful they may be, will always be necessary and healthy, as long as the Communist International contains parties that, in many respects, leave a great deal to be desired.

It is a basic truth that the strictest discipline is a vital necessity not only for the International but for its sections. All Communist parties recognise and proclaim this truth. The only genuine guarantee that international discipline

16. The illegal Yugoslav CP held its first national conference in Vienna 3–17 July 1922, with participation of twenty-two delegates plus Comintern and Youth International representatives. The Second Congress of the Romanian CP was held in October 1922.

will prevail is a common conception regarding all great questions of a Communist party's programme, organisation, and policy. Deviating viewpoints necessarily lead to indiscipline, as the examples of the French, Italian, and other parties show. One of the Communist International's main tasks is to create and promote such a unanimity of viewpoint.

Seiden (Czechoslovakia): Comrades, in the name of the Czechoslovak delegation, not including Comrade Vajtauer, I wish to state that we approve of the activity of the Executive since the Third Congress.

On various serious occasions, the Executive has intervened into the Communist movement in Czechoslovakia, with fruitful and fortunate results.

This is a country inhabited by proletarians who speak Czech, Slovak, German, Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian. It has been a great success of the past year that we succeeded in creating a unified, multinational party whose structure is truly centralised. There were some among us who feared that it would not be possible in this classic land of national antagonisms to overcome so quickly the differences in tradition, the national prejudices, bias, and illusions, and also the technical difficulties resulting from linguistic diversity. We can say today that the disputed questions in the Czechoslovak Party have been resolved. The advice and decisions of the Executive contributed significantly to this achievement. The decisions taken by the Executive with regard to the Party's organisational inadequacies, the united front, and trade-union policy proved to be particularly useful in our country.

The commission of this congress will take up a specific case of breach of discipline that took place in our party. In this specific case, the Executive took a position different from that of the Czechoslovak Party's national conference and party executive. We will have the opportunity in the Commission to explain in detail the reasons why the Czechoslovak party leadership, and this delegation here, considers this position to have been correct. We recognise the discipline of the Communist International as being of such an importance that we immediately implemented the Executive's decision in our country. We expect that the congress commission will conscientiously weigh our arguments. For us, Communist discipline is obviously binding. We therefore declare that we will recognise the decision of the Congress. I only wish to point out to the Congress that the Executive's decision greatly weakened the authority of the Czechoslovak party executive. In the complex situation faced by the workers' movement in Czechoslovakia, it can lead to serious consequences if the Party's centre does not have sufficient authority and opportunity to apply discipline.

As for the future work of the Executive, we believe it quite possible to perfect the Executive's communication and information service.

Chair: Comrades, the next speaker is Comrade Landler, who spoke here on a point of order asking for half an hour of speaking time. I would like to hear whether there is support for this motion by Comrade Landler. (*Cries of 'No'*)

Comrade Landler asks for twenty minutes speaking time. (*Renewed interjections*)

Our rule states that the speaking time is ten minutes. I will therefore ask the Congress: those in favour of giving Comrade Landler twenty minutes speaking time, please raise your hand. So few comrades are taking part in the vote that the Presidium is in doubt. I will therefore take the vote a second time.

Bukharin (*on a point of order*): Comrades, I would like to make a comment. There is a struggle in the Hungarian Party between various currents. Comrade Landler represents one of them. If we grant him twenty minutes, we will have to do the same for the other Hungarian representatives. I therefore propose that we stick with the rules we have adopted.

Chair: I will take the vote. Those in favour of granting Comrade Landler twenty minutes speaking time, please raise your hand. The majority is opposed. So we will leave it at ten minutes.

Landler (Hungary): Comrades, Comrade Zinoviev spoke only briefly and quite diplomatically about the movement in Hungary and then with surprising vigour against the [Communists in] emigration. He maintained that the Communist movement in Hungary is awakening, citing as evidence the fact that 170 Communists were arrested in a single day. And, in this context, he asserted that the Hungarian emigration is something without precedent that is causing great harm for the Hungarian movement and the International. Finally, he asks the Congress to take a strong position against the emigration. In my view, that is excessively diplomatic. I am quite certain in saying that no one in this hall understood anything about this business. After this report, everyone will ask themselves: 'Was the Communist movement in Hungary called into being by the Holy Ghost? Or did the International bring this movement directly into existence despite the bad will of the emigrants? Or did the emigrants perhaps work against the creation of a movement in Hungary?'

Everyone can take from this report what they wish, and even that is diplomatic, because only in this manner is it possible to adopt a vigorous stand against the emigration. The whole matter is all the more surprising, since Comrade Zinoviev is not accustomed to speak against any current in such a sharp manner. It is his virtue to always be the Privy Councillor of Appeasement. Thus, for example, Comrade Zinoviev spoke of the errors of the French

Party and the Norwegian comrades in a fatherly tone – only against the Hungarian emigration does he let loose his thunder. This is not his custom. Seeking the reason for this attitude, it seems to me to lie in the fact that Comrade Zinoviev is employing a tried and true method. For he knew that the Executive would come under fire with regard to the Hungarian movement. And, so, he has now taken the offensive, in order to put us on the defensive.

I have great esteem for Comrade Zinoviev as a person and as president of the International. But I cannot do him the favour of letting him put me on the defensive, because I have been mandated by the Hungarian organisation to present everything without disguises. I will not say anything about factions, because there are no factions. But, in the name of the Hungarian emigration, I must inform comrades plainly about the real state of affairs. I wish to act loyally, but I can do that only if I honestly say everything that needs to be said about the Hungarian organisation, rather than speaking in the brief and diplomatic fashion of Comrade Zinoviev.

Here are the facts. A group of leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party, working in Hungary, will in all likelihood, according to a reliable report, be placed before a special court and condemned to death. The majority of this group of leaders consists of emigrants and belongs exclusively to the faction to which I have the honour of belonging. These emigrants went to Hungary a year and seven months ago. The faction fight was then at its peak.¹⁷ Our factional group separated itself off and, without paying the slightest attention to the faction fight, worked alone against Social Democracy and the Horthy régime. They worked with heroic sacrifice, commitment, and good results. They published an illegal weekly paper in Budapest, of which twenty-nine issues appeared in sequence. The Social Democrats were unable to hold any public assembly of consequence without a demonstration of several minutes for the Communist International. As regards political influence, let me refer to the fact that the Social-Democratic party publication protested weekly and often daily against the Communists' underground work. Despite persecution and Social-Democratic denunciation, they did not flee; instead, all the emigrant leaders worked until the last moment. I must once again stress that, neither in the newspaper, nor in their agitation, nor in their entire activity, was a single word spoken about the faction fight, although it raged on in the emigra-

17. A faction fight broke out after 1919 among Hungarian CP leaders in emigration: a current led by Béla Kun, supported by Varga, was opposed by a tendency including Landler, Rudas, and Georg Lukács. The Landler wing originated among left opponents of the Communist-Socialist fusion during the 1919 Hungarian soviet republic. The Landler wing was sometimes termed ultra-left, but Kun backed ultra-left tactics in the German March Action of 1921, while Landler forces were more cautious regarding immediate party building perspectives in Hungary.

tion. They sent regular reports to the Executive through a contact person who also belonged to the former anti-Kun group. But not a single report received an answer from the Executive. (*'Hear, hear!'*) (*The Chairman rings his bell.*)

Comrades, I ask for another ten minutes speaking time. (*Friedländer moves to extend the speaking time by ten minutes. The motion is adopted by a large majority.*)

Given these circumstances, I am justified in rejecting most vigorously the manner in which Comrade Zinoviev has dealt here with the emigrants. To raise the emigration question here, at a time when the faction fight has been over for nine months, that is, since the [first] Expanded Executive session, means forgetting the sacrifices of the Hungarian emigrants since the first day after the overthrow of the power of workers' councils.

Not a month, not a week has gone by without comrades travelling to Hungary and sacrificing themselves for the cause. I therefore utterly do not understand why Comrade Zinoviev is led to pronounce such a condemnation. I am speaking only in my own name and in the name of the comrades who have now been arrested, but I must say that such behaviour is unjust to the emigration as a whole and damaging to the cause. I do not understand how such assertions against Communists can be made here at a world congress without the slightest evidence. Comrade Zinoviev will refer to two so-called breaches of discipline. He may refer to the Executive's decision naming a central committee, and to the fact that this central committee did not go to Hungary. But it can be shown that a leader of the organisation in Hungary came to Berlin and said that we do not need comrades for the work unless they can go into the factories. He said that illegal work is much more dangerous when a comrade who was, for example, police chief during the period of rule by the councils comes to take part in the underground work. They sent a report to that effect here, but received no answer.

I was in Moscow up to August. Hungarian matters were dealt with as if the aim was to apply the theory of the withering away of the state to the Hungarian question. Comrade Brandler, who was acting in Moscow as commissar for Hungarian matters, boasted, for example, that he was filing all requests of the Hungarians without dealing with them. When Comrade Brandler left, a commissar was designated for Hungarian matters who spoke only Bulgarian and Russian, and since we had no mastery of these languages, we could not speak with him. But when we complained, people shrugged their shoulders. What kind of conduct was that on the Executive's part? Would you perhaps call that an objective treatment of the Hungarian issues?

In addition, Comrade Zinoviev can also say that we published a newspaper in Berlin a month ago in defiance of an Executive decision. But we informed the Executive that the organisation in Hungary had insisted on a paper. It

demanding a weekly paper of four to eight pages, which would enable it to orient itself to Soviet Russia and the international situation. There was no word in this paper about the factional situation. If this formal violation of discipline is such a big deal that the emigration must be condemned for it, and then dealt with in such a short report as that of Comrade Zinoviev, then I must regard him as a trueborn diplomat. But I believe, comrades, that the World Congress will not go along with this.

Under these circumstances I must request that the Congress adopt the following resolution:

The Congress resolves:

- 1.) To admit, in addition to the delegation of the Communist Party of Hungary named by the Presidium, a delegation of the illegal organisation in Hungary.

The Hungarian organisations now have only one delegate from Hungary, but two further comrades were delegated by the emigration. The two representatives who are in emigration were not permitted to attend because they belonged to our former faction. I ask comrades to decide that they be admitted to the Congress.

- 2.) To place the Hungarian question, including that of the organisations in Hungary, on the congress agenda, and to establish a commission to work on the matter, set up in the same way as the other commissions.
- 3.) The Congress protests against the criminal abominations with which the interrogation of the recently arrested Communists was conducted, and against their trial by a state court in order to obtain their condemnation to death. The Congress admires the bravery and courage with which, despite everything, these martyrs of white terror work for the revolution.

Comrades, I ask you to adopt this resolution. It does not deal with a factional struggle but seeks rather to finally put the Hungarian question to rest. There is no danger in investigating what is happening with regard to the Hungarian question and in Hungary. You must take as your starting point the movement that exists in Hungary rather than once again making up ingeniously imagined forms. Only then can you seriously address the definitive resolution of the Hungarian question. As Comrade Zinoviev says, what is important now is not who was a people's commissar in Hungary, and whose achievements were great. Rather, it's a matter of who is now achieving much in the painstaking Hungarian Communist work, and that is done by the comrades who work inside the country. The matter can be resolved only quietly, not through diplomacy. The Congress can itself prepare the ground for this. Then the Hungarian question will finally be resolved. *(Applause)*

Katayama (Japan): Comrades, the Japanese delegation declares that it is in agreement with Comrade Zinoviev's report. I am going to speak of the united-front question only as it applies to Japan. The Japanese Communist Party is illegal and still young. We have appeared publicly through the trade unions and in other ways. Our unions are struggle organisations, not weighed down by tradition. We have no Henderson or Gompers, so, as soon as our party was organised, it was able to penetrate the unions and bring them under our influence. Comrades, we have in the past applied the united front in a number of cases. When we began our propaganda against the Washington Conference, all the trade unions came to support us and helped us expose the bourgeois, capitalist, and imperialist conference in Washington.¹⁸ When the government submitted a draft law against all radical movements in Japan, trade unions of all political shadings – anarchist, syndicalist, Communist, and moderate – came together and launched such an effective propaganda campaign that the government backed off from its plan.

In addition, we have a movement called 'Hands off Soviet Russia', which is similar to the one in Britain. All trade unions and all radical groups now work together against intervention in Soviet Russia and for its recognition. At first, we could do nothing about the famine in Russia. Nonetheless, after the change of government, we were able to take this up. Not only the trade unions and radical groups but also the petty bourgeoisie is helping us to combat hunger in Russia. This is done under the supervision of the Communist Party, although it functions in deep illegality.

Now, I wish to speak of my impressions during the last few days. We are experiencing difficulties in the Communist Party around the question of the united front. It has not yet been achieved on a national basis even in the Party. But we have a dangerous enemy, comrades, an imposing enemy that we must fight, whatever the cost. Comrades from France, Italy, and other countries, you are forgetting the enemy and the urgent importance of combating him. Instead, you are fighting against yourselves. You should struggle for the united front, against imperialism and capitalism. What is more, I must tell you that we have not yet heard anything here regarding an international united front. What are you doing to unite the other countries and build a united front

18. Representatives of nine governments met at the Washington Conference (12 November 1921–6 February 1922) to discuss naval disarmament and conflicting interests in the Pacific. The Soviet Republic protested its exclusion and declared it would not be bound by conference decisions. The Comintern warned against a US-British bid for world hegemony at Japan's expense. The Conference adopted a five-power agreement for naval arms limitations, which lasted until 1936. The results of the Conference were considered at a Comintern conference, the First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East (21 January–2 February 1922) (see Comintern 1970).

against imperialism and capitalism? So far, you have done nothing. I have not yet heard a word about the international aspect of the united front. We want a united front with the strong Communist parties of the world. The colonial countries need such a united front in order to vanquish capitalism. I would like to alert you to the fact that the Fourth Congress must impress on all comrades the importance of the united front – not only in your own country but in all countries, so that we may achieve our goal. It will not weaken our movement but strengthen it. It is not a compromise with the petty bourgeoisie. No, it is a compromise with the workers' leaders, in order to reach the workers that follow these leaders. You will strengthen the Communist movement and make us capable of achieving our goal.

Rákosi (Hungary): Comrades, I must sincerely admit that I do not take up the Hungarian question gladly. The Hungarian question and the Hungarian Party are right now a very delicate matter. As you have gathered from what Comrade Landler said, every step that is not sufficiently considered, every ill-considered word on this matter can cost the lives of hundreds of good proletarians. I cannot allow myself the luxury, like Comrade Landler, of taking up illegal matters that have cost the lives of our best fighters, and could do so in the future. I would, however, like to present the Hungarian emigration and the Hungarian Party in a different light.

Comrades, what is the Hungarian emigration? It is the portion of the Communist Party, of the Hungarian workers' movement, that fled abroad. What was the Hungarian Communist Party? It went through an energetic and quick period of expansion, which however lasted only four months. In these four months, it took power, and then held it for 4½ months. These 8½ months were of course not enough to work out all the differences of opinion on principled and tactical questions that arise in the creation of a Communist Party. The Hungarian Communist Party went into emigration, where it was not possible to deal with this mass of practical and principled differences on the basis of practical activity, of daily struggle.

In the emigration, these differences could not be dealt with through activity, mass action, and daily work among the masses. They lived on, and their effects were expressed mainly through personal frictions and vilification. The Executive grappled with this matter for ten months and made every effort to decipher the principled differences as quickly as possible. But these principled issues were microscopic, and it was therefore impossible to take the appropriate steps. However, we were faced with the fact that the emigration flared up in a ten-month scandal, writing pamphlets that were a juicy mouthful for the Social Democrats. In *Vorwärts*, it was the talk of the town, day after day, so that our revolution, our council dictatorship, our Communist Interna-

tional was besmirched with mud. The Executive had to take a position on this situation, and it was taken up in the first Expanded Session of the Executive. In such a situation, the Executive has not only the right but the duty to lance the boil with a sharp knife. To split a big stump, you need a big axe. Given the scope of this scandal, the Executive could only summon up all its energy to lance this boil. That, in short, is the story of the factional struggles.

I would like to say something more regarding the Hungarian Communist Party. Comrade Landler has attempted here to adorn his faction with the wounds and losses of the Hungarian Communist Party. I must strongly protest. The Hungarian Communist movement is the creation not of some faction but of the Hungarian proletariat, the proletariat that held power in its hands for 4½ months and sees more clearly every day what it lost in the council dictatorship.

The Hungarian Communist Party, including those now imprisoned, does not belong only to the earlier faction fighters on both sides, but to the best forces of the Communists in Budapest and Hungary. But I must energetically reject the attempt to ascribe this fact to the credit of only one faction.

One more thing. It would be disadvantageous for the Hungarian proletariat and the future of the Hungarian Communist Party if its factional battles were to still weigh on the World Congress when it disperses. These factional battles provide no basis to measure the strength of the Hungarian Communist Party. It is enough to look at the activity of the Hungarian bourgeoisie, sixty per cent of which is still dictated by fear of the Communist Party and its return. The Hungarian counter-revolution would like to nip the Communist movement in the bud with fire and sword. It is now compelled to prepare for the future, organising itself in illegal cells that are to start up an illegal struggle in Hungary against the quickly developing Communist Party. This party and the Hungarian proletariat have already shown in 1919 that they wish to fight for their freedom. Today, they are continuing this liberation struggle under incredible difficulties despite repression by the white terror. I hope that, in the future, too, they will find the path assigned them by their history, the central position of their country, and its revolutionary past.

Comrades, I would like to repeat again that when the Executive grabbed hold of this filthy mess and sorted it out, that was no pleasant task. Every comrade was pained to have the Party lying on the Executive's dissection table, and we all felt deep pain when we saw that our work and struggles had led to this.

I am fully in agreement with the last part of Comrade Landler's proposal, namely that the World Congress should express its sympathy for the martyrs and protest against their torment. I would also like to say that the Communist

International has let no occasion pass to give the Hungarian proletariat a helping hand. Comrades are well aware that we have succeeded in freeing four hundred Hungarian comrades from Horthy's prisons, and I can tell you that the Executive immediately took the necessary steps to free this group of arrested from the revenge of white justice and from Horthy's grip. We have nothing against an inquiry into Hungarian matters, but I would like to strongly protest that the affairs of the Hungarian Party should once again come before the Executive or the World Congress in a factional framework, even a disguised one, as Comrade Landler proposed here. The Hungarian Party and the Hungarian emigration have already provided enough raw material to the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, and what Comrade Landler has said here does no more than stir up all the dirt that was good and buried. I am against adopting a proposal that has this factional coloration. (*Applause*)

Chair: Comrades, we will now take a break for lunch. But first I have a couple of announcements.

The evening session begins at 7 p.m.

The Canadian delegation asks to be represented by Comrade Spector for the French question and Comrade MacDonald for the United States question. Are there any objections? There are none.

Some delegates from France propose that Comrade Scoccimarro, who was a delegate at the Paris Congress, also be named for the French Commission. Is there any objection? There is none. The proposal is therefore adopted.

Adjournment: 4:15 p.m.

Session 7 – Sunday, 12 November 1922

Discussion of Executive Committee Report (Conclusion)

Close of discussion on the ECCI report. Resolution on the ECCI report.

Speakers: Marshall, Sullivan, Friedländer, Vujović, Tan Malaka, Zinoviev, Scoccimarro, Graziadei, Duret, Souvarine, Dormoy, Peluso, Ernst Meyer, Péri, Donski

Convened: 8 p.m.

Chairperson: Marchlewski

Chair: Comrades, the commissions, which include all members of the Presidium, will need another twenty minutes to half an hour, so we will have to delay discussion a bit. However, if you wish that we begin discussion regardless, we can continue now. (*Interjections: 'Continue!'*)

Comrade Grün of Austria has the floor.¹

Grün: I decline. (*Applause*)

Marshall (Bedacht, United States): Comrades, brothers and sisters: as representative of the tendency in the American Party that, according to Comrade Carr, has not acted in harmony with the course of the Communist International Executive, I would like to say here that this tendency is, on all questions, completely in agreement with the general direction charted by the Executive during the year covered by this report.

1. The proceedings do not indicate whether the projected speaker was Anna Grün or Josef Grün, both delegates from Austria.

I must take up Comrade Carr's remarks somewhat. Let me say first that Comrade Carr has fallen into the error previously criticised by Comrade Bukharin, by limiting himself only to the internal issues facing the Communist Party of the United States. And, then, he expected that congress delegates would accept his words as true, without having any knowledge of the specific conditions in the United States. He says that, given the small size of the Party in the United States, it is appropriate to be modest, and he certainly was modest, if only intellectually. However, surely the small size of the United States Party should not mislead us regarding the fact that the problems of this country are among the greatest of world-revolution. In a country where the bourgeoisie stands at the height of its power, where the workers' movement lags the furthest behind, the tasks awaiting a revolutionary party are surely among the most daunting. Comrade Carr says that life inside the US Party has proceeded entirely in line with the theses adopted by the Executive in Moscow and then brought to the United States, where they were the object of quarrels. A while later, other theses were adopted ordering us to stop quarrels, and so we did, just like that. A very simple process. But, in fact, things did not proceed in this straightforward manner. After all, Moscow is not some Prussian sergeant-major and we are not some hayseed recruits, obediently awaiting our orders – all the more since the Party has no cause to wait for orders from Moscow.

What were the differences that developed in the American Party in the recent period? The International decided on implementing the united-front tactic. The American Party then had to assess the situation and apply the tactic in united fashion. But the then majority of the Central Committee objected to this assessment. The Central Committee declared that, in the United States, the application of the united-front tactic on a political level did not involve the joining together of different more or less revolutionary groups and parties, because no such groups and parties exist. In the United States, the united-front tactic is to be applied, they said, by first awakening the political consciousness of the working masses and, after that, leading them into struggle.

In resolving this problem, the capitalists are providing us with assistance. They are bringing into action all the instruments of power at their disposal for action against the working class, all down the line. When workers go out on strike against the employers, on the next day they see the police, the national guard, the organs of state power, the federal army all arrayed against them. You have probably seen how, when the railway shop workers went out on strike, a judge in Chicago put an end to the matter by simply banning the strike.² The way that capitalism in the United States brings all its instruments

2. About four hundred thousand railway workers struck on 1 July 1922 to block wage reductions. The US government mobilised troops and police to crush the strike,

of power into the battlefield awakens among the workers an awareness that they have their own interests.

Previously, this consciousness did not exist among the masses. Politically, the working class had fully merged into the bourgeois parties, Republicans and Democrats. But now, the working masses are awakening. Resolutions are being adopted by large workers' organisations, such as the railway brotherhoods, which encompass about half a million workers; the miners, who also have about half a million members in their union; and the machinists, with more than two hundred thousand members. The workers demand, in these resolutions and at their congresses, that an organisation be created in the United States through which they can enter political struggle independently, as a class. These resolutions show us two things: first, their origin reflects the awakening political class consciousness of the workers; second, the diversity of ways in which they are made public reflect the attempt of the leadership to lead this awakening spirit into some kind of morass.

What should we, as Communists, do in this situation? Three options seem to be open to us. First, to oppose these tendencies, which are ultimately headed toward forming a labour party, and thus oppose the motion toward independent political activity of the working class. Second, we can stand aside passively from this tendency. Or, third, we can take the leadership of this movement. The majority of the Central Committee at that time decided for the third option, that is, to attempt to take control of this movement – not just to intervene, but to try to take the leadership, the initiative, to enable these awakened masses to move forward. This was the basic conflict in the American Party that grew out of the united-front question.

In Comrade Carr's opinion, this signified not making propaganda for our party but betraying the task of building our own party.

Building the Party, after all, is a process.³ Through the activity of the mass workers' party, our party will be able to draw in all forces attracted to its programme. Simultaneously, it will create a mass political movement of American workers who are not yet revolutionary and are not ready for our party, and thus take us an enormous step toward the proletarian revolution. Through this work, we will achieve a commanding position, even in the period of this party's formation. We will become an integral part of this movement, not just at the moment when the workers make the attempt to come over to us, but as part of the forces that have created this mass party. We will genuinely be a force driving it forward. And, in this way, we could perform a great service for the American movement. This conception and assessment does not violate

and ultimately obtained an injunction, on 1 September, that banned the strike and all activities promoting it.

3. The German text reads 'not a process', an apparent misprint.

any theses, resolutions, or decisions of the International. But, if we are making a mistake here, it is up to the Fourth Congress to tell us that this is an error.

Finally, a word regarding support to the candidature of Meyer London.⁴ Comrade Carr thought it appropriate to portray things as if there were a tendency in the Party that had withdrawn the Communist Party's candidate out of friendship for Meyer London, in order to get him elected. What was the real situation? Meyer was the only candidate of the Socialist Party, nominated by them. We have just begun to build strength among the Jewish working masses. We are not yet strong enough to dispute the commanding position of the Socialist Party, which has its strongest base in this area. There are masses of workers who still believe that the Socialist Party candidate is their candidate and who do not yet know, as we do, that it does not matter for the workers whether they vote for Meyer London or a Democratic Party candidate. If we had maintained our own candidate right to the elections, we would have set these masses against us, giving the Socialist Party a weapon with which to blame us for having helped deny victory to a workers' candidate and thus giving victory to the bourgeois candidate. We would be wrong to hand the Socialist Party such an argument.

What did we actually do? We nominated a candidate, carried out an election campaign against the Socialist Party, and, at the last moment, just before the vote, we withdrew our candidate. We told the workers of this district that we were withdrawing our candidate not because we view Meyer London as a good representative of the workers, but because we have not yet persuaded the workers on this point and want to give him the opportunity to demonstrate and prove this fact before the very eyes of our voters. I believe that this is the only policy proposed in the American Party and is also the only policy that could conceivably have been carried out. Comrade Carr and his friends were against this policy, but, in all modesty, they have abstained so far from proposing any alternative. I believe that modesty is right now not appropriate. There is a problem to be solved here. Either we solve this problem, or we must abdicate as Marxists and Communists.

Sullivan (United States): Comrades, you have heard two representatives of the United States. Comrade Carr spoke yesterday on behalf of the Centre, and at least his intentions are good. I do not agree with him. He harbours various amiable illusions, for example, that the right wing and the Centre in the American Party can work together for communism. I consider this to be a dangerous illusion. However, at least he is sincere.

4. London was Socialist Party congressman for the Lower East Side district in New York. See comments by Carr (Katterfeld), p. 214.

You have just heard another representative of the American Party, Comrade Marshall of the right wing. He represents the Mensheviks, and he is not sincere. He holds a mask before his face. He comes here and shows you just a tiny scrap of his true face, saying that we should vote Meyer London, the social patriot, into congress. Otherwise the Communist movement in the United States would collapse.

I represent the left-wing forces in the Party, four thousand of whom were expelled. Another one thousand left in January on their own accord. It was the Marshall faction, which held a majority in the Party until September, that threw us out.⁵

I wish to criticise something in the work of the Comintern Executive, namely that the Executive has given too much support to the right wing of the American Communist Party. The results of this policy are clear to see in the United States today – the Party is going under. If we now set our sights on unity, it will be only partial and artificial and of short duration, for the right wing, the left wing, and the Centre cannot work together and cannot coexist long in one and the same organisation. I must criticise the Executive for having neglected to extend application of the Twenty-One Points to America. Had it done so, we would not have heard the representative of the right wing here today.

In order to show you the kind of propaganda carried out by the right wing,⁶ I will read a few quotations taken from the parties' official publications – its official and legal party publications under the leadership of Marshall and his central committee. The first quotation deals with the Genoa Conference.⁷ The Party's official publication, which carries out Communist propaganda, writes as follows:

Nonetheless the Genoa Conference is the first honest attempt of Europe's rulers to repair the damage caused by the War.

Writing in the name of communism, Marshall here praises the Genoa Conference held by the imperialist bandits.⁸

Marshall: Did I write that?

Sullivan: You were in the Central Committee and were responsible for it. The publication was entirely under your control. You made no retraction. It was an official editorial of the Party. 'The first honest attempt by Europe's

5. On the 1922 split in the US Party, see p. 216, n. 31.

6. The German-language text refers here to the 'left wing', an evident misprint that is corrected in the English-language summary.

7. The Genoa Conference was the first major international gathering to admit a delegation from the Soviet Republic. See p. 120, n. 4.

8. See statement by the American Commission on p. 1122.

rulers.' That is the kind of Communist propaganda that you present in the name of the Communist International. But it gets even better. I ask the Presidium whether it would be possible to hang up, between the portrait of the Kaplan woman shooting down Comrade Lenin and the portraits of the Social Revolutionaries,⁹ an issue of the American Party's official publication, published by Marshall, for he is responsible for its politics. He says:

Quite apart from the political situation, it would be more than foolish at the present moment to punish too severely deeds that were carried out in the early period of the revolution.

Is this Communist politics?

Marshall: Please present these newspapers!

Sullivan: I will present them to the United States Commission. You may not believe that I have them, but you know that they exist.

Chair: I ask that there be no interruptions of the speaker, because his speaking time is limited.

Sullivan: If I'm irritating some people here, I can't help that – in fact, I'm glad of it. There is another editorial about the Conference of the Three Internationals in Berlin. What did this paper serve up to us about this in the name of Communist propaganda? It was written by one of the active leaders, XXX, and was never corrected in the official party press. XXX has not yet forgotten the kiss given him in the winter of 1914–15 by his pseudo-comrade Vandervelde, a loyal and dutiful servant of his king.¹⁰ He longs for another kiss like that:

There is something fascinating about the call for a united front [the Conference of the Three Internationals in Berlin]. It hypnotises us, awakening faint hopes that the time will come again when there will be only one Socialist party and one International.

So, he 'hypnotises' us and awakens faint hopes that the time will come again, when there will be only one Socialist – not Communist – party and one International. This is the kind of propaganda that is carried out in the United States by the right wing. Carried out, moreover, by the American Mensheviks

9. Faina Kaplan, a Socialist Revolutionary, wounded Lenin in an assassination attempt in 1918. In the summer of 1922, leading Socialist Revolutionaries were convicted for violent attacks on the Soviet government.

10. The apparent implication is that the unnamed US CP leader made a statement favourable to the Allied side in the War. Vandervelde, a leading Social Democrat, had joined the Belgian government after the outbreak of war in 1914.

with the unknowing support of the Communist International. And that is the basis for my criticism of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

So you should not be surprised that the revolutionary forces are leaving the Party. I can present many other examples of Menshevik activity. The Party has been handed over to the Mensheviks, who attack the Twenty-One Points of the Communist International, defend Paul Levi and Serrati, and violate the Communist International's supervision of the legal party organisation. In the name of the united front, they promote organisational unity with the Mensheviks and the election to Congress of the social patriot, Meyer London.

Marshall did not consider it necessary to say that he and the right wing of the Party insist that the illegal party should be dissolved. He has opened up a campaign to dissolve the illegal party and to maintain only a legal party, whose programme will remain within the limits of bourgeois legality. Just like the old Russian Liquidators of 1906 and subsequently.¹¹ They wanted the same kind of broad mass party. They promised a broad mass party in the United States with one hundred thousand members, and now, by their own accounting, they have dwindled down to fourteen thousand members – a centrist, Menshevik party, that is, a small sect.

I cannot cover all that I have to say; I do not have time for that. But there will be no healthy Communist movement in the United States until the Communist International insists on the expulsion from the Party of the right wing. Instead, you will have to register the fact that all the genuinely revolutionary forces, the working-class forces, are leaving the Party. The Party will become a petty-bourgeois movement that holds it as its duty to send the social patriot Meyer London to Congress, as was recommended here just a few minutes ago.

Chair: Comrades, the Swiss, Austrian, and Dutch delegations have submitted a motion to close the debate. The motion proposes that only the representatives of the youth organisation and the Eastern peoples should speak. Comrade Vujović is on the list for the youth organisation and Comrade Malaka from Java for the Eastern peoples. Comrade Friedländer will explain the motion to close the debate.

11. 'Liquidators' in the Russian Social-Democratic movement after 1906 favoured 'liquidating' the habits of the underground party and instituting a new party régime that could take advantage of legal openings that they believed were emerging under tsarism. Bolsheviks contended that this view, held by many Mensheviks, amounted to abandoning the party's revolutionary character. The debate on US 'liquidationism' at the Fourth Congress turned on whether objective conditions in the US were analogous to those in Russia under tsarism. See also pp. 215–6, nn. 28–30.

Friedländer (Austria): Comrades, the debate has been quite exhaustive. All tendencies have taken the floor. In addition, without a doubt, a certain weariness is setting in. Moreover, Comrade Zinoviev must deliver an extended summary, in order to reply to the different speakers. Under these circumstances, it is entirely counterproductive to continue this discussion. It will be expedient if only representatives of parties that have not yet spoken and a youth representative take the floor. I believe that after four days of debate all comrades will be in agreement with this obvious motion.

Chair: Does anyone wish to speak against this motion? That is not the case. We come to the vote. (*Adopted*)

Vujović: Comrades, the Communist Youth International has always approved the political line followed by the Communist International Executive and continues to do so. In our opinion, during the last fifteen months the Executive has carried out the decisions of the Third Congress in spirit and in action.

The Communist Youth International expresses not only its agreement in theory with the Executive's political guidelines, but also makes every effort to carry out these policies in the youth organisation.

The results show that the application of the united front by all youth organisations and in every country where it was implemented was crowned with success. The youth organisations of Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, and other countries applied the united front, based on the line laid down by the Communist International Executive. Experience in action proved the correctness of this line.

The Communist Youth International also declares its full agreement with the conduct of the Communist International Executive in the special cases of France, Italy, Norway, Czechoslovakia, and other countries where the Executive had to intervene during the period covered by the report. The Communist Youth International considers that the Executive's resolve to take in hand the practical application of the Third Congress decisions was not only understood by the Executive but carried out in life in all countries, particularly in Czechoslovakia and Italy. This resolve consisted of struggling to win the majority of the working class in all countries.

The Communist Youth International [CYI], which I represent here, wishes to stress in particular one point in Comrade Zinoviev's report that it believes to be fundamental. This concerns building Communist cells in all factories and mills. The CYI believes the moment has come to carry out concretely and in practice the theses adopted by the Third Congress on this point.

For its part, the CYI has sought to make these theses a reality through its own activity. We could present specific examples, such as what happened in the Lyons district of France. The factory organisations founded there met

with success, and Communist cells have become a reality in the factories and mills.

The Communist Youth International believes that, in the near future, all Communist parties must develop genuine activity in this regard.

There is another point that we consider very important: the necessary centralisation of the Communist International and discipline within its ranks.

Through the activity of its different organisations in various countries, the Communist International has shown that it stands for Communist discipline and centralisation, not only in words but in deeds.

In France, and other countries where the Executive has had to reckon with some degree of resistance, the youth organisation was always the first to lend support to the Executive. Inside the Communist parties, we have always defended the Executive's conduct.

The different cases of breach of discipline in the period covered by the report were very sharply condemned by the youth. We assume that there will be no repetition of such cases in the future. The theses and resolutions adopted on different occasions at several congresses constitute the foundation of the Communist International. We hope that the Communist parties will show that they not only give these decisions verbal approval, but that every group will show in coming struggles that Communist discipline is genuinely alive. And we hope that the Communist International Executive will then have greater certainty than in the past that all decisions will in fact be carried out.

We express the wish that all the slogans of the Communist International, such as that of the united front, be adopted and carried out without reservations. The CYI believes that the Communist International Executive has put behind it the initial period in which it had to put special efforts into providing all Communist parties with a general political line. In the coming period, it is high time for the Executive to concern itself with organisational questions and to promote more than in the past the organisation of Communist parties into genuine mass parties. We hope that the Communist International's component organisations will no longer be able to influence the Executive's work as a political leadership through open or concealed resistance. In this way, the Executive will be able to dedicate itself in all countries to the reorganisation of the Communist parties on the basis of factory councils rooted in the working masses.

In this way the Communist International and its Executive will be able to lead all the future revolutionary struggles forced on it by the current situation with more energy and success. (*Applause*)

Tan Malaka (Dutch Indies): Comrades, given the speeches by comrades Zinoviev and Radek and other European comrades, and given the importance

the united front holds for thousands of millions of oppressed people of the East, I believe I must take the floor in the name of the Communist Party of Java.

I must address some questions to comrades Zinoviev and Radek. Perhaps Comrade Zinoviev has not considered a united front in Java, and perhaps our united front is something different. But what the decision of the Second Congress of the Communist International means in practice is that we must establish a united front with revolutionary nationalism.¹² We must recognise that the united front is necessary in our country too. And, for us, it is a united front not with Social Democrats but with revolutionary nationalists. In our country, the policies of the nationalists against imperialism take different forms, including the boycott, the Muslim war of liberation, and pan-Islamism. I am looking at two forms in particular, and therefore I ask the following questions. First, should we support the national boycott movement or not? Second, should we support pan-Islamism – yes or no? And if yes, how far should we go?

I must concede that the boycott is certainly not a Communist method, but, given the political and military subjugation of the East, it is one of the most effective available methods. We have also seen that, during the last two years, this method has been crowned with success in the Egyptian peoples' boycott in 1919 against British imperialism and the great Chinese boycott of late 1919 and early 1920. The most recent boycott movement took place in British India. We can assume that, this year or next, some kind of boycott will be utilised in the East.

We know, of course, that the boycott is not our method; it is more the method of a petty bourgeoisie or the nationalist bourgeoisie. We can say more: we can say that the boycott is a way to support the indigenous bourgeoisie. But we have also seen that, as a result of the boycott movement in British India, eighteen thousand leaders are still languishing in the jails, while the boycott aroused a quite revolutionary sentiment. Yes, the British government was even forced by the boycott movement in British India to ask for military assistance from Japan in the eventuality that the boycott movement evolved into an open armed uprising.

12. The Second Congress resolution on the national and colonial questions states, in part, 'all Communist parties must directly support the revolutionary movement among the nations that are dependent and do not have equal rights (for example Ireland, the Negroes in America, and so forth) and in the colonies'. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 286. Lenin's report on this point specifies, '[W]e, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited'. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 213 or Lenin 1960–71, 31, p. 242.

We know that the Muslim leaders in India, Dr. Kitchlew, Hasrat Mohani, and the Ali brothers, are really nationalists. In fact, no uprising took place when Gandhi was arrested. But, in India, we know very well, as does every revolutionary, that a local uprising must end in defeat, because there we do not possess any weapons or other instruments of war.

So the question of a boycott movement, either now or in the future, is very much in the foreground for us Communists. We knew, in India and in Java, that many Communists are inclined to proclaim a boycott movement in Java, perhaps because the communist sentiment coming from Russia has been so long forgotten, and also perhaps because, in British India, communist sentiments that were competing with this broad movement were stifled. In any case, we face the question: should we support this tactic – yes or no? And how far can we go in this?

We have a long experience of pan-Islamism. First let me speak about our experiences in the Indies, where we work together with the Islamists. In Java, there is quite a large association called Sarekat Islam [Islamic Federation], which includes many poor peasants. Between 1912 and 1916, this organisation had perhaps a million members – it could well have been as many as three or four million. It was a very large popular movement that grew up spontaneously and was very revolutionary.

Until 1921, we worked together with it. Our party, with thirteen thousand members, went into the popular movement and carried out propaganda there. In 1921, we were successful in getting Sarekat Islam to adopt our programme. The Islamic association spoke out in the villages for control of the factories and for the slogan: All power to the poor peasants, all power to the proletarians! So Sarekat Islam was making the same propaganda as our Communist party, only sometimes under another name.

But, in 1921, a split occurred as a result of clumsy criticism of the leaders of Sarekat Islam. The government, through its agents in Sarekat Islam, took advantage of this split and also made use of the decision of the Second Congress of the Communist International: *Struggle against Pan-Islamism!*¹³ What did they say to the ordinary peasants? They said: 'You see, the Communists do not merely want to split your religion, they also want to destroy it.' For the ordinary Muslim peasant, that was too much. The peasant thought to himself: 'I have lost everything in this world; must I now lose my heaven as well? That won't do!' That is how the ordinary Muslims thought. And the propagandists,

13. The Second Congress 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions' state: 'It is necessary to struggle against the Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian movements and similar currents that try to link the liberation struggle against European and American imperialism with strengthening the power of Turkish and Japanese imperialism and of the nobles, large landowners, clergy, and so forth'. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 288.

the agents of the government, exploited that very successfully. So we had a split.

Chair: Your time is up.

Tan Malaka: I come from the Indies; I travelled for forty days. (*Applause*)

The Sarekat Islamists believe in our propaganda. If I may use a popular expression, their stomachs are with us, but their hearts are with Sarekat Islam, with their heaven. We are unable to grant them that heaven. Therefore, they boycotted our meetings, and we were unable to carry out propaganda any more.

Since the beginning of last year, we worked to restore the collaboration with Sarekat Islam. We said at our December congress last year that the Muslims in the Caucasus and other countries, who collaborate with the Soviets and fight against international capitalism, have a much better understanding of their religion. We also said that, if they wish to make propaganda for their religion, they can do so, but they should do it not in meetings but in the mosques.

We have been asked at public meetings, 'Are you a Muslim, yes or no? Do you believe in God, yes or no?'

And how did we answer? 'Yes', I said, 'when I stand before God, I am a Muslim, but when I stand before man, I am not a Muslim (*Loud applause*), because God has said that there are many Satans among men!' (*Loud applause*) And so, with the Qur'an in our hand, we inflicted a defeat on their leaders. At our congress last year, we compelled the leaders of Sarekat Islam, through their own members, to cooperate with us.

Then, in March last year, a general strike broke out, and the Muslim workers needed us, as we had the railway workers under our leadership.¹⁴ The leaders of Sarekat Islam said: 'If you want to collaborate with us, you must help us.' Of course we went to them and said: 'Yes, your God is mighty, but your God has said that on this earth the railway workers are even mightier!' (*Loud applause*) 'The railway workers are God's executive committee in this world.' (*Laughter*)

But that doesn't settle the question. And if we have another split, we can be certain that the government agents will be there again with their pan-Islamism. That is why the question of pan-Islamism is urgently posed.

14. It is not clear to what strike Tan Malaka is referring. In 1920, the sugar workers' union asked the railway workers to help them gain union recognition, but no strike took place. The pawnshop workers' strike of January 1922 was the first major work stoppage in the Dutch East Indies. Tan Malaka presented a statement of support to the strikers on behalf of revolutionary unions, including the railway workers. McVey 1965, pp. 92, 121–2.

Now, first, you must understand what the word pan-Islamism actually means. It once had a historical meaning, signifying that Islam must conquer the entire world, sword in hand. This was to be done in a holy war under the leadership of the caliph, and the caliph must be Arabic in origin. About forty years after the death of Mohammed, the Muslims divided into three great empires, and with that the Holy War lost its significance for the entire Muslim world. The notion of conquering the entire world for the Muslim religion lost its meaning. The caliph of Spain said: 'I am the true caliph, and I must carry the banner.' The caliph of Egypt said the same thing. And the caliph of Baghdad said: 'I am the true leader, because I come from the Arabic tribe of the Quraysh.'

So, pan-Islamism no longer has its original meaning, but, instead, has now in practice taken on quite a different meaning. Pan-Islamism now means the nationalist freedom struggle. For the Muslims, Islam means everything: not only religion, but also state, economy, food, and everything. So pan-Islamism means the brotherhood of all Muslim peoples, and the freedom struggle of not only the Arab but also the Hindustani, Javanese, and all the oppressed Muslim peoples. In practice, this brotherhood means the liberation struggle, not only against Dutch but also against British, French, and Italian capitalism, that is to say, against capitalism of the entire world. That is what pan-Islamism now means in the Indies among the subjugated colonial peoples, and that is how they have spread the idea in secret – that is, as the liberation struggle against the different imperialist powers of the world.

This is a new task for us. Just as we want to support the national struggle, we also want to support the liberation struggle of these very combative, very active 250 million Muslims living under the imperialist powers. Therefore I ask once again: Should we support pan-Islamism, in this sense?¹⁵ That is all I have to say. (*Loud applause*)

Summary to the Executive Report

Zinoviev: Comrades, permit me first to deal somewhat more fully with the matter of the workers' government. I am not sure whether we really have serious differences of opinion on this question, or whether it has perhaps simply not been fully explained and is perhaps partly a terminological question. This will become clear in the course of the Congress and in drafting the resolution on questions of tactics, which will be taken up after those of

15. See also comments on pan-Islamism by Ravesteyn (pp. 680–5) and Boudengha (p. 704) and in the resolution on the Eastern question (p. 1182).

the Russian Revolution. For me, it has nothing at all to do with the word 'pseudonym', which was quoted here.¹⁶ I am gladly prepared to give way in the quarrel regarding this word. But what is important is its meaning. I believe that I can best clear up the matter, comrades, by saying the following. Every bourgeois government is simultaneously a capitalist government. It is hard to imagine a bourgeois government that is not also a capitalist government. But unfortunately we cannot say the opposite. Not every workers' government is a socialist government. This contrast is very profound. It deals with the fact that the bourgeoisie has its outposts within our class, but the contrary is not true. It is impossible for us to have outposts in the camp of the bourgeoisie.

Every bourgeois government is thus a bourgeois government, and even many workers' governments can be bourgeois too in terms of their social content. But the contrary is not true. I believe that is the decisive point: there are workers' governments and workers' governments.

I believe that we can imagine four different kinds of workers' governments (and that far from exhausts the list of possibilities). We can have a workers' government that, in terms of its composition, is a liberal workers' government, like that of Australia. There was an Australian workers' government, and many of our Australian comrades said that the workers' government slogan is incorrect because such governments have existed in Australia already and they were bourgeois. They were genuine workers' governments, but their content was liberal. They were bourgeois worker governments, if I may use the term.

At present, there are elections in Britain. It will probably not happen in these elections, but, theoretically, we can very well imagine a situation where a workers' government comes to office that is similar to the Australian workers' government and in its content is a liberal workers' government. Given the present situation, such a liberal workers' government in Britain could be the jumping-off point for revolutionising the country. That could happen. But the government itself is nothing more than a liberal workers' government.¹⁷

At present, we Communists vote in Britain for the Labour Party. That is equivalent to voting for a liberal workers' government. Under current conditions, Communists in Britain have to vote for a liberal workers' government. This tactic is absolutely correct. Why? Because it is objectively a step forward; because a liberal government in Britain is the best option to pave the road for

16. See comments by Ernst Meyer, p. 140, and Radek, p. 167.

17. Zinoviev's conception of the types of workers' governments was incorporated into the Theses on Tactics, p. 1161, after an amendment presented on pp. 1098–9 and other changes.

the bankruptcy of capitalism. We have already seen in the Kerensky period that the position of capitalism was smashed, even though the liberals were agents of capitalism. Plekhanov said that the Mensheviks, during the period from February to October 1917, were half-Bolsheviks. We denied that. We said they were not Bolsheviks at all, not even a quarter. We spoke in these terms because we were locked in fierce struggle with them and we perceived their betrayal of the proletariat. But, objectively, Plekhanov was right. Objectively, the Menshevik government was most suitable to ruin capitalism's game, to make their situation impossible. Locked in struggle against the Mensheviks, our comrades could not perceive this at that time.

We confronted each other in battle. We see only that they are betrayers of the working class. They are not opponents of the bourgeoisie, but when, for a period, they take hold of the bourgeoisie's weapons, they can take many steps that are objectively directed against the bourgeois state. In Britain, we support both the liberal workers' government and also the Labour Party. The British bourgeoisie is right to say that the workers' government will begin with Clynes and can finish in the hands of the left wing.

The second type is a Social-Democratic government. Imagine that the unified SPD in Germany forms a purely 'socialist' government. That will also be a workers' government (in quotation marks, of course). We can conceive of a situation where we would grant such a government a conditional credit, that is, conditional support. We can imagine that, under certain circumstances, a 'socialist' government can be a stage toward revolutionising the situation.

That is the second possibility.

A third type is the so-called coalition government, that is, a government composed of Social Democrats, trade-union leaders, persons without party affiliation, and perhaps Communists as well. We can conceive of such a possibility. Such a government is not yet the dictatorship of the proletariat, but could be the starting point for it. If all goes well, we will manoeuvre the Social Democrats out of such a government, one after another, until power rests in the hands of the Communists. This is a historical possibility.

Fourth, I am thinking of a workers' government that is really a workers' government, that is, a Communist workers' government, for the others are not true workers' governments. This fourth possibility, in my view, is indeed a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat – a workers' government in the full sense of the word.

But that far from exhausts the question. A fifth or sixth type may occur, and all of them can be a good starting point for a further revolutionising of the situation.

I fear that, in the search for a rigorous scientific definition, we might overlook the political side of the situation. For me, it's not a matter of hair-splitting scientific definitions, but, rather, that we don't overlook the revolutionary side of things. Often, you get the feeling that many comrades imagine that we need only join with the Social Democrats in order to have a workers' government. In the process, this would overlook one thing: first we must overthrow the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie will not willingly give up its position; it will struggle for power.

We must not forget that, in addition to the workers' parties there is also a bourgeoisie that has been in power for decades and that does everything possible to struggle for this power.

In order to create a workers' government in the revolutionary sense, one must first overthrow the bourgeoisie. That is the key point. We must not forget to differentiate between two things. The first is the way we carry out agitation, how we best address ordinary workers, how we can best enable them to understand their situation. In my view, the slogan of the workers' government serves that goal well. There is also a second question, namely how events will develop historically, and how the revolution will actually take place.

Let us lift slightly the curtain of the future.

How will the revolution take place? We like to make conjectures, for example, that it will pass through all stages of the workers' government, including the coalition government, and then the civil war. We are all fond of prophesying the future course of the revolution. But the fact is that the only thing we can predict is that our prophecies will not hit the mark. The revolution will very likely take place in quite another manner than we imagine. It will come through quite another door. We saw that in our Russian Revolution as well. Five years ago, we imagined that we might be forced to our knees by the blockade, by hunger, and the rest. We considered different eventualities, but that of the New Economic Policy and the revolution's present course was not foreseen by anyone.

In every country, the situation is different. The revolution will probably take place quite differently in Germany than in Britain. That does not mean that we, as conscious revolutionaries, should not lift the curtain of the future. We are thinking beings, and we wish to lead the way for the working class. We must attempt to clarify things from every possible angle. But prediction is very difficult here. Looking at the workers' government slogan from this point of view, as a specific question of how the proletarian revolution will take place, it seems very doubtful that the world-revolution will necessarily step through the door of the workers' government.

Yesterday, our friend Radek said that the workers' government is a possible form of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. I would like to

say that it is only a possibility, or to be absolutely precise, this possibility arises only exceptionally. That does not mean that the workers' government slogan is wrong. It is correct. When conditions are favourable, it will bring us great successes in agitation. But, when we examine the question of the path forward, of whether the revolution will necessarily take this path, in my opinion, that question cannot be resolved here. It is probably the least likely path. In countries with a developed bourgeoisie, we will win power only through civil war, and if we oust the bourgeoisie in this manner, there is unlikely to be any pause for a considerable period. It could happen, but there is no point arguing about it; all we can do is propose conjectures. The main thing for us is to perceive clearly all the fundamental possibilities along the path to revolution. There may be a workers' government that is nothing more than a liberal workers' government, as possibly in Britain, Australia, and elsewhere. Such a workers' government may objectively be of use to the working class. It is right to agitate for such a workers' government, and we can gain a lot from this. But what we must not forget in this process is our revolutionary perspective.

I have a nice quotation from the newspaper of the Czechoslovak minister Beneš. His paper, *Čas* [*Time*], writes on 13 September:

Using the slogan of struggle against unemployment, the Communist Party is consolidating the workers' united front. One cannot deny the Communists' resourcefulness. They understand how to present the same thing to workers in different forms. So, for example, the Communists at one time began agitating for the formation of soviets. When this brought them no results, they stopped doing that and a year and a half later started over again, using the disguise of united-front committees. Certainly the proletarian united front could become an enormous force if based on progressive ideas.

And so on. I think this bourgeois is right. We would welcome receiving such praise more frequently. Yes, as Communists who are dealing with a working class that has been spiritually enslaved by the bourgeoisie for decades and centuries, we must bend every effort to enlighten our class, using every possible method. I have said that there may be a workers' government that is, in reality, a bourgeois government, but there may also be a workers' government that is genuinely revolutionary. We must attempt to enlighten the backward segments of the working class in various ways, and, when it is easier, do this by means of the united front. But the content of our educational work must always remain the same.

One more thing, comrades. A soviet government does not always signify a dictatorship of the proletariat. Not at all. In Russia, during the Kerensky government, a soviet parallel government existed for eight months, and it was not

a dictatorship of the proletariat. Nonetheless we advanced the demand for a soviet government.

That is why I believe, comrades, that we can continue to advance the slogan of a workers' government, with the one proviso that we know exactly what it refers to. Woe betide us if, in our agitation, we permit for one moment the idea to crop up that there will necessarily be a workers' government, that it could come about peacefully, that there is some organically fixed period that could replace the civil war, and so on. If such conceptions are held by any of us, and they are probably present somewhere, they must be decisively combated. The working class must be educated in such a way that we tell them: 'Yes, dear friends, in order to achieve a workers' government, first we must overthrow and defeat the bourgeoisie!'

That is what is most important about this slogan. If you want a workers' government, fine, we agree on that, even with the Social Democrats. We say that they will betray you. But, even so, we are for such a workers' government, but only on the condition that it is ready to fight shoulder to shoulder with us against the bourgeoisie. If you are willing, we will take up the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and if a workers' government arises from this struggle, it will rest on a firm foundation and will truly be a prelude to and beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In and of itself, it is not a matter of the word 'pseudonym' – I gladly concede this word to Comrade Meyer. It's rather a matter of having a clear position on this question. This is absolutely not some subterfuge through which we can trick the bourgeoisie into renouncing civil war. The International needs a good strategy, but this strategy cannot enable us to avoid civil war and to glide smoothly into the realm of a workers' government. Such a process simply doesn't exist. The decisive element is the struggle, which conquers the bourgeoisie. Once it has been conquered, various forms of workers' government can occur.

In Britain, a workers' government in the present situation could have an objectively revolutionary effect, and we will even give limited support to such a Menshevik-liberal workers' government. But, by no means does that avoid the class struggle; it is simply another form of class struggle. The existence of such a workers' government does not mean that we can avoid the most effective form, that of civil war. Not at all. We know that, under certain circumstances, such a Menshevik-liberal workers' government can turn against us in a manner even more bloodthirsty than a bourgeois government. Noske showed us that, as did our Mensheviks as well. It does not by any means signify a way to avert civil war. That is why I say, comrades, that this slogan is absolutely correct for agitation, provided that we really understand how to employ it in a revolutionary manner.

Take for example the slogan for a Blum-Frossard government in France. The Executive was responsible for that demand. We proposed it to comrades in the process of a discussion. Yet it was premature in France. Why? Because given the traditions of the Party there, this was understood to be a parliamentary alliance. The Executive was entirely right, theoretically, to say we cannot reject the slogan of a workers' government. It is an eventuality, a possibility, a revolutionary perspective, but, given the specific conditions, it was premature. It would perhaps have been better to begin the united-front tactic around the eight-hour day. So people began right away to sniff around, saying, perhaps negotiations have already begun to unite the parties, and so on. We have to approach this practically, as things are.

Some of our friends among the Left perhaps also exaggerated a bit there. If I am not mistaken, it was our friend, Comrade Souvarine, who wrote, 'In Russia there was also a period of a Martov-Lenin government.' That is not correct. There was not such a period in Russia. But you have to understand that the overthrow of tsarism in Russia went halfway toward overthrowing the bourgeoisie. The February Revolution was initially a bourgeois revolution, of course, but it was not entirely bourgeois in character. From the very outset, it was a great people's revolution, which carried the October Revolution in its womb. From its very first day, it had soldiers' councils, but not like those that could be sent off home after a couple of months, the way Noske did, but councils that immediately grabbed Kerensky by the throat.

In such a situation, where the Mensheviks really represented a parallel government, it was correct to say that we want to form a coalition government. As you know, that did not come to anything. Instead, the outcome was civil war. We achieved our goal only arms in hand. We formed an alliance not with Martov but with the Left Social Revolutionaries, who represented the revolutionary part of the peasantry. In this context, the slogan was correct. But it would be incorrect to use this weapon in France today, saying it is the same as a government of Martov and Lenin.

Even our best friends have made small mistakes here. I do not believe that our discussion at this congress will lead to giving up the slogan of the workers' government – especially not after the work of the commissions. This slogan remains correct as a way of getting a hearing from the masses. There is no doubt about that. The slogan is still correct, but we need to understand how to use it properly. It harbours the same dangers as the united-front tactic. When you start talking about governments, it is logical that people think about parliamentary alliances with a division of ministerial posts, and so on. The difficulties here are even greater than with the united-front tactic. But there is no reason to say that we must reject this slogan, simply because it is difficult, as

suggested by our French comrades. They say: 'You see, our party is no good; we can't do anything because we are too weak!' If you are too weak, then you must become stronger. If you cannot swim, jump into the water – that is how you will learn to swim. We must stress the dangers so that we can counter them. We are living through a period that is still somewhat slack, and this has to create a danger of an opportunist infection. Comrade Radek is quite right to say, in this regard, that the danger right now lies to the right. The six sessions we have held so far must surely have convinced us of this.

We must follow a firm course in this matter. We must tell comrades: 'Yes, a workers' government is all very well and good, but to establish a workers' government we must first overthrow the now existing bourgeoisie, and, for that, we need a weapon. We must start by getting organised, and we must also understand that hard struggles lie ahead and that there is no other way to emerge victorious.' With that, comrades, I will end this part of the report.

I will now speak about the most important parties. I will take them up in the same order as in my initial report.

So, I will start with Germany. Comrade Ruth Fischer, who has shown that she does not look nearly as dreadful as some may have supposed, (*Laughter*) reproached us for the fact that the Third Congress exerted a somewhat negative influence on the German Party. This criticism should really be addressed to the Third Congress and not to the Fourth. But, fine, we are the continuators of the Third Congress and we can respond. I believe that the criticism is not accurate. Let us not exaggerate by saying that we saved the German Party. It wasn't us that saved it; the German proletariat itself set the Party back on its feet. But to the extent that the Third Congress was involved, I believed it acted rightly. (*'Very true!'*)

It is said that the Levi group was not handled correctly, that everything was lumped in together. Excuse me, but that is not correct. Do not forget that, during the Third Congress, even the best revolutionary fighters were in doubt on this question. Even in our Russian delegation, there were differences of opinion on this, including among our best comrades. Many thought that Levi is, after all, quite a smart fellow and he will perhaps handle things better than some of his opponents. It turned out that this was not the case. The task and duty of the Third Congress was to ensure that when Levi went to Noske, he went alone, or at least with as small as possible a number of associates. Geyer and all these people do not count for a lot. We will not begrudge them to him. He is welcome to take a couple of Geyers with him. But there was a real danger that he might take with him a section of our party.

And, in this regard, the Third Congress did in fact help the German Party somewhat in taking the correct position and saving the best forces for the revolution. So in this regard Comrade Ruth Fischer is not quite right.

As for the Rathenau affair, Comrade Radek has already stressed that we are in agreement with this criticism. When the murder of Rathenau occurred, we wrote a confidential letter to the German Party, during the campaign. We turned to our Central Bureau in Germany and expressed our view of the matter.

Please permit me to read a few quotations from this letter. It is dated 18 June, that is, while the battle still raged:

Now as to the Party's conduct. We have done all possible to follow the events in Germany. We have read your reports very carefully, and we thank you for writing in such detail. Your policy in the first days, as expressed in *Rote Fahne* [Red Banner], seems to us all to have been too weak. In the given situation, we should not shout 'Republic, republic!' We should, rather, from the outset, demonstrate to the masses that present-day Germany is a republic without any republicans. At this time of upheaval, we should show the broad working masses that they should be concerned not so much about the republic as about their economic interests, and that the bourgeois republic is not only no guarantee for the proletariat's class interests, but, rather, in the present situation, is the best form for suppressing the working masses. We should not sound the same note as the Social Democrats and the USPD. The united front should never, never, never rule out the independence of our agitation. That is an absolute requirement, its *sine qua non*.

We are ready to negotiate with the SPD and USPD people, not as poor relations, but as an independent force, which maintains its own face, expressing the Party's point of view to the masses from A to Z.

I believe this quotation is enough to show that we made our German party aware of this weak side of the Rathenau campaign at that time. We went further. We asked if it would not be possible for the German Party to act more assertively. Of course, we were not so foolish as to say: 'You must immediately move into action, proclaim a strike, and so on.' That must be determined by the Party. But we did pose the question whether it would be possible for the Party to immediately assert itself independently and forcefully. And I am convinced, to the degree that I can grasp the situation, that this was not possible; it would have led to a bloodbath. The German Central Bureau did not make this mistake. Despite all its other partial mistakes, it did make good use of the situation.

The quotation I just read says that we must never, never, never give up the independence of our agitation. And to say anything different from that would be simply the suicide of the Communist Party. ('*Very true*') For example, we wanted the British Communists to affiliate to the Labour Party, but we set a condition: the independence of their agitation. The Labour Party did not

accept that, and we said, 'Here we stand; we can do no other.' The formation of the Communist Party aims, above all, to establish independence of agitation. The tasks of struggle come soon enough, but independence is the first task. We must always preserve our own face. We must never forget that this ragged bourgeois republic is nothing but a noose around the neck of the working class. How could *Rote Fahne* use only the term republic? Now is the time to tell the workers: 'This cringing republic will strangle you; your proletarian interests are at stake. In this specific case we will fight against the nationalists together with the Social Democrats. But you must never forget what "republic" means.'

At that moment, this was our greatest responsibility. It seemed to us, from a distance, that our party had given itself over a bit too much into the hands of the leadership bodies.¹⁸ We, in Germany, are not poor relations. We are an independent party, and the Party deserves victory. And, because, at that moment, they wanted to have us, we then had the least possible cause to act like poor relations. It is clear that the strategy of the Scheidemann people at the outset of the Rathenau campaign consisted of isolating us somewhat. We had to understand that and could not renounce having a discussion with them. But, at the same time, we should have written in all our papers, sounding every trumpet, about what kind of people the Noskes are. And I believe this example is also of importance for all parties.

Now, a few words about our Berlin organisation. I neglected in my initial report to inform you that, during the period of this report, we had a small conflict with the Berlin organisation, which was partly reflected in our press. Comrades, I believe I am speaking now in the name of the Executive when I say that this conflict was awkward in every sense, and we are absolutely prepared to do everything to avoid even the shadow of a conflict. The Executive is well aware of the weaknesses of many of our local organisations. The Berlin organisation, just like that of Paris, not to mention Petersburg, Moscow, and various others, have their weak sides. It cannot be said that the Busch Circus campaign showed a splendid side of our Berlin organisation.¹⁹ But we know that it is a proletarian organisation, and we do not want it thought that there is some ongoing difference of opinion. As far as we can see, there are nuances, which cannot be avoided in an organisation. At the time, we called on the Berlin comrades to come to us in person, in order to resolve this conflict as quickly as possible. That did not prove possible. In order to banish this conflict from the world once and for all, I must stress to the Congress that we are

18. Zinoviev is referring to the course of united-front negotiations with the leadership bodies of reformist-led parties and trade unions.

19. See p. 78, n. 18.

convinced our Berlin organisation as a whole will in the future carry out great services for the Party.

I will make one more comment on the speech of Comrade Fischer. If you will permit me, Comrade Fischer, your speech was distinguished by the fact that it included much that was right, but also much that was wrong. That is not so bad; as they say, it happens in the best of families. You say, for example, that it was the illusion of the united front that enabled the SPD to capture the USPD. That is not correct. You are flattering the USPD. It was not captured; it wanted to be captured. And we should say that to the German workers. It is a political fact that the USPD wanted to be captured. Actually, they threw themselves around the SPD's neck. And that fact is quite important in order to win the USPD workers. You also exaggerate in small matters, when you say that negotiations with the leadership bodies went on for weeks. The negotiations were somewhat protracted, but not they did not last for weeks. I believe it lasted for less than a week. But, as I said, it is permissible to err in such small matters, provided that nothing serious goes wrong.

The German comrades say, especially in private discussions, that I have painted too glowing a picture of the German Party, and that everything is not so perfect. Well, comrades, a great many delegates have been criticising me for exactly the opposite. So I do not think it is so terrible that I have portrayed the state of one party as somewhat too good and too beautiful. But it is a fact that problems that have been disputed in other parties for months have been resolved in the German Party in a single week. After the March struggles, the Rathenau campaign, and the discussion in the German Party, we can say, without exaggeration, that the German Party has overcome the greatest difficulties and is on the road to becoming a genuine, serious Communist party, which now has a good understanding of how to manoeuvre. We have a real Communist party here, truly capable of manoeuvring, and I say this not in order to compliment it but because this is my conviction. And this party will, I hope, soon encounter decisive events in Germany, perhaps earlier than many of us and many of the German comrades themselves think.

I now come to the French comrades. I regret that not every shade of opinion found adequate expression in the debate. Many kept silent, and that is not praiseworthy. Comrade Duret was quite right to say that when the chaps on the Left have something on their minds, they say it right away, frankly, and perhaps even with excessive candour. That is a good trait of the Left. But the comrades located somewhat more to the right keep silent. That is a bad business. If you considered only what was said in this hall, no one would get the idea that a centrist, half-Social-Democratic mood can be found within the ranks of the Communist International.

But we intend to speak not only about what was said here openly, but also about what was left unsaid. For only then will we obtain an accurate picture. I regret that it is not possible for me to pick out for discussion a speech made here by a comrade of the French Centre. Let us hope that this will be possible in the course of the Congress.

As regards the speech by Comrade Duret, in my opinion, Comrade Bukharin took him to task somewhat too harshly. It is true that Comrade Duret and his group made major errors in this campaign. But we must take into account that this group had 800 delegates at the Paris Convention, including many good workers. Moreover, many comrades, including Comrade Duret, have acknowledged their errors quite sincerely and are trying to make amends. Given all that, we cannot dismiss all this with a joke and say that tomorrow he will do the same thing. If he does the same thing tomorrow, then pardon me, but the entire International will do battle against him. But, when he says that we recognise our errors, then we have no cause to mistrust him. On the contrary, I am convinced that a large part of the former Renoult faction is truly loyal to the International, that it desires and will in fact genuinely make good the errors committed by this faction.

Nevertheless, his arguments must be examined somewhat more closely. Some of them have already been refuted. He said that the masses are organised in Germany but dispersed in France, and that the united front is therefore appropriate in Germany but not in France. I believe we must tell Comrade Duret here that he does not grasp at all what it means to win the majority of the workers. In their present amorphous and unenlightened state, they are like sand by the sea, a dispersed mass. That is our curse. We must educate and shape this formless mass, and this is much easier in France, precisely because France has no traditions. For workers in Germany to change their membership card, they have to go through a great inner struggle. In France, that is not the case. When the Communist International was formed, we said that Social Democracy is the greatest barrier to revolution. We can propose a thesis: the stronger Social Democracy is, the more difficult is the path of revolution. You, in France, have the good fortune that your Social Democracy was never that strong. You will therefore find it all the easier to win the masses, provided that you pursue genuinely revolutionary policies and build a genuine Communist party.

It was also said that in France the united front was immediately interpreted as an electoral combination for political purposes. That may well be. But why did you not begin in the trade-union arena, with economic struggles? Only Comrade Bordiga sees a principled difference here, and that is wrong. I ask you, why did you not take up the question of the eight-hour day? Now you

come and say that your party is too weak, and so on. Why are you too weak? Because you have not handled this question correctly.

Let me wrap up my comments on the French question with a few words regarding Comrade Rosmer. Earlier, he quoted my words that a party that does not have weight in the factories and has not created a factory-council movement cannot be taken seriously. Rosmer said that the first condition is correct, but not the second. He said we must take into account the objective difficulties, which could not be overcome. However, I must insist – and this is a very important question – the factory-council movement is the characteristic movement of our period. True, there are objective obstacles that cannot be overestimated. In Britain, in many regions, the shop-steward movement quietly went to sleep. This shows that no revolutionary mass movement yet exists in that country. But we must be explicit: wherever we have serious revolutionary strength among the masses, this will, in short order, result in such a movement.

I am totally convinced that, if our sister party in France truly regains its health, within half a year it will be able to make a start toward a genuine factory-council movement. For strikes are taking place, like the one in Le Havre, strikes that last three or four months.²⁰ In Le Havre, the masses were almost entirely unorganised. At first, the Party did nothing. Given such an outstanding strike, a party like ours, whose official publication has two hundred thousand readers, can make a start toward a factory-council movement in short order. So I believe it is not good to strike such a passive, quietistic note, saying, 'It is hard; there are obstacles'. Of course there are obstacles, but a great deal depends on us. That's why I believe I must stand by that sentence.

I have one more comment on Comrade Duret's talk. He said that, when the Centre split, the danger existed that part of them would come to us and contaminate us.²¹ He is quite right in this. When the Centre wanted to join us, we rejected them, and they then joined together and said they would form a separate International. That was the Two-and-a-Half International. Then came the split, and then the majority of these forces joined with the Second International. But some of these people are going to come knocking at our door once again, and then we must be cautious, close the door again firmly, and flourish the Twenty-One Conditions once again before their nose. Indeed, there's no way around it, we must say that Twenty-One Conditions are not enough for these people. We will have to present them with Forty-Two Conditions.

20. The strike in Le Havre lasted from June to October 1922. See p. 581, n. 15.

21. See Duret's comments on the disintegration of the Two-and-a-Half International on p. 176.

(*Hilarious agreement*) Otherwise, these people will gulp down everything, and, the next day, we will have the same internal struggle all over again.

I now come to Italy.

This is among the most important questions before the Congress. The party led by Comrade Bordiga inspires the conviction that it is fundamentally a healthy, revolutionary, workers' party, which has achieved a great deal. Nonetheless, we are often forced to combat it both theoretically and politically. That is a painful matter, but there is no escaping it; our duty to the Party demands nothing less.

Comrade Bordiga started this off by arguing against our theses regarding winning the majority of the working class.²² He said the formulation was too vague, and that no one could grasp what we were getting at. He demanded that we should eliminate everywhere from the resolution that we wanted to win the majority.

That was the subject of the first set-to between Comrade Lenin and Comrade Terracini.²³ I must concede that I have some sympathy with Terracini; we thought that Comrade Lenin was a bit too rough with him. Since then, the Fascists have triumphed, the Italian Socialist Party has split, and many other world events have taken place. And, now, Comrade Bordiga strides onto the stage, opens his mouth, and says, 'Majority is a vague formulation!' I must now admit that Lenin was right. These comrades appear to fear the majority. Bordiga says here in total seriousness: 'How are we to estimate this majority? Our resolution says that Communists must establish their influence over the majority of the working class. How will we know that we have a majority? We cannot just call in an accountant.' But we are not going to insist that Comrade Bordiga produce a certificate signed by an Italian accountant or by Mussolini affirming that communism in Italy has a majority. I believe that the trade unions will serve as an initial criterion, and we will find other measures that will indicate when we have a majority. That does not mean that we will engage in serious struggle only when we have the organised majority of the workers. Bordiga said that this is some kind of pedantry. In his view, the Executive shifts: today to the right, tomorrow to the left. In my opinion there is an error here of the type that must be eliminated, and if the Party does not do this, it is lost.

In fact, what can we expect of a party that does not even understand that our main goal is to win the masses? That is no vague formula. Bordiga

22. See Third Congress 'Theses on Tactics' in Adler (ed.) 1980, especially pp. 277–8 and Bordiga's comments above, pp. 178–9.

23. The exchange between Terracini and Lenin took place on 1 July 1921 at the Third Comintern Congress. See Communist International 1921a, pp. 498–508 (Terracini) and Lenin 1960–71, 32, pp. 468–77.

reproaches me for having said that many parties have increased their influence even as they decreased numerically. But that is a fact. Influence is the key factor here. It is impossible to organise the majority of the working class; that will be possible only after the proletariat seizes power. Even in Russia, we are only beginning now, after five years of revolution, to encompass the majority organisationally.

That is not yet possible in other countries. But, even now, the Communist party can establish its influence. Yes, there are parties that have lost ground numerically and have nonetheless asserted their influence, and that is the key factor here. Let me give you an example from a distant country, New South Wales [Australia]. We have a party there with five hundred members. After we accepted it into the Communist International, its numbers grew to nine hundred or a thousand. But this little party brought the trade unions there – a quarter of a million members – fully into the Profintern, with great discipline and enthusiasm. That is a good example. We are not saying, ‘Please, organise the majority’. We fully understand how to value the initiative of minorities. This group of nine hundred workers is surely outstanding to be able to influence 230,000 workers. The question is simply that the Communists do assert this influence. This is more than just a mash. Bordiga said he’s for winning influence, but to what purpose? For the Communist programme, yes. But never for a mash. (*Interjection: ‘Not for a brew, either’.*)²⁴

Yes, we are in favour of winning them for the revolution. But, if Comrade Donski thinks that all 230,000 workers of New South Wales have read Bukharin’s programme plus the draft programmes of Comrades Thalheimer and Kabakchiev, that is not correct. The workers know very well what they want, namely, to overturn the bourgeoisie, and, for now, that is quite enough.

Now, a few words about the Italian trade unions. Recently, I read an article probably written by Comrade Terracini regarding the Fascist trade unions. The Fascists are forming their own Fascist trade unions in Italy – a genuinely novel and important development. They want to become a mass organisation. And how do the workers respond? Let me give you an example. In one large factory, the owner drove out all the workers and announced that he would only hire workers who have a Fascist union card. The workers thought that over a bit and then got themselves Fascist cards and were hired back into the factory. After a short time, elections were held there for the factory committee. The Fascists got one per cent of the votes, and the overwhelming majority of those elected were Communists. That was an ingenious move by the worker masses. They understood what was at stake. They decided to bring the card,

24. The German play on words juxtaposes ‘Brei’ and ‘Bräu’.

but to remain revolutionary, and to outfox the violence. At a time when the Fascists are taking over unions or founding new ones, what is our task? Of course, we must go in the Fascist trade unions and win them. But what do our friends do? They write articles explaining the nature of Fascism, of syndicalism, and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The articles contain many definitions that are quite sound, but something is missing: the living spirit, the living masses, and the simple statement that we must go into the unions in order to grab the bourgeoisie by the scruff of the neck. The lack of this single precept spoils the whole sermon. I believe this article was reprinted in *Inprekorr*.²⁵ You should read it. Do you see there a living slogan from which the ordinary worker can learn how to penetrate the enemy's fortress? Not at all. And that is a leaden weight burdening our otherwise splendid and brave Italian Communist Party.

Now, a few words about Spain. I found Comrade Acevedo's speech very interesting. The most important thing he said was that major successes have been achieved in Spain through the united-front tactic. The Spanish comrades were against the united-front tactic, and one of them voted with Renoult against it in the Expanded Executive session. Now, experience has shown that our comrades in Spain have achieved a great success compared to the syndicalists and anarchists. That should be a model for us. I suggest that our friends in the French Party take this as their example.

I now come to Czechoslovakia. Enough has been said in reply to Comrade Vajtauer, and I will not slog through that again. I will only say that Comrade Neurath's demonstration of the emptiness of the opposition's programme does not dispose of the matter. Yes, they are helpless, and it is easy to get a grasp of this situation. It is even possible to prove scientifically that they are followers of Proudhon, although that by no means proves that many of them have ever read Proudhon, or even ever heard his name. That does not dispose of the matter, which we must see very concretely, in life, as it actually is.

As you know, our comrades in the Czechoslovak Party's Central Bureau reproach us for having made an error in reversing the expulsion of the opposition, and many German comrades supported them in this. They say that, by this action, we undermine the authority of the Czechoslovak Central Bureau. I do not believe this. I trust that the authority of the Czechoslovak centre and the Czechoslovak Party is great enough that it will not be undermined, even if they have made such an error. I believe that Comrade Vajtauer's speech contributed to raising its authority and showing the workers what is at stake here.

25. See 'Der Fascismus im arbeitfreundlichen Gewande', *Inprekorr*, 2, 190 (28 September 1922), pp. 1255–6.

Comrades should not come here with a number of articles, as has Comrade Kreibich, who says, 'we are competent and they are second-rate'. This is no way to educate workers. I do not know what will be the outcome of our debate. I will not anticipate the decisions of the Commission; the unexpected may happen. For, certainly, when comrades do not conform to the decisions of the Executive, there is no choice but to break with them. So this all could lead to a very unfortunate outcome. Nonetheless, the International has done rightly in inviting these comrades and bringing the matter before the World Congress. If they are expelled, it will be by the International, not by the party leadership. That will ensure that it cannot be said in Germany and elsewhere that we expel left-wing workers without giving them a hearing. No, everyone – Italians, Germans, indeed, all comrades – should see that it is possible to hold on to such comrades.

When we expelled Verfeuil, Fabre, and others of the Right, it was quite straightforward; that is the purpose of our Clause 9. But even workers who unknowingly do homage to Proudhon should not be immediately expelled. They should be tolerated for a time, and the effort should be made to win them over. Do not forget that all this happened barely a month before the World Congress – as if fired from a pistol. Why should we be hasty? It was our obligation to present this to the International. We had the impression that they represented something much worse than Proudhonism. And I hope that, once the International has spoken, workers who are truly international in spirit will hesitate twenty times before they break with the Party.

Many German comrades say that our Executive's handling of the Czech question sounds a bit like the KAPD story.²⁶ But I maintain that we handled the KAPD matter quite correctly. We expelled them only after every attempt had been made, and they had become a quite hopeless group. Only as the best forces among them were coming over to our United Communist Party did the International speak. Now, they are just a group of harmless people, of interest from a historical point of view but not in terms of politics. But what did our esteemed Levi do? He acted in a different fashion. He was in a hurry. When many workers said they did not agree on this or that question, he broke with them. The Spartacus League [KPD] made the error of going along with Levi on this question.²⁷ Levi thereby revealed himself as a bourgeois aristocrat who

26. The KAPD, formed as a left-wing breakaway from the German CP in April 1920, was admitted to the Comintern as a sympathising section in November 1920. The Third Comintern Congress, held June–July 1921, ended this status and instructed the KAPD to join the German CP (See Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 182–3). The KAPD then left the International.

27. At the Heidelberg Congress of the German CP on October 20–4, 1919, Paul Levi led the majority in driving out the ultra-left forces that founded the KAPD in 1920.

viewed the workers merely as an object and did not have a comradely word for the workers in order to educate them regarding their errors.

The Czech Central Bureau wanted to commit the same error that was made with the KAPD. It was a similar error. So we raised a warning hand and said: 'Wait, comrades, the Fourth Congress is coming. We hope that the best forces will come back. If they do not return, there will have to be a break.' In the meantime, the matter has become somewhat more complicated than we imagined. It's a question not of authority but of something far more important: the interests of the Party as a whole, of the International as a whole. This is not just an affair of the Czechs. I hear that, in Berlin, some comrades have been quite consciously fanning the flames somewhat over this question. I will express no opinion on that, but, without a doubt, there is some unease. It is not just a Czech question but an international one, concerning our relationship to worker groups of this type. And I believe we must all make efforts at this congress to resolve the question in such a manner that these workers, despite all their errors, stay with us.

As for those who, in the fashion of some philosopher like Vajtaufer, do not lay high value on the International, there is nothing to be done. But I hope that the majority will see the question in a different way. At the decisive moment, they will recall that we are not the kind of International that Vajtaufer has portrayed, but rather that there is only one proletarian International and this fact carries weight with every worker. I believe that these workers share this outlook and will come back to us.

I now come to Poland and the speech of our Comrade Domski. I cannot quite forgive our Comrade Domski for a major political mistake that he made even before the Third Congress. It was Domski who wrote an article during the Russian-Polish War that said that bringing socialism to Poland with the Red Army and the bayonets of the Soviet government was not a Communist policy.²⁸

Domski: I did not write that.

The Comintern leadership sought to heal the breach, initiating relations with the KAPD that continued until the summer of 1921. The German CP was then known as KPD (Spartacus League), indicating its continuity with the Spartacus League that had been its main founding component.

28. When the Red Army repelled the Polish invasion of Ukraine in the spring of 1920 and approached the pre-invasion demarcation line, disagreement arose in the Russian CP leadership on whether Soviet forces should halt at this border or advance into Poland. Among Bolshevik leaders who initially opposed the advance into Poland were Radek, Trotsky, and Stalin. The decision was taken to advance, which led, after initial gains, to a defeat and withdrawal of Red Army forces. See Deutscher 2003, pp. 384–6. For Domski's reply regarding his role in this debate, see p. 1121.

Zinoviev: Comrade Domski, I have known you for a decade, and I know that you find it very hard to remain silent when you are being criticised. Nonetheless, I ask you to hold your peace. You took this position first in a letter and then in *Rote Fahne*, and we characterised it then as nationalism of the purest sort. Every proletarian with healthy common sense will say that if the bourgeoisie is holding down the proletarians of a country with bayonets, they will be very lucky indeed if a Red Army, be it Hungarian, Russian, Italian, or even French, can help out the proletarians of a neighbour country. That is the healthy conception of every worker. (*Applause*) Comrade Domski is obviously no nationalist. It was just a relic of Polish Socialist Party ideology. The Polish intelligentsia is infested with nationalism, and good bit of it survives even among very good comrades. Comrade Domski made this mistake fifteen months ago. I do not say this in order to chop off his head, so to speak. If he has something to teach us today, we will gladly be taught, but we will not forget that he made this major political error.

Now, as to his teaching. I have already criticised what Comrade Domski said about the question of a majority. We are quite aware that we do not yet have the majority in Poland. We cannot use the elections just held by Pilsudski as a barometer. We know that Pilsudski is a swindler, and the bourgeoisie rigged the elections. We know that well, but we also know that we are very close to the majority. We do not have it yet, and we must work to secure it.

He also says that the united front is perhaps good for other countries but is not suitable for Poland. This is the same ideology that we encountered here today: 'The Executive can act in dictatorial fashion in all other counties and apply the united front there. But my country is something quite different; circumstances there are quite unusual; the working class is different and so too is the Party.'

In my opinion, it's especially in a country like Poland that the united front is most suitable. You are illegal, but that should not deter you. I see in the Polish Socialist Party's official publication in Warsaw an article with the headline, 'Long Live the Workers' and Peasants' Government'. I can read that to you in Polish. What does that mean? It means that the slogan of a workers' government finds an echo in the deepest soul of the masses among both workers and peasants. You have said that we engage in this demagoguery because the slogan offers success among the working masses. Comrade Domski says we should oppose the workers' government and the united front. I say, on the contrary, that if it is already so popular among the masses that even the social traitors use it on a daily basis, that is all the more reason for us to advance the united-front slogan. We must keep this slogan before their eyes every day. We know that the Polish worker and the Polish peasant are not for a bourgeois

government but for a workers' government. We must say to the social traitors: 'Even though you are traitors, we propose to you the establishment of a united front and a workers' government.'

That should be the theme of our agitation. Certainly, there are special features in the Polish situation, but these characteristics compel us to make the greatest use of the united front precisely in this country.

The Polish comrades also gave me a speech by Comrade Ślusarski, a representative of the Polish opposition, who, unfortunately, did not take the floor. Comrade Domski told me personally not to confuse him with Comrade Ślusarski and not to think their positions are the same. Comrade Ślusarski said the following in his speech to the party conference:

When Comrade Lenin says, 'We will not retreat another step', I gladly believe that this is his sincere intention. But unfortunately that is impossible. The real dictator of Russia is the peasant.

We face the question of the Communist International's relationship to this policy. The Soviet Russia seeks to use all means to buttress its policy. In this regard, the social mediators and opportunists can exert great influence on government policy. The united-front tactic creates contact with the opportunists and makes it possible for them to exercise this influence.

Those are the worst accusations that can be raised against the Soviet government. (*Interjection: 'Levi'*) I do not believe that Ślusarski has much in common with Levi. He has probably long since overcome this error, and if this is not the case, I hope he will do so tonight, at the latest. (*Laughter*) But this is said in Levi's spirit. So, Comrade Ślusarski, you can see what a slippery slope you are on.

You criticise from the 'left', and quite quickly, almost in the twinkling of an eye, you are with Levi. That is a very dangerous course. This error must be corrected as quickly as possible.

Now, for a few words about Norway. I said that, in Norway, there are twelve newspapers that are all named *Social-Demokraten*. Comrade Haakon Meyer informs me that there are forty newspapers, probably all called *Social-Demokraten*. Our party in Norway is strong, and that is precisely why we must make stringent demands. As we listened to the short speech of the young academic Comrade Meyer, we noted immediately that the comrades were in error. Part of the *Mot Dag* group is good, but another part does not accept the Party's authority. They are simply young academics, of whom it can be said that up to 25 years of age they are rabid revolutionaries, then, at 26 years, they change, with 30 years, they are well-positioned lawyers, and then they turn against the working class. We fear these academics. Those who have

truly learned something should subordinate themselves to the Party, go to the workers, and assist them in their liberation struggle. It just won't do that, after a year and a half in the movement, they decide that the Communist International is not independent enough. We must insist that the situation in Norway be sorted out, and I hope that this will happen.

Now, a few words about Comrade Varga's speech. He demonstrated quite thoroughly that it's better to be well-fed than to be hungry, that bread is better than hunger, and that the legend of hunger must be done away with. But that is not what is at issue. First of all, it was not a myth; the hunger was quite genuine, and we had to say that to the working masses. Now, things have begun to improve, and, here, I agree with Comrade Varga, of course we must tell the working class that the Russian worker is no longer going hungry and that his conditions are improving daily. But we will not boast; we will wait until that fact is firmly established. We will go to the workers with facts and figures. We will improve the conditions of our workers step by step and explain this to workers of other countries. But the disagreement is not about that; it concerns something else. In Russia, there is no longer hunger. But we cannot hide the fact that, in other countries, the dictatorship of the proletariat may bring hunger in its wake. It is a bitter truth, but can we reject saying it to the workers? There is no way to escape it. We must say things to the workers as they are. In Russia, we had five dreadful years; in other countries, it could be rather shorter. The dictatorship [of the proletariat] may also come without hunger, and that depends on various factors. But, in some countries, it will probably bring hunger. The desire not to say this to the workers is simply opportunism and inner uncertainty. We cannot tell the workers that tomorrow they will have it great, with meat and a good house. Along this road, we will simply be beaten by the reformists. It's not a matter of telling workers in other countries that there is no longer hunger in Russia. It's a matter of saying how it will be for them as well, and this must be said unhesitatingly. The worker knows life and will accept the inevitable. And we, who act as a vanguard of the working class, must say this frankly to their face.

Now, a few words on Comrade Landler's speech. I would have liked to have spared the Congress this uninspiring debate, but that did not succeed. Comrade Landler has presented matters as if I had fought against the emigration as such. Comrades, you heard my speech – did I really say that? I said our Italian friends would probably not now escape the need to create a centre in emigration. The Finns did this, and earlier, we Russians did so as well. I know how to value an emigration, one that concerns itself with revolutionary struggle. Never will we speak of an emigration as Ebert did, when he talked about foreign 'groups'.

But, Comrade Landler, your shot was wide of the mark; you missed the target. There is a type of emigration that ruins the movement, that poisons it, and we had such an experience with a portion of the Vienna emigration,²⁹ whose representative in the person of Comrade Landler now says that I am a diplomat. And just what is this diplomacy? I must say that it is shameless of Comrade Landler for him and his friends to damage our cause and now to accuse me of diplomacy.

As for the comrades in prison, they, of course, enjoy the highest esteem among us all. The first word at this congress in Petrograd at the ceremonial opening session was a manifesto to the comrades that are in prison, not the last of which are our imprisoned Hungarian brothers. It goes without saying that I support the portion of Comrade Landler's motion that greets our brothers in prison and mourns the fallen. Of course I am for this. But I cannot support the second part of his motion, which would give credentials to two more emigrants and would once again form a commission at this congress to review the Vienna business. What is that about? The comrades who fell in Hungary in the struggle for communism will always be sacred to us. But it is not right to speak in name of the dead in this manner. That sort of thing was customary among the Social Revolutionaries. We say that everyone who fell in the liberation struggle is sacred to us, but you should not speak in the name of the dead. That is my advice to Comrade Landler. Only the International as a whole may speak in the name of the dead – not an individual person. And the Vienna gossip should not be linked up with these things. They are quite different matters and should not be mixed up together.

Comrade Landler tells us that there are four thousand Communists in Hungary. I hope that there are even more. But I would like to know the opinion of these four thousand comrades on whether they are for the Executive of the Communist International or for the Vienna gossip, which Comrade Landler has so cleverly interpreted for us. I hope they will be for us and not for the Vienna gossip.

Comrade Landler spoke in the name of those who are in prison in Hungary. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to talk to these comrades. Still, we may be successful in freeing them from Horthy's claws and bringing them to Moscow, and then we will talk to them. But we have people here that were condemned in Hungary to death or life imprisonment and got out of Hungary's prisons. We saved them and brought them to Russia. What do these comrades say? Are they for Comrade Landler? No, they are against him, against the Vienna gossip and for the International. We have truly done all in our power

29. 'Vienna emigration' refers to Hungarian Communists who fled to Vienna after the overthrow of the Hungarian soviet republic in 1919.

to put the matter to rest. It was great fun for the Two-and-a-Half International. All of you – the German, French, British, and all comrades – will remember how they came out with this in their papers and damaged us. It was a feast for these people, a Wiener schnitzel for Friedrich Adler. (*Laughter*) That was Comrade Landler's doing, and now he said it really was not enough, and we should do it all over again. We are against this kind of commission. The International guarantees you that we will work to put things right, but only if you do not come here with more emigration stories but devote yourself to the work. All respect to the emigrants that support the movement, but down with the emigration that provides raw material for the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals – we have had enough of that.

By and large, that wraps up my response. I'd only like to touch on one brief matter. Comrade Radek said yesterday that danger threatens us from the right, not the left. I'd like to stress these words and express full agreement. It's not a matter of the good will of comrades or the group, but of the objective conditions. We must be very clear. Worse times are coming, and yet even worse times. We will build the Communist International and maintain it as a vanguard of the proletariat, but only on the condition that we are clear that we need a genuine international organisation, which will combat every trace of opportunism not only with words but with deeds. Today, I said in a commission that we sometimes hear our friends say that they agree 'in principle' with everything that the Executive does. But that is precisely the catch: they only agree 'in principle'. I must quote here from Bismarck, who once said, 'We old diplomats always say that we are in favour of something in principle, when we are actually opposed to it.' We can't do that kind of thing in the Communist International. Whoever is against the policies of the Communist International should please indicate that clearly now. And who is in favour, please take your stand for it with fire, strength, and spirit. Then we will build a genuine Communist International, despite the darkness of the world, an International that will seize the first opportunity to lead the working class to the assault and to victory. (*Loud applause*)

Chair: Before the resolution is read out and voted on, some comrades will make statements. I give the floor to Comrade Scoccimarro.

Scoccimarro (Italy): The majority of the Italian delegation submits a declaration that the arguments of Comrade Graziadei, which despite his assurances pertained mainly to the situation in Italy, will be answered during the special debate of the Congress.

Nonetheless two inaccuracies in his factual presentation need to be corrected:

- 1.) The theses adopted by the Congress of the Communist Party of Italy by no means maintain that a split in the Socialist Party of Italy [SPI] was then excluded. They exclude only the possibility that the makeup of this party will be altered through a fusion with the left SPI.³⁰
- 2.) It is absolutely not true that the majority of the Communist Party of Italy abstained from the vote.

Among the militants in the leading bodies, only a minority abstained, and otherwise they conform to the International's policies in disciplined fashion. In the delegation, there are only a few, among whom one belongs to the minority in whose name Graziadei has spoken.³¹

Graziadei (Italy): The minority of the Communist Party of Italy reserves the right to demonstrate the accuracy of its assertions, which are, by the way, widely shared, when the Italian question is debated in full detail.

Personally, I wish to say that, when I sought to explain objectively the state of mind of certain Italian comrades regarding the workers' government question, and, in this regard, spoke of the former anti-parliamentary faction, I wished only to say that, for reasons that can be easily explained, this faction played and still plays a very important role in the founding and organisation of the Communist Party of Italy.

Duret (France): Comrades, I take the floor in order to explain the vote of the faction to which I belong.

As you know, our faction was against the united-front tactic as understood by the Executive Committee. You know that our faction maintained its opposition to the end. You also know that, until the very last moment, I myself voted in the Presidium's sessions against the Executive Committee's decision, given that this decision gave full approval to the united-front tactic as understood by the Executive Committee.

We also have something to add on other points as well, especially as regards the Executive Committee's policy toward various national sections. For example, with regard to France, we consider that the Executive Committee's policy of relying on the Centre and the Left is incorrect. In our opinion, it is not

30. See Graziadei's remarks, pp. 186–7. At issue here is whether the pro-Comintern wing of the Italian SP could join the CP *en bloc*, as had been the case with the USPD majority in Germany, or whether its members would have to apply individually.

31. Scoccimarro is apparently referring to Communists' participation in parliamentary elections. The main founding component of the Italian CP came from the former 'abstentionist' faction headed by Bordiga, which opposed taking part in parliamentary elections. In 1920, the Second Comintern Congress decided in favour of revolutionary participation in bourgeois elections (see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 470–9), and the Bordiga forces accepted this position. In 1922, these forces led opposition to Comintern policy on the united-front policy and workers' governments.

possible, either in France or in any other section of the International, to base Communist policy on forces that are still caught in the prejudices of the Social Democrats. In France, these forces are concentrated mostly in the Centre.

In a statement to the Paris Congress, our faction declared it would abide by all decisions of the Communist International. We also explained in the sessions of the French Commission that we would submit to the Communist International. We note that there are forces who are contemplating the possibility of breaking with the Communist International, and we want to demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of the French Party is totally committed to it. For this reason, and despite all the objections that I have just presented, we will vote for the Executive Committee resolution.

Souvarine (France): In voting for the resolution, the Left of the French Party states that in its opinion the portion of this resolution touching on the Executive's response to the crisis in the French Party does not in any way prejudice the special decisions to be taken by the Congress on the French question.

Dormoy (France): In keeping with the decisions of the Paris Congress, the delegation of the French Communist Party's centre faction votes for the conclusion of Zinoviev's report.

It reserves the right to explain its stand in the course of the debate on the French question and to correct various imprecise or inaccurate conceptions expressed during the debate on the Executive's report.

Peluso (Italy): The Italian delegation approves the portion of the resolution now before us that deals with the powers of the Communist International's highest bodies, with Clause 9 of the International's Statutes, and with its application since the Third Congress.

Since the Italian delegation has raised objections to some other aspects of the resolution, especially with regard to the united front and the International's positions on Italian politics – objections which will be developed in the course of congress debates – it abstains from the vote on the Executive's report.

Ernst Meyer (Germany): Having heard the statements on the vote of this resolution, it is appropriate now to read out the resolution itself. Its text is as follows:

Resolution on the Executive Committee Report

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International fully approves the political work of the Executive Committee of the Communist International [ECCI], which during fifteen long months of activity has carried out the

decisions of the Third Congress correctly and in accordance with specific political conditions.

In particular, the Fourth Congress approves the united-front tactic as formulated by the ECCI in its theses of December 1921 and in other ECCI documents on this question.³²

The Fourth Congress approves the position taken by the ECCI regarding the crisis of the Communist Party of France, developments in the Italian workers' movement, and in the Communist Parties of Norway and Czechoslovakia. Purely practical and detailed matters concerning these parties will be taken up in the special commissions, whose decisions will be reviewed by the Congress.

As regards events that took place in individual parties, the Fourth Congress recalls and confirms that, in the periods between world congresses, the ECCI is the highest body of the Communist movement as a whole, and that the Executive Committee's decisions are binding on all affiliated parties. From this, it follows that to violate the Executive Committee's decisions, with the excuse that the matter is to be appealed to the next congress, is a clear breach of discipline. For the Communist International to permit such conduct would amount to totally nullifying the International's regular and unified activity.

As for the doubts expressed in the Communist Party of France regarding the interpretation of Clause 9 of the Statutes, the Fourth Congress declares that this paragraph gives the ECCI the unconditional right to expel individuals and entire groups that in its opinion are hostile to communism from the International and thus also from its national sections.

It goes without saying that the Executive Committee is compelled to utilise Clause 9 of the Statutes in cases where the leading bodies of the national party in question do not display the necessary energy and vigilance in protecting the Party from non-communist elements.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International reaffirms again the Twenty-One Conditions drawn up by the Second Congress and instructs the incoming Executive Committee to stringently enforce these conditions. In the coming period, the Executive Committee must be more than ever an international proletarian organisation that ruthlessly combats all opportunism, an organisation based on the principle of strictest democratic centralism.

Meyer: Comrades, the Commission's discussion on this resolution actually turned on only one question. This was whether the sentences stating that the Fourth Congress approves the Executive Committee's conduct in matters

32. For the December 1921 resolution, the first of many ECCI texts on the united front, see pp. 1164–73.

relating to individual countries should be included now, or whether the vote on this passage should be held off until the commissions on the different national issues have concluded their work. The view was expressed in the Commission that it is best not to wait for the commissions to do their work, so that the commissions can concern themselves more with the future work of the parties and less with the Executive Committee's conduct in the past. The passage was also clarified as meaning that the Executive Committee's point of view should be approved as a whole, while its application in individual cases could be examined by the commissions. Flowing from this, a motion by one delegation was adopted to make an addition to the original draft, which I have just read. The amendment read:

Purely practical and detailed matters concerning these parties will be taken up in the special commissions, whose decisions will be reviewed by the Congress.

When the Commission came to its final vote, and after the addition of this sentence, all delegations except for two gave their approval to this resolution.

Péri (France): The National Federation of Communist Youth of France stands in agreement with the policies of the Left of the French Party in the struggle to apply the decisions of the Communist International. We declare that we vote without reservations for the resolution on the report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

Chair: The following written declaration has been handed in.

Radek: Enough of these declarations. Let's vote!

Chair (reads):

Comrades Torp and Meyer of the Norwegian delegation declare that they will vote for the resolution submitted by the expanded Presidium. They ask that the proceedings note that they are not in agreement with the Executive's stand on the dispute in the Norwegian Party.

After hearing the statements by those delegations who have objections to specific points in the resolution or who oppose the resolution as a whole, I believe that we can vote together rather than by delegations.³³

33. In the Second Congress, a weighted voting system was adopted that allocated votes to delegations on the basis not only of the size of a party's membership but also the weight of the country and its working class in world politics. Thus the delegates from the very small Communist groups in the US held ten votes, just as did the much larger Russian Bolshevik Party. Such roll-call votes were to be held

If there is no objection, I will proceed to the vote.

There seems to be no objection. I will take the vote. Delegates in favour of the resolution, please raise your hand. Thank you.

Delegates against the resolution, please raise your hand.

Delegates who are abstaining from the vote, please raise your hand.

(The resolution is adopted by a large majority. One vote against, sixteen abstentions.)

Comrade Bordiga has the floor for a personal statement.

Bordiga: I decline.

Chair: Comrade Domski has the floor for a personal statement.

Domski: The remarks of Comrade Zinoviev regarding my nationalism reflected some minor misunderstandings. *(Laughter)* The incriminating article was published not during the attack on Warsaw, but, rather, long before this offensive, when no one yet knew that it would take place. This article did not express any fundamental opposition against introducing socialism on the points of bayonets, but rather simply pointed out that under the concrete conditions – *(Laughter. A few comrades start singing the 'Internationale'. All those present join in. The speaker decides not to continue.)*³⁴

Adjournment: 1:10 a.m.

on request by three delegations. The normal procedure, however, was for all seated delegates to vote individually, using their red voting cards. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 16; and 2, pp. 839–43.

34. A written statement by Domski was appended to the congress proceedings; see p. 1121.

Session 8 – Monday, 13 November 1922

Five Years of the Russian Revolution and Perspectives for the World-Revolution

Speakers: Lenin, Clara Zetkin

Convened: 11:40 a.m.

Chairperson: Béron

Lenin: (*Greeted with loud, prolonged applause. The 'Internationale' is sung.*) Comrades, I am down in the list as the main speaker, but you will understand that, after my lengthy illness, I am not able to make a long report.¹ I can provide only an introduction to the main questions. My subject will be a very limited one. The subject, 'Five Years of the Russian Revolution and Perspectives for the World-Revolution' is

1. The translation of Lenin's speech draws on the English text found in Lenin 1960–71, 33, pp. 418–32, but follows the German text where there are discrepancies. On 26 May 1922, Lenin had suffered a stroke, and he did not resume political activity until September. His congress report, delivered in German, was his first public address following his illness. Three of those present commented as follows:

Alfred Rosmer: 'Those who were seeing him for the first time, said: "It's still the same Lenin". But the others could not allow themselves such illusions. Instead of the alert Lenin they had known, the man they had before them was deeply marked by paralysis.... None the less his mind remained unshaken, and the main ideas were presented and developed with skill'. Rosmer 1971, p. 169.

Max Eastman speaks of him as 'a granite mountain of sincerity' and adds that, after Lenin commented that the organisation resolution was 'too Russian', in part because 'it is so long that nobody but a Russian would read it', Lenin 'continued to laugh a little at the memory of that remark after he had begun to say something else'. Eastman 1964, p. 334.

Rosa Leviné-Meyer also emphasises 'his sincerity, the feeling he conveyed that he put the last vestige of his being into *what* he wished to say', adding: 'I could never remain unmoved when I spoke of or remembered that experience'. Leviné-Meyer 1977, pp. 41–2.

altogether too broad and large for one speaker to exhaust in a single speech. I will therefore take up only a small part of all this subject matter, namely the question of New Economic Policy. I have deliberately taken only this small aspect in order to introduce you to the most important question – at all events, it is the most important to me, because I am now working on it.

I will therefore speak on the subject of how we began the New Economic Policy and what results we have achieved with the aid of this policy. If I confine myself to this question, I shall, perhaps, succeed in giving you a general survey and a general idea of it.

To begin with how we arrived at the New Economic Policy, I must go back to an article I wrote in 1918. At the beginning of 1918, in a brief polemic, I touched on the question of the attitude we should adopt towards state capitalism. I then wrote:

State capitalism would be a *step forward* as compared with the present state of affairs (that is, the state of affairs at that time). If in approximately six months' time state capitalism became established in our republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country.²

Of course, this was said at a time when we were more foolish than we are now, but not so foolish as to be unable to deal with such matters.

I was therefore of the opinion in 1918 that, with regard to the economic situation in the Soviet Republic at that time, state capitalism would be a step forward. This sounds very strange, and perhaps even absurd, for, at that time, our republic was already a socialist republic. We were then every day hastily – perhaps too hastily – adopting various new economic measures that could not be described as anything but socialist in character. Nevertheless, I said then that, compared to the economic situation of the Soviet Republic at that time, state capitalism would be a step forward, and I explained this idea by simply enumerating the elements of the economic situation of Russia. In my opinion, these elements were the following:

- 1.) Patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent, primitive peasant farming.
- 2.) Small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain).
- 3.) Private capitalism.

2. “‘Left-Wing’ Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality’, Lenin 1960–71, 27, pp. 334–5.

- 4.) State capitalism.
- 5.) Socialism.³

All these economic elements were present in Russia at that time. I then set myself the task of explaining the relationship of these elements to each other, and whether we should perhaps rate one of the non-socialist elements, namely state capitalism, higher than socialism.

I repeat: it seems very strange to everyone that a non-socialist element should be rated higher than, regarded as superior to, socialism in a republic which declares itself socialist. But the fact will become intelligible if you recall that we definitely did not regard the economic system of Russia as something homogeneous and highly developed. We were fully aware that in Russia we had patriarchal agriculture, i.e., the most primitive form of agriculture, alongside the socialist form. What role could state capitalism play in these circumstances?

I then asked myself which of these elements predominates. Clearly, in a petty-bourgeois environment, the petty-bourgeois element predominates. I recognised then that the petty-bourgeois element predominated; it was impossible to take a different view. The question I then put to myself – this was in a specific controversy which had nothing to do with the present question – was: ‘What is our attitude towards state capitalism?’ And I then concluded: ‘Although it is not a socialist form, state capitalism would be for us, and for Russia, a more favourable form than the existing one.’ What does that show? It shows that we did not exaggerate either the roots or the construction of a socialist economy, although we had already accomplished the social revolution. On the contrary, at that time, we already realised, to a certain extent, that it would be better if we first arrived at state capitalism and, only after that, at socialism.

I must lay special emphasis on this, because I believe that it is the only point of departure we can take, firstly, to explain what the present economic policy is; and, secondly, to draw very important practical conclusions for the Communist International. I do not want to suggest that we had then a ready-made plan of retreat. This was not the case. Those brief lines set forth in a polemic were not by any means a plan of retreat. For example, they made no mention whatever of that very important point, freedom to trade, which is of fundamental significance to state capitalism. Yet they did contain a general, even if indefinite, idea of retreat. I think that we should take note of that not only from the viewpoint of a country whose economic system was, and is to this

3. Compare Lenin 1960–71, 27, pp. 335–6, which in Point 1 uses the term ‘natural’ in place of ‘primitive’.

day, very backward, but also from the viewpoint of the Communist International and the advanced West European countries.

For example, just now we are engaged in drawing up a programme. I personally think that it would be best to hold simply a general discussion on all the programmes, to give them the first reading, so to speak, and to get them printed, but not to take a final decision now, this year. Why? First of all, of course, because I do not think we have considered all of them in sufficient detail, and also because we have given scarcely any thought to possible retreat, and to preparing for it. Yet that is a question which, in view of such fundamental changes in the world as the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism with all its enormous difficulties, absolutely requires our attention.

We must not only know how to act when we pass directly to the offensive and are victorious. In revolutionary times, this is not so difficult, nor so very important; at least, it is not the most decisive thing. There are always times in a revolution when the opponent loses his head; and, if we attack him at such a time, we may win an easy victory. But that tells us nothing, because our enemy, on calm reflection, can rally his forces beforehand, and so forth. He can easily provoke us to attack him and then throw us back for many years. For this reason, I think, the idea that we must prepare for ourselves the possibility of retreat is very important, and not only from the theoretical point of view. From the practical point of view, too, all the parties which are preparing to take the direct offensive against capitalism in the near future must now give thought to the problem of preparing for a possible retreat. I think it will do us no harm to learn this lesson together with all the other lessons which the experience of our revolution offers. On the contrary, it may prove beneficial in a large number of cases.

Now that I have emphasised the fact that, as early as 1918, we regarded state capitalism as a possible line of retreat, I shall deal with the results of our New Economic Policy. I repeat: at that time, it was still a very vague idea, but, in 1921, after we had passed through the most important stage of the Civil War – and passed through it victoriously – we felt the impact of a grave – I think it was the gravest – internal political crisis in Soviet Russia. This crisis led to discontent not only among a considerable section of the peasantry but also among the workers. This was the first and, I hope, the last time in the history of Soviet Russia that feeling ran against us among large masses of peasants, not consciously but instinctively, in terms of their state of mind. What gave rise to this novel and for us very unpleasant situation? The reason for it was that, in our economic offensive, we had run too far ahead, that we had not provided ourselves with adequate resources, that the masses sensed

what we ourselves were not then able to formulate consciously but what we admitted soon after, a few weeks later, namely, that the direct transition to purely socialist forms, to purely socialist distribution of goods, was beyond our available strength, and that if we were unable to effect a retreat so as to confine ourselves to easier tasks, we would face disaster. The crisis began, I think, in February 1921. Already in the spring of that year, we decided unanimously – I did not observe any considerable disagreement among us on this question – to adopt the New Economic Policy. Now, a year and a half later, at the close of 1922, we are able to make certain comparisons. What has happened? How have we fared during this period of more than eighteen months? What is the result? Has this retreat been of any benefit to us? Has it really saved us, or is the result still indefinite? This is the main question that I put to myself, and I think that this main question is also of first-rate importance to all the Communist parties. For, if the reply is in the negative, we are all doomed. I think that all of us can, with a clear conscience, reply to this question in the affirmative, namely, that the past eighteen months provide positive and absolute proof that we have passed the test.

I shall now try to prove this. To do that, I must briefly enumerate all the constituent parts of our economy.

First of all, I shall deal with our financial system and our famous Russian rouble. I think we can say that Russian roubles are famous, if only for the reason that their number now in circulation exceeds a quadrillion. (*Laughter*) That is something! It is an astronomical figure. (*Laughter*) I am sure that not everyone here knows what this figure signifies. But we do not think that the figure is so very important even from the point of view of economic science, for the noughts can always be crossed out. (*Laughter*) We have achieved a thing or two in this art, which is of no importance from the economic point of view, and I am sure that, in the further course of events, we shall achieve much more. But what is really important is the problem of stabilising the rouble. We are now grappling with this problem, our best forces are working on it, and we attach decisive importance to it. If we succeed in stabilising the rouble for a long period, and then for all time, it will prove that we have won. In that case, all these astronomical figures, these trillions and quadrillions, will not have mattered in the least. We shall then be able to place our economy on a firm basis, and develop it further on a firm basis. On this question, I think I can cite some fairly important and decisive data. In 1921, the rate of exchange of the paper rouble remained stable for a period of less than three months. This year, 1922, which has not yet drawn to a close, the rate remained stable for a period of over five months. I think that this proof is sufficient. Of course, if you demand scientific proof that we shall solve this problem for far into the

future, then it is not sufficient; but, in general, I do not think it is possible to prove this entirely and conclusively.⁴

The data I have cited show that between last year, when we started on the New Economic Policy, and the present day, we have already learned to make progress. Since we have learned to do this, I am sure we shall learn to achieve further successes along this road, provided we avoid doing anything very foolish. The most important thing, however, is trade, namely, the circulation of commodities, which is essential for us. And, since we have successfully coped with this problem for two years, in spite of having been in a state of war (for, as you know, Vladivostok was recaptured only a few weeks ago), and in spite of the fact that only now are we able to proceed with our economic activities in a really systematic way – since we have succeeded in keeping the rate of the paper rouble stable for five months instead of only three months, I think I can say that we have grounds to be pleased. After all, we stand alone. We have not received any loans, and are not receiving any now. We have been given no assistance by any of the powerful capitalist countries, which organise their capitalist economy so ‘well’ that they do not know to this day which way they are going. Through the Treaty of Versailles, they have created a financial system that they themselves do not understand. If these great capitalist countries are managing things in this way, I think that we, backward and uneducated as we are, may be pleased with the fact that we have grasped the most important thing – the conditions for the stabilisation of the rouble. This is proved not by theoretical analysis but by practical experience, which, in my opinion, is more important than all the theoretical discussions in the world. Practice shows that we have achieved decisive results in that field, namely, we are beginning to push our economy towards the stabilisation of the rouble, which is of supreme importance for the rouble, for trade, for the free circulation of commodities, for the peasants, and for the vast masses of small-scale producers.

Now, I come to our social objectives. The most important factor, of course, is the peasantry. In 1921, discontent undoubtedly prevailed among a vast section of the peasantry. Then, there was the famine. This was the severest trial for the peasants. Naturally, all our enemies abroad shouted: ‘There, that’s the result of socialist economy!’ Quite naturally, of course, they said nothing about the famine actually being the terrible result of the Civil War. All the landowners and capitalists who had begun their offensive against us in 1918

4. Another fifteen months were required to bring inflation under control. A new, gold-backed currency, the *chervonets*, was first issued toward the end of November 1922. It existed alongside the still-depreciating rouble until 1924, when a gold-backed rouble was introduced.

tried to make out that the famine was the result of socialist economy. The famine was indeed a great and grave disaster which threatened to nullify the results of all our organisational and revolutionary efforts.⁵

And so, I ask now, after the failure of the harvest, this unprecedented and unexpected disaster, what is the position today, after we have introduced the New Economic Policy, after we have granted the peasants freedom to trade? The answer is clear and obvious to everyone; in one year, the peasants have not only got over the famine, but have paid so much tax in kind that we have already received hundreds of millions of poods of grain,⁶ and that almost without employing any measures of coercion. Peasant uprisings, which previously, up to 1921, were, so to speak, a common occurrence in Russia, have almost completely ceased. The peasants are satisfied with their present position. We can confidently assert that. We think that this evidence is more important than any amount of statistical proof. Nobody questions the fact that the peasants are a decisive factor in our country. And the position of the peasantry is now such that we have no reason to fear any movement against us from that quarter. We say that quite consciously, without exaggeration. This we have already achieved. The peasantry may be dissatisfied with one aspect or another of the work of our authorities. They may complain about this. That is possible, of course, and inevitable, because our machinery of state and our state-operated economy are still too inefficient to avert it; but any serious dissatisfaction with us on the part of the peasantry as a whole is quite out of the question. This has been achieved in the course of one year. I think that is already quite a lot.⁷

Now, I come to our light industry. In industry, we have to make a distinction between heavy and light industry because the situation in these two branches of industry is different. As regards light industry, I can safely say that there is a general revival. I shall not go into details. It is not my task today to quote a lot of statistics. But this general impression is based on facts, and I can assure you that it is not based on anything untrue or inaccurate. We can speak of a general revival in light industry, and, as a result, of a definite improvement in the conditions of the workers in Petrograd and Moscow. In other districts, this is observed to a lesser degree, because heavy industry predominates in them. So this does not apply generally. Nevertheless, I repeat, light industry is undoubtedly on the upgrade, and the conditions of the workers in Petrograd

5. This paragraph, present in the Russian text and Lenin's *Collected Works* (Lenin 1960–71, 33, p. 424), is not found in the German edition.

6. The pood, a measure of weight used in Russia until 1924, is equivalent to 16.4 kilograms.

7. For further discussion of the impact of the New Economic Policy on agriculture, see the speech by Teodorovich, pp. 757–63.

and Moscow have unquestionably improved. In the spring of 1921, there was discontent among the workers in both these cities. That is definitely not the case now. We, who watch the conditions and mood of the workers from day to day, make no mistake on that score.

The third question is that of heavy industry. I must say that the situation here is still grave. Nonetheless, some turn for the better occurred in the period between 1921 and 1922, so that we may hope that the situation will improve in the near future. We have already gathered some of the resources necessary for this. In a capitalist country, a loan of hundreds of millions would be required to improve the situation in heavy industry. No improvement would be possible without it. The economic history of the capitalist countries shows that heavy industry in backward countries can only be developed with the aid of long-term loans of hundreds of millions of dollars or gold roubles.⁸ We did not get such loans, and, so far, have received nothing. All that has been written about concessions and so forth remains only on paper. We have written a great deal about this lately and in particular about the Urquhart concession.⁹ I think our concessions policy is a very good one. However, we have not concluded a single profitable concession agreement so far. I ask you to bear that in mind. Thus, the situation in heavy industry is really a very grave problem for our backward country, because we cannot count on loans from the wealthy countries. In spite of that, we see a tangible improvement, and we also see that our trading has brought us some capital. True, it is only a very modest sum as yet – a little over twenty million gold roubles. At any rate, a beginning has been made; our trade is providing us with funds which we can employ for improving the situation in heavy industry.

At the present moment, however, our heavy industry is still in great difficulty. But I think that the decisive circumstance is that we are already in a position to save a little. And we shall go on saving, even though it is often at the expense of the population. We must go on saving. We are trying to reduce the state budget, to reduce staffs in our government offices. Later on, I shall have a few words to say about our state apparatus. At all events, we must reduce it. We must economise as much as possible. We are economising in all things, even in schools. We must do this, because we know that, unless we save heavy industry, unless we restore it, we shall not be able to build up an industry at all; and without an industry we shall go under as an independent country. We realise this very well.

The salvation of Russia lies not only in a good harvest on the peasant farms – that is not enough – and also not only in the good condition of light industry,

8. A gold rouble was then worth approximately half a US dollar.

9. Regarding the Urquhart concession, see p. 95, n. 10.

which provides the peasantry with consumer goods – this, too, is not enough. We also need heavy industry. And to put it in a good condition will require several years of work.

Heavy industry needs state subsidies. If we are not able to provide them, we shall be doomed as a civilised state, let alone as a socialist state. In this respect, we have taken a determined step. We have begun to accumulate the funds that we need to put heavy industry on its feet. True, the sum we have obtained so far barely exceeds twenty million gold roubles; but, at any rate, this sum is available, and it is earmarked exclusively for the purpose of reviving our heavy industry.

I think that, on the whole, I have, as I have promised, briefly outlined the principal elements of our economy, and feel that we may draw the conclusion from all this that the New Economic Policy has already yielded dividends. We already have proof that, as a state, we are able to trade, to maintain our strong positions in agriculture and industry, and to make progress. Practical activity has proved it. I think this is sufficient for us for the time being. We shall have to learn much, and we have realised that we still have much to learn. We have been in power for five years, and, during these five years, we have been in a state of war. We have been successful.

This is understandable, because the peasantry was on our side. It would be difficult to be more strongly committed to us than the peasants were. They were aware that the White Guards had the landowners behind them, and they hate the landowners more than anything in the world. That is why the peasantry supported us with all their enthusiasm and loyalty. It was not difficult to get the peasantry to defend us against the White Guards. The peasants, who had always hated war, did all they possibly could in the war against the White Guards, in the Civil War and against the landowners. But this was not all, because, in substance, it was only a matter of whether power would remain in the hands of the landowners or of the peasants. This was not enough for us. The peasants know that we have seized power for the workers and that our aim is to use this power to establish the socialist system. Therefore, the most important thing for us was to lay the economic foundation for socialist economy. We could not do it directly. We had to do it in a roundabout way.

The state capitalism that we have introduced in our country is of a special kind. It does not correspond to the usual conception of state capitalism. We hold all the commanding positions. We hold the land; it belongs to the state. This is very important, although our opponents try to make out that it is of no importance at all. That is untrue. The fact that the land belongs to the state is extremely important, and, economically, it is also of great practical purport. This we have achieved, and I must say that all our future activities

should develop only within that framework. We have already succeeded in making the peasantry content and in reviving both industry and trade. I have already said that our state capitalism differs from state capitalism in the literal sense of the term, in that our proletarian state not only owns the land, but also all the vital branches of industry. We have leased out only a certain number of the small and medium plants, while all the rest remain in our hands. As regards trade, I want to re-emphasise that we are trying to found mixed companies, that we are already forming them, that is, companies in which part of the capital belongs to private capitalists – and foreign capitalists at that – and the other part belongs to the state. Firstly, in this way, we are learning how to trade, and that is what we need. Secondly, we are always in a position to dissolve these companies if we deem it necessary, and do not, therefore, run any risks, so to speak. We are learning from the private capitalists and looking round to see how we can progress, and what mistakes we are making. It seems to me that I need say no more.

I should still like to deal with several minor points. Undoubtedly, we have done, and will still do, a host of foolish things. No one can judge and see this better than I.

Why do we do these foolish things? The reason is clear: firstly, because we are a backward country; secondly, because education is minimal; and thirdly, because we are getting no help. Not a single civilised country is helping us. On the contrary, they are all working against us. Fourthly, our machinery of state is to blame. We took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortune. Very often this machinery operates against us. In 1917, after we seized power, the government officials sabotaged us. This frightened us very much and we pleaded: 'Please come back to us.' They all came back, but that was our misfortune. We now have a vast army of government employees, but we lack sufficiently educated forces to exercise real control over them. In practice, it often happens that here at the top, where we exercise political power, the machine functions somehow; but, down below, government employees have arbitrary control and they often exercise it in such a way as to counteract our measures. At the top, we have, I don't know how many, but at all events, I think, no more than a few thousand, at the outside several tens of thousands of our own people. Down below, however, there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly deliberately and partly unwittingly, work against us. It is clear that nothing can be changed overnight. Clearly, it will take many years of hard work to improve the machinery, to perfect it, and to enlist new forces. We are doing this fairly quickly, perhaps too quickly. Soviet schools and workers' faculties have been formed; a few hundred thousand young

people are studying; they are studying too fast perhaps, but, at all events, a start has been made, and I think this work will bear fruit. If we do not work too hurriedly, we shall, in a few years' time, have a large body of young people capable of thoroughly overhauling our state apparatus.

I have said that we have done a host of foolish things, but I must also say a word or two in this respect about our enemies. If our enemies blame us and say that Lenin himself admits that the Bolsheviks have done a host of foolish things, I want to reply to this: 'Yes, but you know, the foolish things we have done are nonetheless very different from yours.' We have only just begun to learn, but are learning so methodically that we are certain to achieve good results. But since our enemies, that is, the capitalists and the heroes of the Second International, lay stress on the foolish things we have done, I take the liberty, for the sake of comparison, to cite the words of a celebrated Russian author, which I shall amend to read as follows: if the Bolsheviks do foolish things the Bolshevik says, 'Twice two are five', but when their enemies, i.e., the capitalists and the heroes of the Second International, do foolish things, they get, 'Twice two make a tallow candle'.¹⁰ That is easily proved. Take, for example, the agreement concluded by the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan with Kolchak. I ask you, are there any more enlightened and more powerful countries in the world? But what has happened? They promised to help Kolchak without calculation, without reflection, and without circumspection. It ended in a fiasco, which, it seems to me, is difficult for the human intellect to grasp.

Or take another example, a closer and more important one: the Treaty of Versailles. I ask you, what have the 'glorious' powers done? How will they find a way out of this chaos and confusion? I don't think it will be an exaggeration to repeat that the foolish things we have done are nothing compared with those done in concert by the capitalist countries, the capitalist world and the Second International.

That is why I think that the outlook for the world-revolution – a subject which I must touch on briefly – is favourable. And subject to a certain definite condition, I think it will be even better. I should like to say a few words about this condition.

At the Third Congress, in 1921, we adopted a resolution on the organisational structure of the Communist Parties and on the methods and content

10. Lenin is referring to a statement by the misogynistic character Pigasov in Ivan Turgenev's *Rudin*: 'A man may, for example, say that twice two make not four but five...but a woman will say that twice two make a tallow candle.' Lenin 1960–71, 33, p. 533.

of their activities.¹¹ The resolution is an excellent one, but it is almost entirely Russian, that is to say, everything in it is based on Russian experience. This is its good point, but it is also its failing. It is its failing because I am sure that no foreigner can read it. I am convinced of that, and I read it again before saying this. In the first place, it is too long, containing fifty or more paragraphs. Foreigners are not usually able to read such things. Secondly, even if they read it, they will not understand it because it is too Russian. Not because it is written in Russian – it has been excellently translated into all languages – but because it is thoroughly imbued with the Russian spirit. And, thirdly, if by way of exception some foreigner does understand it, he cannot carry it out. This is its third defect.

I have talked with a few of the delegates who have come here, and I hope to discuss matters in detail with a large number of delegates from different countries during the Congress, although I shall not take part in its proceedings, for, unfortunately, it is impossible for me to do that. I have the impression that we made a big mistake with this resolution, namely, that we blocked our own road to further success. As I have said already, the resolution is excellently drafted; I am prepared to subscribe to every one of its fifty or more points. But we have not learnt how to present our Russian experience to foreigners. All that was said in the resolution has remained a dead letter. If we do not realise this, we shall be unable to move ahead.

I think that, after five years of the Russian Revolution, the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study. We have only now obtained the opportunity to do so. I do not know how long this opportunity will last. I do not know for how long the capitalist powers will give us the opportunity to study in peace. But we must take advantage of every moment of respite from fighting, from war, to study, and to study from scratch. The whole party and all strata of the population of Russia prove this by their thirst for knowledge. This striving to learn shows that our most important task today is to study and to study hard.

Our foreign comrades, too, must study. I do not mean that they have to learn to read and write and to understand what they read, as we still have to do. There is a dispute as to whether this concerns proletarian or bourgeois culture. I shall leave that question open. But one thing is certain: we have to begin by learning to read and write and to understand what we read. Foreigners need something more advanced: first of all, they must learn to understand what we have written about the organisational structure of the Communist parties, which the foreign comrades have signed without reading and under-

11. For the Third Congress resolution, see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 234–61. For Lenin's involvement in drafting it, see Lenin 1960–71, 42, pp. 316–19; 45, pp. 185–6.

standing. This must be their first task. That resolution must be carried out. It cannot be carried out overnight; that is absolutely impossible. The resolution is too Russian, it reflects Russian experience. That is why it is quite unintelligible to foreigners, and they cannot be content with hanging it in a corner like an icon and praying to it. Nothing will be achieved that way. They must assimilate part of the Russian experience.

Just how that will be done, I do not know. The Fascists in Italy may, for example, render us a great service by showing the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds. Perhaps this will be very useful. We Russians must also find ways and means of explaining the principles of this resolution to the foreigners. Unless we do that, it will be absolutely impossible for them to carry it out.

I am sure that, in this connection, we must tell not only the Russians, but the foreign comrades as well, that the most important thing in the period we are now entering is to study. We are studying in the general sense. They, however, must study in the special sense, in order that they may really understand the organisation, structure, method and content of revolutionary work. If they do that, I am sure the prospects of the world-revolution will be not only good, but excellent. (*Loud, prolonged applause. Shouts of 'Long live our Comrade Lenin!' evoke a fresh ovation.*)

Clara Zetkin (Germany): Comrades, sisters and brothers: The Russian Revolution stands before us, today as five years ago, as the most colossal world-historical event of our time. Barely had this giant stretched itself up and charged forward, engaging in a tenacious and passionate struggle for its existence and development, then there was a parting of the ways, an intellectual division, in the working class of every country. Reform on one side; revolution on the other! That cry arose from all countries in response to the Russian Revolution.

The situation thus announced gives the Russian Revolution a quite specific and far-reaching importance. Since roughly the middle of the nineties, an intellectual and political attitude had developed in the working class, which was the ideological expression of imperialist capitalism and of its repercussions on the condition of the working class. In theoretical terms, we call that revisionism; in the realm of practice, we call it opportunism. What was its essence? It was the opinion, or better said the delusion, that the revolution is superfluous and avoidable. The revisionists – today's reformists – claimed that capitalism generates organisational forms that surmount its intrinsic economic and social contradictions, or at least moderate them to the point where the theories of immiseration, of crisis, and of breakdowns have lost their validity. According

to revisionist theory, capitalism no longer created the objective conditions for an inevitable and irresistible revolution. This theory also excludes the social factor in revolution: the will of the working class to revolution. We were told that democracy and social reform 'gradually hollows out capitalism. Society grows over from capitalism to socialism'.

To be sure, this viewpoint was rejected on a theoretical level at the conventions of the German Social Democracy, the leading party of the Second International. It was also condemned at the 1900 and 1904 international congresses of Paris and Amsterdam, although, at the first of these, not with the necessary clarity and severity. However, it became more and more dominant in the practical activity of the Second International's parties. That was already apparent in the position of the international congresses in Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Basel on the question of imperialism, militarism, and the threat of world war.¹²

The World War broke out. The bourgeoisie of the belligerent countries proclaimed its philosophy with machine guns, tanks, submarines, and aeroplanes spewing out death and destruction. No sooner had the World War begun, than it was clear – and it became ever clearer as it proceeded – that it signified nothing other than the crisis of all crises, and that it would end with a dreadful breakdown, the breakdown of world capitalism. It is a bitter irony of history that, while the march of events confirmed the theory of crisis and breakdown, most of the organised working class of the highly developed capitalist countries clung to the theory that turned away from revolution and preached reformism. That led to the ignominious bankruptcy of the Second International when the War broke out.

The proletariat did not respond to the lessons of World War by joining together internationally for a general reckoning with capitalism. Rather, we saw the opposite: the proletariat joined with the bourgeoisie of its so-called fatherlands. As the War ended, capitalism demonstrated its incapacity to surmount the breakdown. The bourgeoisie manifested its inability and its lack of will to rebuild the world out of the chaos it had created. The opportunists leading the workers redoubled their embrace of revisionist theory. They found a new way to explain it: socialism and communism would arise not out of capitalism's breakdown but out of its reconstruction, its renewed flowering. The wickedness of the War would be overcome and society reconstructed not through revolutionary class struggle but only through collaboration, harmony, association, and coalition of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. No to

12. The Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Basel Congresses were held in 1907, 1910, and 1912 respectively. For their resolutions on war and militarism, see Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 33–5, 69–70, 88–90.

a revolution that could rebuild society on a communist basis! Instead, unite with the bourgeoisie to restore capitalism. That was the reformist slogan. Comrades, in this oppressive atmosphere, the Russian Revolution came as a cleansing storm. The Russian proletariat was the first to draw with logical consistency the practical conclusions from imperialist war and capitalist collapse. Unfortunately, it remains alone in this, apart from the creation of the small soviet republics that have been formed on what was once Great-Russian territory.

The Russian Revolution began by doing away with revisionism and reformism, just as is done by the world-revolution itself. The Russian Revolution expressed unequivocally and manifestly that the proletarian masses understood and were determined to effect the abolition of capitalism once and for all. It is the first mighty act of the world-revolution, the Last Judgement of capitalism.¹³

It is true, comrades, that the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, and their co-thinkers outside Russia advance the theory that the Russian Revolution is nothing more than a small national occurrence, which is supposed to remain within the framework of a purely bourgeois revolution. The goal, they say, is to go back to the February Revolution. Now, it is very true that the Russian Revolution expressed the given historical conditions that pushed toward the destruction of tsarism on Russian soil and toward the state taking new forms. But, from its very first days, it also showed that the Russian Revolution is no minor national episode, but rather part of the great cause of the world proletariat. It showed that this revolution cannot be retained within the narrow riverbanks of a bourgeois and purely political revolution, because it forms part of the mighty process of proletarian world-revolution.

In the Russian Revolution, we see more than merely the objective and subjective factors that grew up, living and weaving,¹⁴ on Russian soil. We see in the Russian Revolution the impact of economic, social, and revolutionary tendencies and forces of international capitalism, of bourgeois society around the world. That is already evident in the fact that the revolution was unleashed by a world war that was no accident but the unavoidable result of the combination and interpenetration of world economic and political conditions under the rule of finance-capital, of imperialist capitalism. In the Russian Revolution, we see the expression of all the economic, political, and social conditions created by world capitalism both inside and outside Russia. We also see, crystallised

13. Zetkin probably has in mind the German phrase, 'Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht' (world history is the Last Judgement), from a poem written by the revolutionary-nationalist writer August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben in 1840.

14. The German text, 'leben und weben', is an example of the rhyming pairs that are a characteristic feature of Zetkin's style.

within the Russian Revolution, the concentrated historical understanding and revolutionary will of the proletariat of all countries. International revolutionary socialism, together with the intellectual and moral forces that it aroused and schooled, became living and effective in the Russian Revolution.

The Russian Revolution is thus a great demonstration on a world-historical scale of the vigour, power, and irresistible nature of the social factor in historical development, that is, the understanding, will, action, and struggle of the proletarian masses, who aim to bring down capitalism and realise communism.

It has been claimed that the proletarian revolution began in Russia because of the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie. This weakness is supposedly the reason why the world-revolution has risen up, rattling and roaring, on Russia's soil and nowhere else up to the present day. That is true, but only to a degree. Comrades, I maintain that a factor much more decisive than the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie was the strength of the Russian proletarians' revolutionary action and thought, ideologically schooled and raised high by the Bolshevik Party. Thus was it filled with a revolutionary spirit and joined together as an organised force that became the conscious agent of history. As evidence for this opinion, I offer this: it is true that, at the outset of the Revolution, the Russian proletariat was able to catch unawares and trample the relatively weak Russian bourgeoisie. But the ongoing triumph of the Revolution, its continued existence for five years, during which each day was a day of struggle against the mighty world bourgeoisie – this triumph shows that the Russian Revolution possessed something much more decisive than the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie: the strength, passion, endurance, in a word, the determined will to carry through this revolution that inspired the proletarian masses under Bolshevik leadership.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: it was evident from the start that the revolution in Russia could not be a purely bourgeois revolution in terms of either its most important social force, the proletariat, or its content. The demand rang out ever louder: the revolution must bring peace, land to the peasants, workers' control of production, and above all the demand of all power to the Soviets, the councils. These demands were incompatible with a bourgeois revolution. True, they receded for a time. During the months that followed the February/March Revolution, they did not find full expression. Yet, they were raised with increasing emphasis, gained in influence, and were transformed from propagandistic slogans into the goals of struggle.

The bourgeoisie intervened as an organised force in this revolution in the *zemstvos* [local councils] and *dumas* [representative assemblies] of different major cities and in many industrial associations and federations that had

arisen during the World War. The Russian proletariat, on the other hand, had no organisations of revolutionary struggle. These were created only during the revolution itself in the form of the councils. It is significant that the councils initially did not take up the struggle for revolutionary goals on a revolutionary footing and with revolutionary decisiveness. In the councils, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries initially had the upper hand. They clung to everything in the Russian proletariat that expressed the essence of reformism and the voluntary abdication of the proletariat before the bourgeoisie's power. This essence consisted of deficient courage to take responsibility and deficient faith in its own power.

It is characteristic that the conference of eighty-two delegates of workers' and soldiers' councils, which met in Petrograd in April 1917, adopted a resolution stating that the struggle between capital and labour must take into account the conditions created by the incomplete state of the Revolution and the results of the War. The forms of struggle, they said, had to correspond to these conditions.¹⁵ The faintheartedness of the Russian proletariat, indeed of its élite organised in trade unions, found expression in the decision of a conference of union leaders from all Russia, which opened on 20 June of that year. The demands adopted by this conference already showed the growing influence of the Bolshevik Party, the revolutionary class party of the proletariat. Alongside other radical demands, the call was raised for workers' control of production. But a condition was added, specifying that the proletariat could not take over sole responsibility for the activity of state bodies regulating the economy. This task was supposedly so difficult, so complicated, that all productive forces, all layers of the population had to be drawn into collaboration.¹⁶

This stand by the organised workers was thoroughly consistent with the policy of proletarian coalition with the bourgeoisie, promoted by the petty-bourgeois, reformist, socialist, and Social-Revolutionary parties since the February/March Revolution. It was, in reality, a bourgeois policy in democratic disguise, an expression of capitalist class-rule. It found its most extreme expression by bringing about not peace but the June offensive, not satisfaction of the peasants' hunger for land but the shooting down of rebellious peasants, not workers' control of production in order to heal the economy but the denial of any social reform and the plundering and sabotage of the economy, and,

15. Zetkin is probably referring to the All-Russian Conference of Soviets, 30 March–3 April 1917. For an account of this event, see Sukhanov 1984, pp. 254–65.

16. The Third All-Russian Trade-Union Conference met in Petrograd 20–8 June 1917. For an account, see Shkliarevsky 1993, pp. 68–79. For the proceedings, see Koenker 1982.

above all, through the hostile rejection of any concession to the demand of the proletariat and the peasants for all power to the councils.

In the struggle against the revolutionary offensive of the proletariat, [bourgeois] democracy soon abandoned its principles. It was increasingly exposed as the naked class-rule of the bourgeoisie, sharpened into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The coalition of socialist petty bourgeois and intellectuals did not dare go beyond the framework of a bourgeois, political revolution, out of concern for the bourgeoisie with which it was tied. The outcome was that, in September, the next step was to set up a dictator. And, whether that dictator would be Kerensky or a general, lurking behind him would be the restoration of tsarism.

At this moment, the proletariat, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, stepped in decisively. It drove out the government of harmony, of 'pure democracy', and transferred all state power to the councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers. From their representatives, a provisional government was formed.¹⁷ In this decisive historical moment, the proletariat showed that it had shed its lack of confidence in its own strength and had achieved the courage, previously lacking, to take responsibility for destroying an old world and building a new one. The Russian proletariat was the first, and until now the only one to cease being an object of history and to become its subject, no longer enduring history but making history on its own account.

The proletariat's seizure of power, under Bolshevik leadership, highlights a lesson for us. This concerns the right to carry out an armed revolutionary uprising, even if of only a minority, and such an uprising's significance. But this lesson is sharply delimited on both the left and the right. It shows that there is no historical justification for the petty statistical diligence that reduces the revolution to a simple case of addition and subtraction – that sophistry that 'permits' revolutionary struggle, proletarian struggle for the seizure of state power, only subject to a condition. And that condition is, namely, that such an overwhelming majority has been won to this struggle that victory is guaranteed in advance regardless of circumstances. This conception reduces the revolution to an insurance agency demanding prompt payment in cash. The Russian Revolution gave this the lie.

But the decisive revolutionary uprising of the proletariat of Petrograd and Moscow is just as sharply delimited from all romantic putschist adventurism. It was not the action of a brave, small party, operating without a firm connection with the proletarian masses in the blue skies of revolutionary slogans

17. The 'provisional government' referred to here by Zetkin is the Council of People's Commissars, appointed by the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 26 October 1917.

and demands. No, the Bolsheviks' action was the heroic deed of a party of an organised minority, which had established a connection with the masses on a broad front and which was rooted in the proletarian masses.

The conquest of power for the soviets, led by the Bolsheviks, is portrayed historically as a brilliant isolated action that happened as if with one blow. But that was not the real situation. The brave deed was preceded by months of the most energetic and tenacious agitational, propagandistic, and organisational work by the Bolsheviks among the masses. Through this, the struggle was assured of not merely the support of the broadest masses, but of something more. The Bolsheviks' slogans for the struggle were understood by the masses and could become goals of struggle for the masses themselves. So the act of insurrection was not a deed of petty revolutionary gymnastics by a daring party, but a revolutionary deed of the broadest revolutionary masses. But the decisive factor in this was a wager. Despite all preparations, the answer to the question, 'victory or defeat', was not given in advance. The wager could not and should not have been avoided. To delay the revolution, the insurrection, until victory is assured, means postponing it to never-never-day. And, ultimately, that means rejecting not merely the revolutionary struggle but the revolution itself. No matter how intelligent and carefully prepared revolutionary action may be among the masses, victory is not assured. You must wager in order to win. If the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat won in the revolution in their first brave attempt, it was only because they had the courage to wager. That is a lesson of the Russian Revolution that must be taken to heart by the proletarians of every country: weigh the situation carefully, to be sure, but, in the process of weighing, do not forget to wager. Weighing must be the basis and preparation for wagering.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: when the Russian workers conquered power with the help of Russian peasants and set about building their dictatorship in the form of the soviet system, another historical insight was validated. As early as 1884, on 11 December, our old teacher, Engels, wrote a letter to Bebel. This letter stands in harsh contradiction to the singing and saying of reformists of all countries that democracy alone is the path that leads to liberation of the proletariat. This insight is incompatible with the policies of bourgeois-proletarian spiritual harmony and of coalition government. Engels pointed out that, at the moment of crisis, after the proletarian revolution, there will be no more angry and embittered foe than 'pure democracy'. I will read the relevant passage.

At the moment of revolution, pure democracy can acquire new meaning as a final sheet-anchor. Thus, between March and September 1848, the so-called feudal and bureaucratic masses reinforced the liberals in order to

hold the revolutionary masses down. At the moment of crisis and the days thereafter, our only opponent is reaction as a whole, which unites around pure democracy. This is something that we must not lose from view.¹⁸

Comrades, brothers and sisters: it is striking that the reformists of every variety who so busily assemble quotations from Engels and Marx in order to dispute the right to make the Russian Revolution, the proletarian revolution, these gentlemen who proclaim praise for democracy in every language, seem to have forgotten the opinion of Engels that I have just referred to. Remarkable – or perhaps not. The Russian Revolution made it evident just how right Engels was. On the first day of the revolution and in the initial period after establishment of soviet-power, ‘pure democracy’ had already emerged as the bitterest enemy of proletarian class-rule. Since the February / March Revolution, the Russian proletarians had seen this ‘pure democracy’ at work as capitalist class-rule, as the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

‘Pure democracy’ took up the struggle against soviet democracy, against workers’ democracy with the slogan, ‘For the Constituent Assembly and against soviet-power’. ‘Pure democracy’ counterposed the demand for the Constituent Assembly against soviet democracy, legitimised through revolution, and itself a creation of the revolution and its foremost upholder. That has an odd ring. ‘Pure democracy’ had almost eight months to hold elections for the Constituent Assembly and convene it. This it had not done. It had rejected bringing into being the purest expression of the popular will. Why? The Constituent Assembly could not convene without raising threateningly the spectre of agrarian and proletarian revolution – agrarian revolution, in the form of the peasants’ demand for land and peace; proletarian revolution, in the form of the demand for peace and workers’ control of production. And, thus, as for ‘pure democracy’, first the election of the Constituent Assembly and then its convocation were again and again postponed. Then, suddenly, the demand for the Constituent Assembly was raised as the goal and battle flag of ‘pure democracy’ as a means to overthrow soviet-power. The Constituent Assembly was declared to be untouchable, the holy of holies, whose creative power alone could create a legally valid state.

The demand for a Constituent Assembly was raised not only by petty-bourgeois socialists, reform socialists, in league with the bourgeois parties in each country. It also found an echo in our own revolutionary ranks. I recall that no one less than that theoretician of communism, Rosa Luxemburg, at a certain time, raised the demand for the Constituent Assembly plus the soviets

18. A paraphrase of Engels’s text; see Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 47, p. 234.

as the backbone of proletarian state power.¹⁹ It is typical of the importance of this demand that, not long after, it cropped up again. During the Kronstadt uprising, it was raised by some of the Social Revolutionaries, while ultimately rejected by others. It was raised even by Milyukov, leader of the Cadets. Constituent Assembly plus soviets, we were told. But it was, of course, to be soviets without Communists, which amounts to saying, a body without a soul, content without essence, word without deed.

But let us move on. What was the situation after the conquest of power by the proletariat? The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, as it convened on 5 January 1918, is still fairly often held against the revolutionary government in significant sectors of the working class. What was the justification for this act? Let us weigh the facts objectively. Immediately on its convocation, the Constituent Assembly declared that it met not in order to collaborate with the soviets but as their enemy, that it denied the legitimacy of soviet-power and thus the right of revolution itself. Its Social-Revolutionary, Menshevik, and bourgeois majority rejected the request that it recognise soviet-power and the provisional government it had established. Indeed, it refused even to discuss this. The Bolsheviks in the Constituent Assembly, and, with them, the Left Social Revolutionaries, responded to this impudent declaration of war in the only way possible. They left the Constituent Assembly, and the Soviet authorities declared it to be dissolved and dispersed it.

This action is endorsed by many in the camp of the European and American proletariat who criticise Bolshevik policies, which represent those of the Russian Revolution itself. The Soviet authorities were justified, they concede, in dispersing the Constituent Assembly, for it had been elected under other conditions and no longer reflected the opinions and desires of the broad productive masses. The soviet elections that had since taken place had shown that clearly and irrevocably. However, they add that the Soviet government should immediately have called new elections. Technical and external considerations spoke powerfully against new elections, against convoking a new Constituent Assembly. Given the breakdown of transportation and the very flimsy connections between the centres of political life and the periphery, it would be difficult to quickly organise elections that would reflect with true accuracy the will of the people. But that was not the only consideration.

No, much more profound historical and political considerations spoke against this course. To convoke the Constituent Assembly and place the

19. See Luxemburg 2004, pp. 299–302. Luxemburg's text on the Russian Revolution, written while imprisoned in 1918, had been left among her papers and was published by Paul Levi in 1921. Zetkin wrote a book-length reply to the criticisms raised by Luxemburg; see Zetkin 1922b.

decision on the structure and power of the state in its hands would ultimately deny soviet-power, the Soviet order, the Revolution, and its rights. What would and could be the function of a Constituent Assembly beside the soviets? Would the Constituent Assembly function as an advisory body, with the decision resting with the soviets? That solution would certainly not have served the goal of 'pure democracy'. For 'pure democracy' did not want to counsel and advise; it wanted to rule and govern. The Soviet government could not conceivably accept being reduced to an advisory body. The Russian proletariat would be wrong to share political power with the bourgeoisie or even return it, given that the revolution had laid this power in its strong hands. If the soviets and the Constituent Assembly had coexisted, one beside the other, it would have created a situation of dual power, which would necessarily have quickly led to a struggle for power. The Revolution's achievements would have been put in question and threatened. The Constituent Assembly beside the soviets would have been nothing more than a legal focal point for legal and illegal counter-revolution, enraged and enflamed. Therefore, no Constituent Assembly, all power to the soviets! That is what the slogan of the Russian Revolution must be in order to keep political power genuinely in the hands of the proletariat.

Along with the rejection of the Constituent Assembly, there is another measure of Russian revolutionary politics that has provoked the indignation of its severe critics: the soviet electoral franchise. As you know, this franchise is restricted in that it is denied to all exploiters, who can neither vote nor be elected. Other than that, it is universal for all working people more than eighteen years old. This limitation was necessary for the political expropriation of the bourgeoisie. The soviet system places all political power in the hands of the broad productive masses. In factory and mill, in the village, they elect their representatives in the soviets. Barring the bourgeoisie from voting and being elected excludes the possibility of returning a portion of political power to their hands.

It has been said that making this provision permanent is a petty measure that discourages creative forces and deters them from contributing with pleasure to building the new order. True, the number of bourgeois who have been denied the right to vote is not large. But, by contrast, the social and economic power that still lay in the hands of the bourgeoisie at the beginning of the Revolution was very large indeed. In seeking to establish its power, the proletariat truly had no cause to give so much as an iota of political power and political rights to the caste of its previous exploiters and lords.

There is more to it than that. The denial of the right to vote was intended as a sign of social contempt and denunciation. Those who do not work, be it

with their head or their hand, those who are social exploiters and parasites, shall also have no right to influence the shaping of political and social conditions, whether directly or indirectly. And there is yet another consideration in denying the soviet franchise to the exploiting classes. That is the fundamental significance of the franchise as a political and legal expression of the character of a social order. The nature of the franchise reveals the economic foundation of society, power, and law as it affects different classes. The franchise established by the revolution that created the bourgeois order originally signified only the extension of political rights and power from the possessors of the old feudal fixed property to the possessors of moveable capitalist property. That is why it was linked to property, income, tax payments, and such factors. The introduction of a universal franchise expresses the fact that, beside the possessing class, a new class of those without property has begun to press its way forward. In the universal franchise, in addition to property, an individual's labour and social achievement is valued as a basis for political power and rights. But the Soviet government is building society not on a division of power between the bourgeois and the proletariat, between labour and property, but on labour alone. In accord with the Soviet state's character as a workers' state and with the character of the new social order, the franchise can pertain only to working people and not to the exploiters.

It is not enough, comrades, for the Soviet Republic as a government, as a dictatorship of the proletariat, to be expressed in paragraphs and on a piece of paper. It had to take form in life. That could only happen in fierce struggle with the bourgeoisie and the counter-revolution. From almost the first day of its existence, it had to defend itself against not only the Russian bourgeoisie but that of the world, which felt an immediate impulse of solidarity. The Soviet Republic had to combat counter-revolution at home and on all fronts. The young proletarian power had to be protected against enemies from outside and inside.

The Soviet government's first word was one of peace. I say peace not in the sense of pacifism, as I will soon explain. Soviet Russia exited from the World War and demobilised. But what was the response to this? The armies of German imperialism, including Social Democrats carrying the Erfurt Programme in their knapsack, drove on against Petrograd. They held Ukraine and other territories under occupation. The Entente bestirred itself to attack the Soviet government and provided the counter-revolution with political, financial, and military assistance. To maintain soviet-power, the Red Army had to be created. It was a matter of creating and organising a force, and employing it to fend off an opposed force. One form of this force defending the workers' state was the Red Army, which defended this state's existence and independence

on the battlefields. The other form of force was the dictatorship of the proletariat, raised to the level of terror. Both forms of force were hard, historical necessities, unavoidable means of defence, so that Soviet Russia could live, build, and develop.

As a result of the influence of reformist leaders, there is still a considerable mass of workers who do not grasp the historical necessity of a war to defend the revolution and the nature of the terror. They let the Red Army be cursed as an expression of so-called Soviet imperialism; they wax indignant in particular about the 'barbarity' of the terror. But let us see things as they are. The red terror in the Russian Revolution was the answer to the white terror of the bourgeoisie, which was still in possession of strong instruments of power. The bourgeoisie did not only set about shattering the proletariat's political power through conspiracies, uprisings, and the like; it also mustered up its entire influence to wreck efforts to build and renew the economy and social life. The soviets' red terror was simply elementary self-defence. The Russian Revolution had to do what Marx described, in his profound work, *Class Struggles in France*, as the first duty of every revolution: it had to 'suppress the enemy'.

It was not merely a matter of striking down the enemy. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which, under certain circumstances is sharpened into a terror, had yet another task to fulfil. It had to dishearten the counter-revolutionaries and banish from their soul the last hopes that they might some day succeed in winning back their vanished power to exploit and rule. A revolution cannot simply walk through the country, uniformed as in a girls' school, in a spotless white robe bearing a garland of peace in its hands. It must come wearing sandals of iron, girded with a huge sword, because its opponents want it so and provoke it. The proletarian dictatorship's severity, its measures of terror, are not freely chosen expressions of the revolution's will. They were, rather, forced on it by the counter-revolution. And they have a great goal. By taking bad measures, they serve to prevent what is even worse. The necessity of defence encompasses also the necessity of prevention. They wail over the hundreds and thousands that have fallen in the Civil War to the terror. They tear their hair in despair over the supposed strangling of 'democracy' and bourgeois freedoms through the dictatorship of the proletariat and the terror. But no one speaks of the tens of thousands that have fallen as victims of the counter-revolution. No one thinks of the tens of thousands more who would surely have faced the same fate, if revolutionary force had not broken the force of counter-revolution. No one in the reform socialist camp considers the fact that, without the harshness of the Revolution, millions and millions

would continue to languish in the barbarity of capitalist exploitation and servitude, condemned to ruin and death.

Comrades, may I take a break at this point?

Chair: Comrade Zetkin has asked for a break. (*Loud agreement*) I see there is no objection.

The Presidium proposes to continue today's agenda point tomorrow morning at 11:00 a.m.

Adjournment: 4:08 p.m.

Session 9 – Tuesday, 14 November 1922

Five Years of the Russian Revolution and Perspectives for the World-Revolution (Continued)

Speakers: Clara Zetkin, Béla Kun

Convened: 11:50 a.m.

Chairperson: Neurath

Clara Zetkin: (*Greeted with applause*) Comrades, brothers and sisters: I ended my remarks yesterday by explaining that, in defending and maintaining itself, the Soviet government cannot dispense with force. However, nothing could be more wrong than the assertion of our reformist and bourgeois opponents that the Soviet government exists only because of force. State power cannot rest long on bayonets. That was clearly shown by Russia's eight months of coalition governments and, in particular, the months of the Kerensky Social-Revolutionary government.

This is especially true during a time of revolution, in which days must be measured as months, and years as decades, and sometimes centuries. The Soviet government had to affirm its right to exist through its creative and active policies. One of the foremost characteristics of Soviet policy is its internationalism, which was strongly expressed in its stand on the question of war and peace. The first call of the proletarian state was for peace. The demand for peace was certainly strongly rooted in the destitution generated by the War, and was voiced by the peasant and proletarian masses under this strong pressure. Its other source, equally strong, was the consciousness of international revolutionary solidarity of working people, of producers around the world.

Marx wrote in *Class Struggles in France*: 'The socialist revolution was proclaimed in France. But it cannot be consummated there. In general, the socialist revolution cannot be consummated within national limits.'¹ This conviction was one of the central themes of the Russian Revolution and of Bolshevik revolutionary policy. Among the first decrees of the Provisional [Soviet] Government was an appeal to all governments and peoples for peace.² Far from being inspired by bourgeois-pacifist illusions, it demanded peace as the revolutionary act of proletarians, as a gate, the first step toward world-revolution. This appeal accorded special praise to the workers of Germany, Great Britain, and France, who had already provided such great and valuable services for humanity. Therefore, the appeal said, they now had to do their duty to liberate humanity from the misery of war.

The Soviet Republic's call for peace through proletarian revolution went unheeded, although, surely, peace and revolution could never have been achieved so cheaply and under such advantageous circumstances as through a direct extension of Russia's proletarian revolution. A year of crimes, abominations, and devastation of human lives and belongings would have been avoided. And most important, the broad proletarian masses possessed weapons then and could have turned against the exploiting class with full force. But world peace was not achieved by world-revolution. The Soviet Republic was compelled to make a separate peace at Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers. For the young proletarian state, this peace greatly increased the difficulties of its internal situation. It was utilised by the Social Revolutionaries, the most firm and energetic organised force of counter-revolution within Soviet Russia, to shamelessly vilify the Soviet government. All the responsibility for military collapse was heaped on its shoulders.

But what was the real state of affairs? The severities and humiliations of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk were the young Soviet state's atonement for the crimes and folly of the Kerensky government's June offensive.³ It had to pay for the imperialism of 'pure democracy'. In addition, the Social Revolutionaries – counter-revolutionaries, in fact – set in motion another attack against Soviet power, saying that the Peace of Brest-Litovsk had reinforced German, Hohen-

1. Probably a paraphrase of *The Class Struggles in France* in Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 10, pp. 56, 70.

2. See 'Decree on Peace' in Degras 1951, pp. 1–3. The newly formed Soviet government could be referred to as provisional because of the pending convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

3. On 18 June 1917, Russian armies launched an offensive in Galicia. Despite initial gains, the attack ended two weeks later in a crushing defeat for Russian forces. Kerensky was then Minister of War. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed 3 March 1918, ended the war between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers led by Germany. Russia ceded territory including about one-quarter of its population and industry.

zollern militarism at the expense of the so brilliantly displayed 'democracy' and 'civilisation' of the Entente imperialists. However, German imperialism marched directly from Brest-Litovsk to Versailles and the Peace of Versailles. German imperialism's madness in victory enflamed the will to victory of the other side and heightened it to a fever pitch. They were shocked by the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. It led them to throw every instrument of power into the War. The result was the collapse of German militarism, German imperialism.

However, among the forces that led to this collapse, the Russian Revolution and its example must without a doubt be counted among the strongest moral and political factors that wore down the will of the German and Austrian armies to stay the course. When the German proletarians began to refuse to bleed on the battlefields for the profit and purposes of the German bourgeoisie, the first word stammered by military rebellion was 'soldiers' councils'. And, when the military collapse became a political overturn, when the revolution arose in Germany, its first word was 'workers' and peasants' councils'. How had the working masses of Germany learned this slogan, which expressed their indignation and lust for freedom? They had learned it from the Russian Revolution.

Unfortunately, their learning did not go beyond the revolutionary ABCs. The German proletariat had then not yet learned to read the language of revolution fluently. They had not learned what the Russian workers and peasants, those 'backward' illiterates, had learned in eight months from the bourgeois, capitalist policies of the coalition governments. Even now, four years later, this has not yet been learned. The German workers gave back to the bourgeoisie the political power concentrated in the hands of the councils. In place of the dictatorship of the proletariat, they set up 'democracy', that is, bourgeois class-rule. So the expectation of the Russian revolutionary leaders that waves of world-revolution would roll rapidly onwards was not fulfilled. The Bolsheviks' opponents smiled and chided them for their firm conviction that the Russian Revolution would be the starting point for a world-revolution that would unfold at a rapid pace.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: such ridicule is both facile and unjustified. The leaders of the Russian Revolution judged rightly the direction and objective of the world-revolution that had broken out. They could fall into error regarding its tempo. Why was this? The goal and direction of historical development can be clearly recognised, clearly understood, and sketched out in perspective. They are fixed by the operation of objective social forces. But the tempo depends to the highest degree on the subjective forces of historical evolution, that is, in this case, on the revolutionary understanding, will, and activity of the proletarian masses. So many imponderables come into question

in assessing this factor that it is not possible to foresee accurately the tempo of development of world-revolution. But what is chalked up as the Bolsheviks' arithmetical error by world history's master complainers was, in fact, one of the strongest driving forces for the enduring and sustaining power of the Russian Revolution. This arithmetical error is ten times, a hundred times more fruitful in its impact far beyond Soviet Russia's borders than the so carefully proven formulae of the accomplished mathematics instructors. The unshakeable conviction that the world-revolution must stride forward and will complete what was begun on Russian soil – it is to this conviction that the Russian proletariat owes the power of its confidence, its almost religious belief in world-revolution, in the revolutionary solidarity of proletarians of all countries, which even now, after five years of the most intense struggle, of unprecedented suffering, has kept the masses of Soviet Russia fresh, enthusiastic in the struggle, brave, and determined.

Let us turn from the Russian Revolution's policy for peace to its economic policy. This economic policy was to be generated by the solid and creative power of the revolutionary proletariat. It was to remake society. From its outset, the Revolution paraded its proletarian character. Its economic policy had to be oriented to its final goal: communism. If the soviets' political power had the task of achieving communism, then it had to abolish private ownership of the means of production. And that was not all. It had to organise the entire society anew, according to a plan and in a communist spirit. That was an enormous task, and, in its resolution, the tragedy of the Russian Revolution came to the fore. This tragedy is lodged in the contradiction between a manifest and passionate will to construct communism, if possible at once, to realise it completely, and a weakness born of the backwardness of inherited economic and social conditions within which this will was active.

To understand the economic policy of the Russian Revolution, we must have an accurate picture of the social forces available to the proletarian state to carry through the communist revolution. What were the forces from which the Russian Revolution could draw support for this overturn?

In contrast to utopianism, Marxism holds that the foundation for social revolution is established by the highest possible economic and technical development, which enormously expands the productive forces, creates the most advanced means and methods of labour as well as organisational forms and methods, and, on the other hand, by a proletariat that makes up the immense majority of the population, a proletariat of those who work with hand or brain, and that is capable of carrying out the economic and social tasks of communist transformation and the building of communism.

What is the situation in Soviet Russia in this regard? In its economic and social structure, the Soviet state resembles a pyramid, established by the

Revolution at its summit. Underneath, as its foundation, is a new, backward, and comparatively as yet little developed modern heavy industry; and a new proletariat, comparatively few in number, still young in its schooling and capacity to administer, govern, and lead the productive apparatus, to achieve highest productivity, and also relatively inexperienced in the administration and leadership of the public and state business. On this narrow, cramped foundation lies the immense bulk of the poor-peasant population and the poor-peasant economy, whose mode of operation still encompasses the most backward forms, 'backward', as Rosa Luxemburg said, 'as in the times of the Pharaohs'. And, obviously, also the mentality that goes with that.

Comrades, examining closely this state of affairs, we must say that historically it is a miracle of miracles that this topsy-turvy pyramid still stands today, although shaken for five full years by all the powers and storms of counter-revolution. But, over time, such a situation is untenable. The greatest master of balancing acts could not prevent this pyramid from ultimately toppling or the great solid blocks above from crushing the small and thin foundation. It could be different only if the narrow foundation of modern industry and the modern proletariat were to broaden, grow high, and become so spacious, thick, and firm that it could stand against all the pressures from above. Or, on the other hand, if the small foundation at the bottom were to gain support through revolution, through the creation of soviet republics outside the Russian soviet state, if the proletariat of new soviet states with higher economic development and a higher civilisation – as they put it in bourgeois society – were capable of rapidly broadening the development of Soviet Russia's narrow foundation, of reinforcing it, and in this way speeding its communist transformation.

That did not come to be. No such soviet states were formed. And the result of that was that the Russian Revolution and its creation, the Russian proletarian state, had to come to a *modus vivendi* with the peasantry and with the capitalists both within and outside Russia. This *modus vivendi* is the New Economic Policy. In assessing it, we must not lose from view the given and specific Russian conditions. We must not judge on the basis of whether some measure that has been taken corresponds to very elaborate plans for a social revolution thought up in some study. Our criterion must be to judge whether the action in question, measured against circumstances that are not freely chosen but merely found, represents steps that lead in the direction of development toward communism; whether the measures aim toward communism as their goal.

It is, above all, from this angle that we must judge Bolshevik agrarian policy, which has aroused sharp criticism not only in the ranks of reformists

and bourgeois but also among Communists.⁴ I will give some attention to this agrarian policy. To understand the Russian Revolution, it is extremely important to grasp this policy in its broad outline – we cannot, of course, enter into details here. This understanding is also extremely important in order to resolve tasks that will likely face the world proletariat after the conquest of political power in all countries, although under different circumstances than those in Soviet Russia. In their own way, the Menshevik Beckmessers who reject the Russian Revolution on the grounds of its agrarian policy are thinking logically.⁵ Whether they can rightly be called Marxist thinkers is, of course, quite another question.

In evaluating Bolshevik agrarian policy, we must recall that capitalism, despite the profusion of its instruments of power, was unable, over long periods of time, to go beyond small-peasant operations and replace them with higher productive forms. True, capitalism proletarianised the small peasantry across wide areas and entire countries. Still the small-peasant form of production has persisted, despite everything. There is no need for us to look to the Balkan countries, which are still overwhelmingly dominated by small peasants. There is no need to think of the small-peasant masses of Italy and France. Even in Germany, so highly developed industrially, there is still a strong small peasantry. Even in the United States, small-peasant operations are numerous, although small farms must be measured there by American and not by European standards.

How can it be expected that the Russian Revolution and Bolshevik agrarian policy could put an end to small-peasant farming through a wave of the hand? Given the strength of the poor-peasant population, it was inevitable that the revolution in Russia would not be possible without an agrarian policy that satisfied the peasant masses. In Russia, eighty per cent of the population is small peasants, among whom nine-tenths are working peasants. For the proletariat to have seized political power and carried out a revolution against the will of these masses would have been utterly excluded. I will go further. A revolution without the support of these masses was not possible. Anyone who wanted proletarian revolution in Russia had also to swallow the Bolshevik agrarian policy in tough and sour chunks. You had to choose; there was no way around it.

4. Luxemburg's criticism of Bolshevik agrarian policy had been published by Levi in 1921. Criticisms of the Bolshevik agrarian policy had been voiced in the Second Congress by Crispin and Serrati. A contrary policy had been followed by short-lived soviet governments in Hungary (1919) and parts of Poland (1920), with bad results. See Luxemburg 2004, pp. 290–3; Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 52–5, 357–8; and 2, pp. 653–4.

5. Sixtus Beckmesser is a censorious and narrow-minded critic in Richard Wagner's opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

Bolshevik agrarian policy began with one of the first decrees of the Provisional [Soviet] Government, which abolished private ownership of land. The right to use land was promised to all persons, as individuals, without distinction of sex, on the condition that they personally work the land.⁶ A period of time followed in which the peasants divided up the large estates in wild, anarchic fashion. The large estates' inventory of machines, tools, cattle, and so on was also divided. There was then a period of attempts to shape the division of land according to firm rules, to avoid the division of large estates, and to integrate small-peasant farming in a planned way into the economy as a whole. That happened during the period of 'war communism' with its 'collection commissions' and 'requisitions'. Hunger for land had made the peasant masses revolutionary; satisfaction of this hunger made them a strong support of the Soviet government.

Rosa Luxemburg had feared that, as a result of an agrarian upheaval of this sort, the Russian peasant would fall into political apathy. But this did not happen. He did not claim his piece of land in order then to crawl onto his oven. No, the satisfied hunger for land made him a heroic defender of the Soviet Republic. By doing so, he defended his soil against the return of the great landowners. But, in another respect, the hopes of the Russian Revolution's leaders were not fulfilled. The distribution of land did not sharpen rural class contradictions, driving the poor peasant masses to the side of the industrial proletariat, so that they together could overcome the class antagonism between worker and capitalist. Instead, a broad layer of middle peasants grew up, whose interests rapidly came into contradiction with those of war communism. These middle peasants held possession of nourishing bread and deadly weapons. They were able to compel adoption of the new policy, with its measures to introduce a tax in kind in place of the compulsory delivery of the entire agricultural product aside from a ration for personal consumption. They compelled adoption of free trade and the other well-known economic innovations.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: it has been held against the Bolshevik agrarian policy that it is not communist and leads away from communism, in contradiction to the task of the Soviet state to prepare and carry through a communist transformation. Even worse, it is said to erect a barrier to this transformation. What is the truth? The first question is whether it was at all possible to carry out an agrarian revolution that would maintain the great estates, establish other great estates, and transform them into modern large-scale enterprises. Anyone who claims that to be possible is talking through his hat.

6. For the decree on land adopted by the Second Soviet Congress on 26 October 1917, see Lenin 1960-71, 26, pp. 258-60.

The agrarian economy of Soviet Russia is characterised not by modern large-scale enterprises but by small-peasant operations. When the Revolution broke out, large-scale enterprises were present in significant quantity only in Poland, the Baltic countries, and some parts of Ukraine. If we follow the old socialist formula, what does that tell us about resolving the agrarian question? The agricultural productive apparatus that might have enabled us to press forward toward creating large-scale enterprises simply did not exist. Further, there did not exist a modern rural proletariat that could have taken such a productive apparatus in hand, governed it, and led it. It is characteristic that we constantly hear mention in Russia of the 'village poor' but not of a peasant or agricultural proletariat. Such a proletariat in the proper sense of the word does not exist. The large estates that existed were still run by the landlords according to the old feudal pattern and not according to the methods of modern capitalism, which were implemented by only a very few individual liberal-minded aristocrats.

So it was excluded for the Russian Revolution's agrarian policy to set about creating large agricultural enterprises. Given these facts, and also considering the initially weak central government, the agrarian reform had to be carried out in chaotic fashion by the peasant masses themselves. It had to happen in the way it did.

It is true that Bolshevik agrarian policy has placed absolutely insurmountable obstacles against the development of agriculture along a communist path? I dispute that. True, the 'ancestral psychology of ownership', of which so much is said in criticising the agrarian measures of the Revolution, is still powerful among the small peasants of Soviet Russia. Indeed, among many of them, doubtlessly, it is initially strengthened and reinforced. But will this endure? That is another matter. Surely the peasants' opposition and indeed rebellion against the measures of war communism was shaped by factors other than simply the supposedly irresistible outbreaks of innate petty-bourgeois peasant mentality.

Hunger for land made the peasants supporters and defenders of the Soviet state. Hunger for goods, arising from their work, drove them away from communism and led them to economic views that were capitalist and counter-revolutionary.

How did they become acquainted with communism? Not as solidarity arising from the integration of city and countryside, no, but rather as 'war communism', which took everything from the peasants without giving them the products that were essential and indispensable for their farm operations and consumption. That is why we should anticipate that, when industry revives, the Soviet economic policy will not run into any insuperable anti-Communist attitude among the peasants.

In assessing small-peasant psychology, there are several other factors that must not be forgotten. Among the Russian small peasants, there are old and deeply felt traditions of indigenous village communism that have not entirely died away. They have been sustained and reinforced by primitive religious feelings that view all property as ultimately from God, as God's property. These sentiments are nourished by the propaganda of Tolstoy's followers, Social Revolutionaries, Narodniks, and many religious sects. And these beginnings of communist understanding are systematically encouraged and promoted by the measures of the proletarian state.⁷

To begin with, despite all the new policies, the land has not become the private property of the peasants. It remains the property of the proletarian state. The peasant receives it for his use, but he can neither bequeath nor sell it. Exploitation of wage labour is forbidden. In addition, the poor-peasant economy is integrated into the national economy as a whole – not only by the tax in kind, but even more through a whole number of regulations, arrangements, and rules for tilling and utilising the land. Finally, the Soviet government is proceeding consciously and systematically to lead the development of agriculture in the direction of cooperative enterprise. That is taking place in part through the initiative of the peasants themselves, pressed by poverty. Bad harvests and famine in recent years have led the peasants toward founding cooperatives and associations of various types. Leagues of neighbours and relatives have been formed for the collective acquisition and use of machines, ploughs, and the like. In addition, the Soviet government is striving to create as many large Soviet farms as possible, while encouraging the establishment and success of cooperative farms and agricultural enterprises. Certainly, the Soviet and cooperative farms that function as modern agricultural enterprises are only tiny islands in the huge ocean of small-peasant farms, whose number is estimated at about twelve million. But they can play a significant role as technical and social models, and we know they are doing so in no small measure.

There is one more factor we must take into account. We must not fall into viewing the Russian agrarian revolution in terms of the emancipation of peasants in France, regardless of the many superficial analogies between these two mighty events. We must not forget that the emancipation of French peasants took place linked to a bourgeois revolution whose essence was expressed by the words 'property' and 'individualism'. The Russian agrarian revolution, on the other hand, is integrated into a proletarian revolution, whose central concepts are labour and solidarity. This creates a social atmosphere for the

7. See also Trotsky, p. 352; and Tahar Boudengha, p. 705.

development of poor-peasant attitudes quite different from those in the time of the French Revolution.

Above all, the Russian small peasants will learn from experience that their conditions are intimately linked – for better or worse – with the development of industry and the proletariat's rise to new forms of economic and social life. The peasant cannot rationalise his operations unless this process is supported by the flowering of modern industry and the achievements of proletarians. In this regard, I would like to say that the best and most effective agrarian reform is the electrification of the Russian economy. The Soviet government has this task in focus and is striving to accomplish it. This task creates solidarity between city and countryside – a linkage of the economic and cultural interests of industrial proletarians and small peasants, stronger and more solid than anything one could imagine.

Let me wrap up this topic. It is true, of course, that the Bolshevik agrarian reform has not been able to resolve the agrarian question overnight, through the realisation of complete communism. Nonetheless, it does not at all represent a deviation from the direction and goal of a communist society. On the contrary! Through one innovation after another, it is leading the small peasantry economically, socially, and culturally along the path to communism, and it will steer a steady course. And the psychology of small proprietors will change with their transformed conditions of labour and life.

The petty-bourgeois reform-socialists regard the Russian Communist Party's agrarian policy as equivalent to the Fall of Man in the paradise of revolution. In their view, this policy is the capitalist original sin in the Bolshevik world, the original sin that can result only in the revival of capitalism altogether. In my view, this opinion is totally wrong. Even without the Bolshevik agrarian policy, Soviet Russia could well have been obliged to come to an accommodation with capitalism, in order to follow a consistent path to communism. From the start, the leading party of the Russian revolution, while setting communism as its final goal, did not fail to investigate the road leading to that objective. It tested and weighed the specific and practical political conditions under which it must be achieved in Russia. The Bolsheviks therefore expressed their economic policy through limited and immediate goals that nonetheless were steadfastly directed toward communism. Lenin formulated this in April 1917.⁸ What did he pose as the immediate economic tasks after the conquest of power? Socialisation of heavy industry, transport, and the banks; the monopoly of foreign trade; and workers' control of production. And the initial decrees of the Provisional [Soviet] Government did not go

8. See, for example, Lenin 1960–71, 24, pp. 73–4, 211.

much beyond these demands. Only bit by bit were further measures taken to end private property of the means of production, estates, and so on.

The proletarian revolution pressed forward in this direction, toward going beyond the April slogan of workers' control. Why was that? A large segment of the employers responded to the Soviet government's measures with sabotage or by shutting up shop and running away. There was nothing left for the workers to do but to take over management of these factories, to occupy them. Otherwise, the factories would have been shut down and the economy totally destroyed. There was another factor: Soviet Russia had to arm and sustain the Red Army in a struggle with armies equipped and maintained by the advanced armaments industry of the entire world. That could not be done within the framework of the initial and rather modest economic measures. It demanded that all available means of production be taken over and utilised, that all productive forces be employed. In addition, although the political power of the bourgeoisie had been expropriated, it was still in possession of rich social resources that it ruthlessly employed against the workers' state. It was necessary to strike at the roots of the bourgeoisie's power, namely, its property. This took place through the nationalisation of all available means of production and inventories.

Finally, there was also another consideration. The defence of Soviet Russia against the assault of counter-revolution required of the broad masses enormous and unprecedented sacrifice and deprivation. The masses accepted this gladly because – how shall I put it – a rough-hewn primitive communism of consumption was created. In this way, the Russian Revolution was driven economically far beyond its originally adopted goals.

Those who now moan that the Revolution is defeated and is in flight are quite wrong. The Russian Revolution has retreated from its initial positions in good order, retaining in fact more commanding heights and fortresses than it originally set out to occupy and had initially occupied. True, capitalism has come again, although its power was broken and seemed to have been banished from the sacred revolutionary soil of Soviet Russia once and for all. It has returned in the form not only of small peasants but of those receiving leases and concessions. It is obvious that these gentlemen are not taking part in the Russian economy for the sake of the edifying feeling of building it up, lifting it, and thus serving the cause of civilisation. They are pursuing a more 'tangible' goal: to make a profit, the largest profit possible. But, comrades, the capitalist who returns to Soviet Russia is no longer absolute master of the house in his own enterprise. Why not? Because he is no longer master of the house in the state. The drive for profit on the part of concessionaires and lessees is reined in by the laws of the workers' state, and through the application of these laws by the agencies of Soviet power.

Certainly, the contradiction between capital and labour will break out in the framework of the New Economic Policy in all its ruthlessness and severity. But the Soviet state acts as a custodian appointed by the proletariat over all productive forces, all natural resources, all human labour-power. The interests of the proletariat are its highest law. Its legal regulations and conditions make it impossible for national and foreign capitalists to plunder natural resources. This also prevents the capitalists, however great may be their lust for profit, from increasing their profits through the plunder and devastation of human beings. The proletarian state is aware that the greatest wealth of Soviet Russia is the labouring population, the source of all value. It is aware that it is necessary not merely to maintain the Russian proletariat as it presently lives and strives. No, its physical, intellectual, and professional competence and moral cultural power must be raised to a much higher level, so that it may create and maintain perfected communism.

That is why, in the unavoidable conflicts between capital and labour in the enterprises that have been leased or granted as concessions, the trade unions and cooperatives will once again play an enormous role and develop their activity fruitfully. How will this differ from the situation in non-Soviet countries, where the capitalists still rule politically? There, state power is nothing but a brake on the functioning of unions and cooperatives. It always intervenes in the conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for the greater good of capitalism, unless the working masses have become strong enough to prevent this. But, in Soviet Russia, in all workers' conflicts with industrial, commercial, or loan capital, state power will be on the side of the trade unions and cooperatives.

However, we must consider another side of 'state capitalism'. The Soviet Republic is not only engaged in 'state capitalism' by providing leases and concessions. It must also be a 'state capitalist' in its own enterprises. Only a part, and so far only a small part, of Russian industry and the Russian economy is provided to the capitalists as a loan for their exploitation. The other part, and it is the most important – including heavy industry, transportation, and so on – remains, in its commanding heights, in the hands of the Soviet government. The Soviet government, the workers' state itself, is the biggest employer in Soviet Russia. But what does that mean in a period when the Russian economy is not linked with states on the road to communism but is integrated into the capitalist world economy? It means that the written and unwritten laws of this world economy exert an influence, within certain limits, on the shaping of relationships in the first workers' state. The Soviet state too must be concerned as an employer, on behalf of the class it represents, with the 'profitability' of the enterprises. Indeed, I will go further. Even when the transition

period is over, even when we have achieved pure communism, society will generate surplus-value in its economy. It will have to accumulate in the interests of further economic and cultural development. What is the result of this? The result is that the workers' state may come into temporary conflict, here and there, with the demands and interests of individual workers and groups of workers, toward whom it must represent the present and future interests of the entire proletariat as a class. Obviously, such conflicts must not be resolved on the basis of the temporary and momentary interests of individual persons or groups within the proletariat and individual branches of the economy. No, they must be resolved, today and in the future, in terms of the interests of the proletariat as a class, in its entirety.

Obviously, conflicts of this sort will not be absent from Soviet Russia. Conflicts will arise for this reason alone: the Russian proletariat is not yet able to put forward out of its own ranks all the forces needed to occupy the administrative, leading, and decisive posts. Thus, people are named to these posts who have profound economic, technical, and professional training and experience but lack the necessary communist outlook. Comrades, brothers and sisters: in this regard too, the trade unions and cooperatives have an extraordinarily important task – as agencies not only of economic construction but of education both 'upwards and downwards', to coin a phrase. Downwards, in order to raise the proletarian masses as producers to the highest possible productive capacity. Proletarians will sometimes experience this as severity. But, in weighing this apparent severity and the backwardness of which our friend Lenin spoke yesterday, we must not forget that, outside Russia, in the highly developed capitalist states, the proletariat has gone through the dreadful school of capitalism for hundreds of years in order to achieve its present capacity to produce and to labour. This education begins with the 'bloody legislation' in England,⁹ and instruction continues today using the whip of hunger and the scourge of class exploitation and class-rule. The Soviet Russian workers' state will educate its worker masses with the aid of trade unions and cooperatives and using gentler and more humane methods consistent with the meaning of communism. But it must still educate – educate to achieve work discipline, skilled production, and so on. And that encompasses the possibility of clashes.

The workers' state will also simultaneously work together with the trade unions and cooperatives to train a staff of employees, officials, managers, and agents who will be imbued with the spirit of communism and will transform

9. See Chapter 28 in the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, 'Bloody Legislation against the Expropriated since the End of the Fifteenth Century. The Forcing Down of Wages by Act of Parliament' (Marx 1977–81, 1, pp. 896–904).

the economy as rapidly and fundamentally as possible in a communist direction. The employees and officials must become aware of what it means to be representatives of the workers' state.

Another factor: despite its poverty and the devastation of its economy, Soviet Russia is today the state with the most advanced legislation for workers' protection and social welfare. And this is not merely on paper. Trade unions and cooperatives have the task, together with the soviet bodies, of supervising the implementation of labour and social welfare legislation and of working for its improvement. They are effective agents of social reform. The activity of cooperatives and trade unions with regard to social reform was earlier hailed by reformist gentlemen, as previously said, as a means to hollow out capitalism and avoid revolution. Now we see just how right we 'radicals' were in maintaining that the trade unions and cooperatives could only contribute to truly transformative social reform after the proletariat's conquest of political power. Only after the conquest of political power do they become a factor for transformation of the economy in the direction of communism. Social reform then takes on an entirely new face, a different meaning. Through the protection and defence of the proletariat against capitalism, they become contributors to the construction of communism. The proletariat's conquest of political power and the establishment of its dictatorship in the form of the soviet system stands as a towering milestone at the turn in the road where all social factors acquire a higher development and new tasks.

There is no need for me to point out the effects of the New Economic Policy in other areas. Our friend Lenin did that yesterday in illuminating fashion. However, I consider it necessary to strongly emphasise this side of the new policy. For it highlights two facts. First, that, in conquering and maintaining political power, the proletariat is not yet on the downslope but is right up against the mountain. By means of its overall policies and especially its economic policy, the proletarian government must clamber over the mountain into the promised land of communism. This raises a number of difficult problems: that of the relationship between city and countryside; that of the political power of the workers incorporated in the Soviet state and the proletariat's economic organisations – the trade unions and cooperatives; that of the relationship between productive workers on the one hand and, on the other, the employees and officials in the factories and the bureaucracy in all the varied offices of the central and local Soviet authorities. These thorny problems will confront the proletariat of every country following the conquest of political power.

We, therefore, have an extraordinary amount to learn from the relevant developments in the Russian Revolution – not only from what appears to be correct but also from what appears defective or is so in fact. However, in all this we must keep our focus on the central problem, which is the conquest and

maintenance of political power, state power, in the hands of the proletariat. On this stands or falls the possibility of transforming society all the way to communism, as an achievement of the proletariat itself. The defence of state power by and for the proletariat must take priority over all other considerations. If evidence is needed of the decisive role of state power in communist transformation, we need only look at two classic examples: Soviet Russia is one; the other is Germany under the coalition government.¹⁰

In Soviet Russia: defence of proletarian state power; socialisation of heavy industry; strengthened legislation to protect workers; securing of the eight-hour day; a consistent struggle against the scourge of overtime, which is allowed only where it is demonstrably essential in the higher interest of the workers' state itself; strengthening of social welfare; expansion of the school system as in no other country, despite all the poverty. All things considered, a beginning of economic reconstruction, small steps forward in economic life, and – most important, a slight but clearly perceptible improvement in the conditions of the proletariat.

Against that, consider Germany: the proletariat lacks state power; a coalition ranging from Stinnes to Scheidemann, and indeed to Hilferding and Crispian; instead of socialising, the threat of Stinnes-ising state-owned enterprises; dismantling of the eight-hour-day with the aid of bourgeois state power; dismantling of social-welfare institutions; the schools handed over to the priests; the middle class proletarianised under conditions of great impoverishment; the economy more devastated with each passing day. All in all, the growing impoverishment of the working masses, which brings millions close to the point of death.

These facts, in my view, show more clearly than anything the decisive significance of the proletariat's grip on state power. But it is not this reason alone that has led Soviet Russia to the 'new policy' as an 'unavoidable evil', arising from specifically Russian conditions. Rather, I see the 'new policy' as the only path under these conditions that leads from capitalism to communism.

Soviet Russia's path to communism requires not merely holding firm to the 'new policy'. Beside this must stand the deepening of communist understanding, the consolidation of communism's idealistic core and of the powerful cultural values that communism embodies and brings to full development. For this reason, hand in hand with the new policy – and partly in order to lift the economy to a new, higher level – systematic and comprehensive work is

10. By 'coalition government', Zetkin is referring to the alliance of the SPD with bourgeois parties that ruled Germany February 1919–June 1920 and May 1921–November 1922.

required for popular education, especially of youth. This must be education and training for communism.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: it would be beyond my scope to try to portray even a hint of the colossal achievements of the Russian Revolution in this field of cultural work. The Russian Revolution is a vehicle of culture, a cultural power, as is found nowhere else today. Recall all the measures taken in the fields of popular education, training, and art. The Red Army soldiers, who have passed through the school of revolutionary 'militarism' in Soviet Russia, return to their distant villages as bearers of culture in the truest sense of the word. During the five years of its reign, the Russian Revolution has achieved wonders. Even by this criterion alone, it is already immortal. What could it have achieved without the proletarian government? But what is the precondition for the Soviet government's continued existence as a strong force to transform society economically and culturally to communism? I believe that an essential precondition for this is the intimate organic connection between the Communist Party, the leading revolutionary class party of the proletariat, and the broad proletarian masses outside this party. The Russian Revolution was born of this firm unity, which has enabled it to survive to this day. It must also secure the communist future. This organic unity of party and masses does not consist of the rigid application of a highly mechanical schema. It is not a power imposed on the proletariat from outside. No, it is a life that pours out of the masses themselves.

The nature and activity of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia is the most complete and most powerful expression of revolutionary understanding, will, self-activity, and self-motion of the proletarian masses. Life and activity flow in a rich alternating current from below out of the masses to the Party and through a thousand visible and invisible channels back from the Party to the masses. We hear the clamour about a crippling and deadly dictatorship in Soviet Russia of a party clique, a leadership clique. It is nurtured by formulae that are merely a poor imitation of anti-Bolshevik lies and slanders regarding conditions in the state where the proletariat has not only taken power but has preserved it and is no longer under bourgeois control. Against this outcry we must accurately evaluate the role of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia as a rich source of the most intensive creative life. And, for this, we need only to glance at the life and work of the proletarian and peasant masses. What a burning desire to learn, what enthusiasm for learning! What a moving and stirring among countless previously dormant forces!

Thanks to the Soviet government and the influence of the Communist Party, wonderful talents are blooming in the working masses. The most beautiful intellectual and moral values are raised from the depths into the light. Look

at the Soviet structures, look at the different social institutions. Everywhere, things are weaving and working, as in no other country of the world today. Millions are striving forward, upward. And, in their will and their action, flashes the brain and beats the heart of the Communist Party. Certainly we, coming from abroad, see much cruel suffering, many harsh abuses. Nonetheless, we are overwhelmed by the feeling that here is such new and strong life! The spirits are awakened. Here it is a pleasure to live, a pleasure to work, and a pleasure to die, when nothing more is left.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: I will conclude. When we survey what the Russian Revolution has achieved, a question will be posed by some elements who prize order – those who want to avoid revolution, those who hate and fear it, or who at least would like to have it for a very cheap price in the form of a beautiful revolution. They will ask whether to get these results it was necessary to go through the storms of revolution; could it not have been achieved on the path of democracy and reform? I say ‘no’! For, without the revolution, Soviet Russia would not have its creative and transformative political power, its soviet order, its workers’ state, its dictatorship of the proletariat. Without this decisive turning point, there would be no new, higher, and liberating historical life.

The Russian Revolution truly does not need to apologise for the supposed insignificance of its achievements. On the contrary, these achievements are astonishing, are amazingly great. The tasks before a proletarian revolution are much greater, more encompassing, and more profound than those of any bourgeois revolution. The bourgeois revolution creates only the state apparatus and the political power relationships, and what is tied in with that. It does not reach creatively into the social economy. And, nonetheless, after the great French Revolution for example, it took a hundred years before its finest achievement, the republic, was secured by the uprising of the Commune.

Proletarian revolution cannot be content to ‘hammer the rotten old hulk’ of the capitalist state ‘young again’ in Soviet form;¹¹ it must also transform the social economy, and with it the entire social superstructure. That is a mighty task that cannot be completed overnight and cannot be accomplished by great personalities. It must, rather, be the achievement of the entire proletarian class over decades. Marx wrote in his polemic against Max Stirner that we should not be discouraged if the proletarian revolution is extended over decades.¹²

11. The quoted words are from the poem ‘Von unten auf’ (Up from Below) by the German revolutionary poet Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810–76).

12. Marx’s criticism of the German anarchist philosopher Max Stirner (1806–56) is developed in *The German Ideology*. See Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 5, pp. 117–443.

For its task is to create not only new social conditions but new human beings, and to educate them to build the new social relationships.

We must take that to heart with regard to the first proletarian state in the world. Russia's revolution has achieved more than any other revolution before it. It has not been thrown back to its starting point but has rather advanced far beyond it. With an iron broom, it has swept the soil of Russia clear of all feudal institutions and relics. This it has done with a thoroughness not found in any bourgeois revolution in any country of Europe. Look at Britain! Despite a bourgeois revolution and long bourgeois class-rule, strong survivals of the feudal order exist there even today. Look at Germany, the country of the most recent bourgeois revolution. The achievement of that revolution, the republican form of state, is still so little secured that its defenders tremble at the prospect of another Kapp Putsch or Orgesch Putsch. In Soviet Russia, by contrast, it is inconceivable that the old tsarism would return again. Nor is it conceivable that a modernising capitalist state could arise here, as was dreamed by the reformists in alliance with petty-bourgeois democracy. The proletarian revolution has sown so many seeds of new and fruitful life, both institutionally and in the consciousness of millions, that this life can never be extinguished and destroyed.

Soviet Russia as a proletarian state stands firm. It is the first form of proletarian state in the epoch of transformation from capitalism to full communism. Certainly, it is not the only form, and this must be borne in mind, for the historically given conditions for establishment of a proletarian state are varied. But, still, it is the first and as yet the only state with a proletarian dictatorship. Given this fact, all that it does and achieves and also its mistakes and weaknesses are fruitful and meaningful for the world proletariat and the world-revolution. Russian's proletarians and Russia's Communist Party have paid the highest tuition fees to learn how a proletarian state, abandoned by the world proletariat, can gradually be transformed into a communist society. In this regard, Bolshevik policies are decisive and instructive. Many screw up their noses dismissively, regarding them as merely a zigzag course, a chain of errors and aberrations. But the opposite is true.

The policies of the Bolsheviks, the Russian Communists, display, as a whole, an almost magnificent unity, homogeneity, and consistency of line. These policies are the first attempt on a world-historical level to convert Marxism from theory to practice; it is the first world-historical attempt to 'make' world history in freedom. Certainly, this is being done in the framework of already existing conditions, but the main thing is surely to make history consciously, and no longer to accept history as the anarchic interplay of the blind and objective commanding forces of bourgeois society.

Comrade Lenin said yesterday that we all have very much to learn. You here in Soviet Russia and we who are abroad. He said that we abroad do not understand enough Russian to correctly comprehend the resolution of our Third World Congress, which was Russian in thought and feeling. In a certain sense, he is quite right. The proletariat abroad has not yet learned to read Russian, that is, to act in a Russian manner. Since the Communist International is to be the centre from which revolutionary struggle surges outwards over the world, it must also be the university for our mutual education and experience. Lenin calls on us to learn, to win time. To win time is to win everything! His conception here coincides with the profound words of Goethe regarding human development:

Inheritance splendid, here and now!

For time is my estate, and time my field to plough.¹³

Yes, comrades, time, but not experienced as a futile, idle waiting. No, time whose every minute is utilised in passionate activity. For you, here in Soviet Russia, it is to learn, to ply the trowel building the proletarian state. For us, abroad, to wield the sword in revolutionary struggle to conquer political power. Thus is closed the circle of world-revolution that will free humankind. Thus will new life bloom from the ruins of world war. For, in these times, the highest, mightiest, most fruitful and creative form of all historical evolution is revolution, the revolution as free expression of the will of the proletarian masses. (*Extended, loud applause*)

Chair: We now go to the next agenda point. The reporter on this second point is Comrade Béla Kun.

Béla Kun (Hungary): Comrades, the time has not yet come to write the history of the five years of Russian Revolution. And, if it had come, this is not the task of the Fourth World Congress, whose participants are here not to write but to make history. All the more is it our task, however, to carefully and critically collect all the experiences of the Russian Revolution and to critically evaluate all the collected experiences of our revolutionary struggles. All of us who fought through the Russian Revolution and led revolutionary struggles to the west of Russia have come up with generalised theories on the basis of Russian revolutionary experience – theories that are more or less immature and defective. Almost none of us has avoided these errors. I believe I can say that the sense of these experiences of the Russian Revolution is simply that we

13. Verse translation from Goethe, *Poems of the West and East*, Bern: Peter Lang, 1998. In German: 'Mein Erbe, wie herrlich, weit und breit/Die Zeit ist mein Acker, mein Besitz ist die Zeit', in *West-östlicher Divan*.

must utilise them to avoid further errors. We must avoid any utopianism. All collected experience must be critically applied to West European conditions. On the basis of the experiences of the Russian Revolution, we must attempt to initiate in the West the same political realism that has always been and still is the policy of the Communist Party of Russia.

After the reports of Comrade Lenin and Comrade Clara Zetkin, it is now my task to emphasise the subjective factor of proletarian revolution and portray, if only in summary form, the role of the Communist Party of Russia in the proletarian revolution. You will permit me, in this regard, to draw a parallel between the great Russian Revolution and revolution in Hungary, a bough broken off so prematurely.

Looking back on the history of these five years that now lie behind us, we are confronted by a miracle. Soviet-power exists. It exists despite the offensive of the German Empire, of blessed memory, despite the united offensive of the capitalists of all countries, and despite all the subversive activities of Russian and international Menshevism. It exists and lights the way for the international proletariat. The existence of the Russian Revolution and of the Russian Soviet government is based on factors whose absence in Hungary necessarily led to the collapse of the Hungarian proletarian dictatorship.

I will not go into the international and internal political elements that favoured the Soviet government in Russia while fatally undermining its Hungarian equivalent. I will say only that the Hungarian proletarian revolution not only had no plan for retreat, of the type cited by Comrade Lenin yesterday, but also no space into which to retreat. But, with regard to the Russian Revolution, I want above all to note the circumstance that demolished every prophesy for Soviet Russia, namely the existence of a centralised, disciplined workers' party, prepared for limitless sacrifice, in the form of the Communist Party of Russia. The absence in Hungary of such a party, or even something approaching such a party, in the given unfavourable international and internal political situation, led to the collapse of the proletarian revolution, despite the overall preparedness for self-sacrifice of the Hungarian proletariat and poor peasantry.

This collapse was caused, in addition to military defeats on the front lines, by a wavering at that time in the Hungarian working class, inspired by the Social Democracy. The Russian proletariat and its glorious army also suffered a whole number of defeats on various fronts, both then and later. There were moments in Russia of extreme danger, where considerable parts of the Russian working class wavered. At these moments, the mood of a part of the working class was, if not openly, then passively counter-revolutionary. There were times when the state of the wavering, hungry and exhausted working

class could have justified a superficial observer in prophesying a Thermidor in Soviet Russia.¹⁴ I think of the time of the Kronstadt uprising.¹⁵ But the effects of this wavering by a part of the working class were stopped short.

We, in Hungary, did not have a mature Communist party, and I am confident in saying that we could not have had one at that time. We had no mature Communist Party that, at the most critical moment of working-class wavering, could have held the tiller of state power with a firm hand, despite the passivity or even the momentarily oppositional will of the working class. The Communist Party had led the struggle of the Hungarian proletariat through to the conquest of state power with a clear class consciousness, firm belief, and determination, and its influence had prevailed among the broad masses of the proletariat. But, as a result of the fusion with Social Democracy, this active Communist minority was no longer capable of leading the struggle and, at the critical moment, doing what was necessary.¹⁶ In Russia, by contrast, a Communist party existed and exists today, trained in decades of struggle. At the critical moments of the Russian Revolution, its role was just as great as was its influence on the broad masses as a whole.

Moreover, comrades, this party, whose class character was and is so sharply defined, grew during the five years of revolution into a genuine party of the Russian people. German Social Democracy, at its Görlitz convention, definitively discarded its disguise as a class organisation and declared itself to be not a class party but a 'people's party'.¹⁷ As one of the largest mass parties of the world, it thus became a genuine party of the petty bourgeoisie and a servant of the German big bourgeoisie. The Russian Communist Party, on the other hand, has exerted every effort during the entire time of the Russian dictatorship to protect its character as a class party. Yet, since it gained state power, it has genuinely become a party of all layers of working people among the Russian people. This is not understood in the ranks of Social Democracy, and there are even Communists who have doubts about this fact. But I will offer an example showing that the Communist Party of Russia has genuinely

14. The counter-revolutionary coup that overturned the Jacobin leadership of Maximilien Robespierre took place on 27 July 1794, the ninth day of Thermidor in the French revolutionary calendar. The coup marked the turning of the tide against the French Revolution.

15. Soviet soldiers and sailors in the Kronstadt fortress, on an island close to Petrograd, mutinied on 2 March 1921, at a moment of grave economic crisis and widespread discontent in Soviet Russia. The revolt was forcibly suppressed on 18 March.

16. The establishment of the Hungarian soviet republic in 1919 was accompanied by a fusion of the Communist and Social-Democratic parties. As a result, the Communist movement was eclipsed as an independent force.

17. The SPD's convention of 18–24 September 1921, held in Görlitz, adopted a new reformist programme, replacing the Erfurt Programme of 1891.

become a party of the Russian people, and that every Communist can be said to be a representative of the working layers of the Russian people.

Last year, there was a cleansing of the Party in Russia, with the goal of freeing it from all elements that we can call, say, undesirable. This cleansing was carried out in open meetings of the Party's cells, in the presence of the entire non-party masses of the enterprise. Every worker and peasant outside the Party had the opportunity to raise objections to the continued membership of certain Communists, and the workers and peasants outside the Party made demonstrative use of this right. To be a Communist in Russia – let me stress this again – means to be a people's representative. Thus, the Communist Party of Russia has genuinely become a party of the working people, while maintaining and emphatically projecting its class character during five years of revolution.

What is the cause of this astonishing development? It is found, of course, in the revolutionary policies and the wonderfully flexible tactics of the Communist Party of Russia. However, we must ask how the Party was capable of such policies and such influence over the working class. How is it possible that the Russian Party won the majority of the working class not only once, before the October Revolution, but – I might say – fifteen times, a hundred times daily during the Revolution? The secret lies first of all in its composition. In no other party, whether bourgeois or proletarian, has there existed such a carefully chosen, consolidated, and ideologically unified nucleus – Comrade Bukharin called it a general staff – as in the Russian Party.

This party, this general staff, this nucleus, this fundamental group was built up through long years of struggle. During these struggles, all the forces suspected of any form of opportunism were removed from the Party not only mechanically but also organisationally. All forces that did not fit into this narrow framework were held outside the lines formed up for battle. During its struggles, the Communist Party of Russia not only developed its nucleus but drew in around it a body of cadres encompassing all the forces suitable for the leadership of the masses – not sympathisers or intellectuals who refuse to submit to party discipline, but genuine worker leaders, competent to lead the worker masses, the majority of the working class.

During the five years of the Russian Revolution, one of its characteristic features has been the fact that almost all forces in the Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary Parties that shared something in common with the workers' movement and working class have been drawn into the Communist Party of Russia. Nothing was left of the Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary Parties but a few literary figures who never had anything in common with the workers' movement. These cadres have now, unfortunately, been quite thinned

out, but this is the starting point to draw together new cadres, through whom the [Communist] Party's influence is felt among the working-class masses.

This influence on the broad worker masses is expressed, of course, now that the Communist Party has the rudder of state power in its hands, not only through agitation and propaganda, but also through the institutions of government in daily administration – institutions that previously enabled the Social-Revolutionary Party to secure influence on the masses. Earlier, at any spot where there were workers and a possibility of speaking to workers, one would find a Social Revolutionary. Today, however, at almost every point where workers go and with which workers have an association, one finds a Bolshevik, a Communist. The Soviet institutions and administration may make many errors, as Comrade Lenin stressed yesterday, but still, through the Communist Party, they have become the expression of proletarian democracy. We can say that it is through the Communist Party that the Soviet bodies have become instruments of proletarian democracy, and not the other way around. There is a parallel here with the history of the Hungarian soviets.

In Hungary, we had soviets – I could say that they were soviets as understood by Gorter or, on the other hand, the German USPD – which did not have a Communist leadership. These bodies, elected on the broad foundation of proletarian democracy, did not become genuine instruments of the working masses. They did not express the public opinion of the working masses. And, in Russia, comrades, the Mensheviks demanded free elections of the soviets; everyone from Martov to Milyukov joined in a united front for free elections in the soviets and against the Bolshevik dictatorship.¹⁸ Yet, here, the soviet bodies are instruments of proletarian democracy to a far greater extent than were the freely elected soviets in Hungary, which lacked a firm Communist leadership.

In Hungary, the parties provided no unified leadership in the soviets and trade unions. The trade unions laid claim to the leadership, because they were much more proletarian in character than the soviets, which contained

18. After the establishment of the Soviet government in 1917, the Mensheviks, who opposed soviet-rule, continued to run for elections to the soviets, and sometimes won local majorities. However, as a party opposed to soviet-rule in conditions of civil war, the Mensheviks were excluded from the soviets for several months in 1918. Even when readmitted, their political activity faced severe restrictions, and many Mensheviks were jailed. The Soviet government sometimes disbanded soviets in which a majority of delegates were opposed to soviet-power. Such measures were heightened in the social crisis of 1921. During this period, the Mensheviks called for 'free elections and re-elections of soviets with full freedom of oral and printed agitation for all parties'. In the summer of 1922, however, the Menshevik Central Committee decided to boycott elections to the soviets. See Haimson 1974, pp. 194, 263, and *passim*; Carr 1966, 1, pp. 170–84.

many forces beyond those that were purely proletarian. There was a struggle between soviets and trade unions, and the trade unions could, with justification, claim that they expressed the public opinion and class character of the proletariat to a much greater degree than the soviets. During these struggles, there emerged what I think you could call a reformist, syndicalist struggle of the Social-Democratic trade-union leaders against the soviet bodies. The workers leaned to the trade unions, where at least a leadership was present, in the form of the reformist worker leaders, rather than the soviets, where there was no Communist leadership.

In Russia, the soviets, aided by the Communist Party, became a people's institution, a genuine expression of proletarian democracy. In Hungary, this did not happen precisely because of the lack of a Communist leadership. Comrades, how is it possible in such a large country to lead so many state bodies, so many workers' organisations in unified fashion? How is it possible in a country, whose various segments are much larger than Britain, France, and Germany taken together, for the Party's leadership to be effective even in small localities?

How is centralisation at all possible in a country like Russia? Comrades, I would like to respond to this question with a parallel. In Germany, the Social Democrats, once arrived in power, almost dissolved as a party. The government bodies influenced the Social-Democratic Party much more than the Party influenced government. The decisive factor in the Social-Democratic Party, once ensconced in the government, is the Social-Democratic state bureaucracy that took shape out of the party bureaucracy. In Russia, it was quite different. Here, the Party always took care that its leading forces in the soviet and state bodies exerted influence, rather than being subject to it. Something additional was required to make this possible, and judging from what I heard in a speech the day before yesterday, this something is incomprehensible to many of those who lack a close knowledge of the Communist Party of Russia.

The day before yesterday, a comrade stated that Moscow is no Prussian drill sergeant and we are not recruits.¹⁹ To that I would answer, Moscow is truly not a Prussian drill sergeant but, rather, represents a worthy leadership of the world-revolution. But those who do not understand the significance of centralised discipline in the Russian Revolution are poor recruits for communism, poor recruits for the Communist party. For the Communist party, assuming leadership of the entire state apparatus in a country as large as Russia is a task of almost boundless difficulty. The history of these five years shows that the Party's forces had to be reorganised at least ten or fifteen times in order to carry out the tasks set for the Revolution by the Party. A weapon like the New

19. See speech by Bedacht (Marshall), p. 342.

Economic Policy would have been completely impossible without the iron discipline of the Communist Party. Only a full redeployment of all the Party's forces made it possible for this New Economic Policy to be carried through without severe disruption of the Party.

How did this discipline come to be? How should it be understood? Of course, it is often said that the old Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Comrade Lenin were a conspiratorial organisation.²⁰ Unfortunately, I did not participate in this conspiracy. I do not know what kind of conspirators they were. But I know one thing from my own experience, and that is that these conspirators became the best of mass leaders. How was this possible? Because it was in this 'conspiratorial' period of the Russian Revolution that discipline was created and the members of the Party were educated in its spirit.

This discipline is exerted, of course, not by the masses but by the leaders, and the members must have firm confidence in their leadership. And this leadership, this nucleus of the Russian Communist Party is a genuinely authoritative body of the entire Communist Party membership. It is quite possible – and this was indeed the case after introduction of the NEP [New Economic Policy] – that many members of the Communist Party of Russia did not understand what that means. Even now, there are regions where the masses do not yet understand how we will pass through the NEP to socialism and what this NEP actually means. But the masses have such trust in their leadership that even when they do not immediately understand a political measure, even when that understanding comes only through an extended process, they follow this leadership in the certainty that it will make clear to them what they do not yet understand.

Here, I must quote something from the Austrian poet Anzengruber, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, but they should be deserving.'²¹ The leaders of the Russian Revolution were deserving, and that is why this trust of the Communist Party and the masses toward these leaders arose. The iron discipline of the Russian Communist Party was, on the other hand, the best means to realise its unprecedentedly flexible tactical policy. I will not discuss why this policy is flexible – the reasons for this flexibility are clear to all. There is no country in the world where Marxism took shape in flesh and blood as it has in the Communist Party of Russia. But the best Marxist analysis will be no more than a historical document unless there are organisations and bodies that follow this flexible policy with the required freedom of manoeuvre. Without

20. Kun is using 'conspiratorial' in the sense of the Russian word *konspiratsiia*, which referred to the practices and techniques of political functioning under the heel of tsarist repression.

21. A paraphrase of a passage in *Das vierte Gebot*, a play by Ludwig Anzengruber (1839–89).

firm discipline and trained cadres disciplined in struggle, and without the capacity to manoeuvre developed in such struggles, the execution and fulfilment of this flexible policy would not have been possible.

Today, in the sixth year of the Revolution, the Russian Communist Party faces what I believe is the greatest problem it ever had to resolve during the entire revolution. This is the problem of carrying out the New Economic Policy under the leadership of a political party, a working-class party, in such a way as to free its implementation from petty-bourgeois instincts, and to protect the Party from the results of petty-bourgeois instincts. The Communist Party has stood the test, thanks to its discipline and its capacity for manoeuvre.

And today, in the Revolution's sixth year, one of the most important lessons given by the Russian Communist Party during the Revolution concerns centralisation and centralised discipline. In my opinion, one of the Comintern's most opportune resolutions is the theses of the Second Congress on the role of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution.²² These very aptly phrased theses are only a faded reflection of the role that the Communist Party of Russia played in the Russian Revolution. This role, indeed the entire activity of this party, should be studied thoroughly and painstakingly by the leaders and organisers of the Western parties, in order to apply these experiences to Western conditions and to prepare the Western parties to conquer and maintain power. From the point of view of international revolution, utilising these experiences is by no means of secondary importance.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: I am certainly far removed from any voluntaristic philosophy, but I believe that looking into the future and examining the perspectives for proletarian revolution, the subjective element of the Communist party is one of the most important factors. Unfortunately, we cannot determine the objective factors; the best we can do is influence them through the Communist party. But I believe I can say that, in 1919, when we went through the demobilisation crisis,²³ if we had possessed something even remotely resembling a Communist party of this type, we would have been in a position not only to win but also to hold power.

Even now, in this more or less slack period of world-revolution, the importance of the subjective factor, the Communist party, remains intact. In examining the perspectives for world-revolution, we face the question how we can create a Communist party that is capable, perhaps with other means and

22. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 190–200.

23. The 'demobilisation crisis' arose in Hungary after the end of the War, when soldiers released from the army faced an economy in chaos and rising unemployment. Government emergency measures to meet their needs were hindered by conditions of economic breakdown.

methods, of winning a majority of the proletariat again and again, both before and after the revolution.

Is it possible to build such Communist parties? Comrades, I believe this possibility exists. Recently, I have been working deep within the revolutionary Russian Communist Party, and I can say that the mass, the membership of the Russian Party does not stand on a higher level than the German proletarians. I could even say the mass of the German proletariat stands on a much higher cultural level than that of the Russian Communist Party. Of course, the Russian proletariat has behind it five long years of experience, which enables them to adjust much more readily to the flexible policies of the Party.

But it is possible to achieve this in every party. In my view, the main problem in building the subjective factor of world-revolution is developing the revolution's nucleus and fundamental cadres. I believe I can say, comrades, that we are succeeding in developing this nucleus, these cadres, and this vanguard. This enables us to lead the Western proletarian masses with a sure touch to the conquest of power, and with their help hold power, as the Russian Communist Party has done. That is why, in terms of world-revolution, this is one of the most important of our tasks, and why the teachings coming to us by the Russian Communist Party on this point are among the most important lessons of the five years of Russian Revolution. (*Loud applause*)

Adjournment: 3:00 p.m.

Session 10 – Tuesday, 14 November 1922

Five Years of the Russian Revolution and Perspectives for the World-Revolution (Concluded)

Speaker: Trotsky

Convened: 6:15 p.m.

Chairperson: Neurath

Trotsky: (*The delegates rise and greet Comrade Trotsky with loud applause*)¹

Comrades, sisters and brothers: the great and central political goal of every revolutionary party is to conquer political power. In the Second International, this goal was, to use philosophical language, a regulative idea, that is, a rather flimsy thing that has little relationship to practice. Only in the last few years have we begun to learn, on an international scale, to make the conquest of political power a practical goal. And the degree to which this goal is no mere philosophical notion but a practical matter is shown by the fact that we, in Russia, have a definite date, 7 November 1917, on which the Communist Party, at the head of the working class, conquered political power in the state.

To tell the story of how power was won would take hours and hours, and that is certainly not my intention. But this story shows that we are dealing here not with events taking place automatically, by objective logic, but with entirely practical political efforts and measures.

1. Following the Congress, Trotsky published an edited version of this report, two-thirds longer than the version in the congress proceedings. The edited text is available in Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 185–216.

In the moment of conquest of political power, our political tactics were heightened to revolutionary strategy in the most concrete sense of the word. On 7 November, this revolutionary strategy, which represented, as it were, the power of all our party's previous politics, enabled it to conquer state power. That did not mean – as this became fully clear only later – that the Civil War was at an end. On the contrary, only after the conquest of political power did our civil war begin on a broad scale. That fact is not merely of historical interest, for it is also a source of many important lessons for the West European and international parties.

Why did it happen that our civil war began in full force only after 7 November, and that we subsequently had to wage civil war in the north, south, east, and west for almost five years without interruption? That was a result of the fact that we conquered power with such ease. It has often been said that we took our possessing classes unawares. In a certain sense, that is quite right. Politically, the country had just emerged at last from tsarist barbarism. The peasantry had almost no political experience and the petty bourgeoisie had only a bit. The middle bourgeoisie had gained more experience through the *dumas* [representative assemblies]; the aristocracy was organised to some extent through the *zemstvos* [local councils]. Thus, the great reserves of counter-revolution – the rich peasants, at certain moments also the middle peasants, the middle bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, and the petty bourgeoisie as a whole – these reserves were so to speak almost intact, hardly even touched. Only when the bourgeoisie began to understand what it had lost by losing political power did it begin to strive with all its force. And here, of course, it was obliged to turn first of all to the aristocracy, the noble officers, and so on, in order to set the potential counter-revolutionary reserves in motion. Thus the protracted civil war was history's revenge for the ease with which power fell into our hands.

However, all's well that ends well! In the course of these five years, we did maintain power. The workers' movement of the entire world can now conclude with some certainty that things will be much harder for your Communist parties before the conquest of power and much easier afterwards. In Germany, everything that can be mobilised against the working class will be thrown into action, not to mention Italy, where we have already today the accomplished counter-revolution, even before we have seen even a temporarily successful revolution. Thanks to the fiasco of the 1920 revolution, in which only a revolutionary party was missing, Mussolini and his Fascists have now been able to seize power, and the bourgeoisie has handed over this power to it. Mussolini represents the organisation and consolidation of all the forces opposed to the revolution, plus of many forces that remain to be won to the

revolution. But I will not go further into this topic, which will be dealt with in another presentation.

In France, Britain, and elsewhere, we see that the bourgeoisie, warned by the Russian example and armed with the entire historical experience of the democratic-capitalist countries, organises and mobilises everything that can be set in motion. Clearly, all these forces already bar the way to the proletariat. In order to take power, the proletariat must take revolutionary measures to neutralise, paralyse, combat, and defeat all these forces. However, once it has taken hold of power, the counter-revolution will have almost no new reserves at its disposal. After the conquest of power in Western Europe and the rest of the world, the proletariat will have much more elbow room for its creative work than we had in Russia.

Our civil war in Russia was not only a military process – of course, with due respect to the esteemed pacifists, it was military, but *more than just military* – fundamentally it was a political process. It was a struggle for the political reserves, above all the peasantry. Through its ruthless policies in the Civil War, the proletariat demonstrated to the peasantry that it had to choose between the aristocracy and the proletariat. Thanks to this consistent and ruthless revolutionary strategy, the proletariat won the match.

After vacillating for a long time between the bourgeoisie, democracy, and the proletariat,² the peasantry ultimately decided for the proletariat – at the decisive moment, when there was really no third way. This support was expressed not with democratic ballots, but with weapons.

The democratic parties always aided and abetted feudal counter-revolution. I believe it will not be much different in Western Europe, including with regard to the socialist parties. You know, comrades, that, a few days ago, our Red Army occupied Vladivostok. That closes the long chain of all the fronts of the Civil War. In this connection, Milyukov, the well-known leader of the liberal party, writes a few lines in his Paris paper on 7 September that I would like to call classic. ‘This sad history’ – it was always a sad history (*Laughter*) – ‘began with the announcement of the general unanimity of anti-Bolshevik forces. Merkulov (the head of the counter-revolutionary forces in the East) acknowledged that the non-socialists (that is, the rightist forces) owed their victory in large measure to the democratic forces.’ But Milyukov says that Merkulov used the support of democratic forces only as a tool to oust the

2. The term ‘democracy’ here refers to radical or socialist parties supporting the Russian Provisional Government, above all the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries.

Bolsheviks from power: 'At that point, power was seized by forces that actually viewed the democrats as Bolsheviks in disguise.'³

This passage could seem banal, since we're already quite familiar with this kind of thing. But you must keep in mind that this story keeps getting repeated. That is what happened with Denikin, then Yudenich, then with the British and French occupation, then with Petlyura in the Ukraine. On all our borders, the same course of events was repeated with wearisome monotony: the peasantry was driven by Social Democracy to reaction, which betrayed and mistreated them. Then came the moment of remorse, and the Bolsheviks' victory followed. And, then, the same story would begin again in some other spot in the arena of civil war. And although this mechanism is quite simple and universally understood, we can nonetheless say today that, in periods when civil war reaches a fierce crisis, socialist forces in every country go through this same sequence.

We have committed many errors. Comrade Lenin spoke to that yesterday. Nonetheless, I believe that, on the whole, in the Civil War, we acted well, that is, consistently and ruthlessly. And I think a book on our revolutionary policies during these years, dealing with the Civil War from the point of view of the international proletariat, would be rather instructive.

After the conquest of political power, the task is not merely to defend it with the methods of civil war, but to construct the state and – what is more challenging – the 'new economy'. I can leave aside many of the remarks I wanted to make because we have heard the truly splendid report of Comrade Zetkin yesterday evening and today. I will limit myself to the most essential supplementary comments.

After political power has been secured – the initial precondition – construction of the socialist economy depends on a number of factors: the level of development of productive forces, the general cultural level of the working class, and the national and international political situation.

I have cited these three factors in order of importance. But the Soviet government as a subjective force in history encountered these factors in reverse order: first the political situation, then the cultural level of the proletariat, and only then, in third place, the level of development of the productive forces. That is quite clear. We had to carry out our economic activity in the framework and at a tempo dictated above all by the Civil War. Economic effectiveness did not always run on a parallel course with political necessity. If one is to have any understanding at all of the history of our so-called zigzag course, the key point to grasp is that what was politically necessary and unavoidable did not always run parallel to what was economically expedient.

3. *Poslednyye novosti* (Paris), 7 September 1922.

We learned in the primary school of Marxism that it is not possible to get from capitalist to socialist society in a single leap. None of us interpreted Engels's famous 'leap from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom' in this mechanical sense.⁴ None of us believed that society can be transformed overnight. Engels was referring to an entire epoch that represents a genuine 'leap' from a historical point of view.

It is true that we did proceed to some degree through leaps with nationalisation and with the attempt at socialisation. As has already been said, we had to do this under the pressure of civil war, because, as said, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie had not had the occasion, before we won political power, to become convinced that we, the working class, represented an irrevocable historical power under whose yoke they had to bow. They had not had any opportunity before 7 November to learn this important lesson. We had to teach them that, after the conquest of power. How did this find expression? Because, immediately after the conquest of power, every factory, every branch of a bank, every consulting room of a lawyer or doctor (that is, of course, those who had a private practice, namely the richer ones) was converted into a stronghold of counter-revolution.

In order to permit the owners of small and middle-sized factories to keep their factories for a period of time after the conquest of political power, it was necessary to reach an agreement with them and to demand that they submit to the laws of the new government. That was absolutely excluded. None of these people wanted to take us seriously. That was the bad news: none of them took us seriously. We faced the rather difficult task of teaching them that they needed to take us seriously, and there was no way to do that other than to confiscate the foundation of their power and take it into the hands of the state. How else could it be done? Some of them were driving the workers from the factories, shutting down their enterprises, converting their homes into refuges for counter-revolutionaries, and so on.

It is quite natural that, in this case, the requirements of civil war come before considerations of economic expediency. So the bourgeoisie was not expropriated gradually, in systematic fashion, at a pace corresponding to our capacity to organise and make good use of their property. Rather, it was done in a way that would enable us to strike down the enemy that then threatened to kill us immediately. That is a very important point. Obviously, to the degree and to the extent that West European parties have an easier time of it after the conquest of power, they will be able to undertake expropriation in a manner that is much more systematic and cautious. Expropriation will take place to the extent that the expropriated property can be utilised economically and organisationally.

4. From Engels's *Anti-Dühring*; see Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 25, p. 270.

But, of course, political and military considerations will always have priority over economic rationality. Now let us return to our topic.

After we had expropriated far more than we were capable of utilising, after all the institutions of capitalist society had been destroyed as so many hostile fortresses, we faced the necessity of somehow organising this large and rather chaotic inheritance. The Civil War still raged, and organisation of the economy was subject to the demands of the military-economic requirements of civil war. That is how war communism was born. It meant, first of all, the need to provide bread for the state and the army by the application of all available means, above all that of armed force. In addition, it meant that what was needed for the army and Civil War had somehow to be pressed and pulled out of this disorganised industrial base, sabotaged as it was by the bourgeoisie and its technical lackeys. The entire apparatus that had led this industry then lay in ruins. We had no alternative but to try to replace this apparatus with the centralised machinery of the state. It was actually nothing more than a replacement-apparatus created for the needs of war.

You will ask if we had any hopes of going over from this stage, without major retreats, by a more or less direct route to communism. We must admit that we did actually hope, at that time, for a more rapid pace of revolutionary development in Western Europe. Very true! And, even now, we can say with full certainty that, if the proletariat in Germany, France, and Europe as a whole had taken power in 1919, the entire course of events in Russia would have taken an entirely different form.

In 1883, Marx wrote to a theoretician of the Russian populists, the *Narodniks*, that if the proletariat achieved power in Europe before the complete disappearance from history of the Russian *obshchina*, the Russian peasant commune, and common village-ownership of land, this peasant commune in Russia could become the starting point for communist development.⁵ And he was quite correct. We are all the more justified in assuming that, if the proletariat of Europe had won power in 1919, it would have taken in tow our backward country, with its ersatz organisations and ersatz economic apparatus, and given us technical and organisational help. In this way, we would have been able to advance gradually and without major retreats, making many corrections to our primitive war communism and yet continuing to progress, to pass through the evolution to communism.

That was our hope. And it was no crime, because, of course, no one could say in advance whether this evolution would take place at a quick pace or a

5. For Marx's letter to Vera Zasulich, written in 1881 (not 1883), see Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 46, pp. 71–2. For drafts of Marx's letter and related documents, see Shanin 1983. See also Zetkin's comments, p. 327.

slower one. In 1919, even the Two-and-a-Half International recognised the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was really not so utopian, viewed not only from the standpoint of the direction of evolution but also in terms of tempo.

Let us forget, for the moment, that we took leaps forward and then backward. Let us give an international congress like this one an accounting of what took place, in broad strokes. In March 1917, tsarism was overthrown. In October 1917, the proletariat took power. It began to defend its power and simultaneously to organise its state and economy. In the course of the next five years, it converted the land, the most important industrial enterprises, all the railways, and the most significant water transport companies to state property. It left in the hands of the bourgeoisie, as lessees, only quite insignificant undertakings, of which I will have more to say. The workers' state controls trade and has decisive weight in the markets. The state receives from peasants, who are tilling state owned land, a tax in kind. This it utilises in order to develop industry, through state expenditure, for the state's purposes. Anyone will say that yes, for a rather backward country, the progress toward socialism is very significant. However, there's a catch here: this progress was not achieved through a general evolution proceeding in a consistent direction, but, rather, through leaps and zigzags. And, here, our enemies say that this represents the beginning of capitulation. And that is the crucial point.

Why did we have to begin a retreat? This question needs careful examination. The most important task in organising the economy is to allocate productive resources and labour-power among the different branches of the national economy, above all agriculture and industry. To allocate and organise these forces in socialist fashion requires methods that the victorious proletariat – even in the most developed countries – will need years and perhaps decades to develop. Our substitutes were adequate only for the purposes of the war economy. Why? It's obvious.

Consider the entire situation. Under capitalism, productive forces are allocated according to the laws of the free market, competition, supply and demand. During periods of crisis and prosperity, a certain equilibrium is established for a moment and then again destroyed. So it was until 1914. Then came the War. In economic terms, it signified a huge deformation and disorganisation of the economy. Then came the two revolutions, which also terribly damaged the economy in terms of the extent of its productive apparatus. We stood on the edge of chaos, amid the dying echoes of capitalist 'harmony'. We always called it anarchy, and, yet, it did represent a certain 'harmony', in the sense that it produced a certain socially necessary relationship among the different branches of production. And, so, we had before us these vestiges, distorted by the deformations induced by war and sabotage by technical

personnel, while we simultaneously faced the question of feeding the army and finding a loaf of bread for the workers.

Our methods of primitive centralism were adequate to these last two needs. But it is utterly excluded to suddenly draw up *a priori* statistics, simply crossing out capitalist organisational methods and then bringing socialism into being on the basis of a general calculation of the needs, labour resources, and material factors of the economy. That is excluded.

After first, of course, winning political power, we take over the capitalists' methods and material apparatus of production, the organisation of the economy, the allocation of production and productive forces. On the basis of experience, we make more and more corrections, which are induced by two considerations: firstly, the available material possibilities, and, secondly, the changes in needs resulting from the revolution. Through these correctives, we move closer and closer to conditions in which we can lead the economy through a genuinely centralised economic plan – one based on all the preceding experience and accumulated wealth and sufficiently flexible to develop the necessary capacity to adjust to local and even individual needs.

Between capitalist anarchy and such conditions, however, lies the use of capitalist means to develop a socialist economy still only coming into being. And that is our situation. I am not fond of using the term 'state capitalism'. Lenin himself has said that this term should be used only with certain qualifications and reservations, for there is certainly a huge difference between what we often term 'state capitalism' and the genuine article. The reformists always said that socialism would come through a process of progressive nationalisation. In France, the programme of Jaurès was 'the progressive socialisation of the democratic republic'. We always countered that, in the best of cases, such a process would lead to state capitalism, for as long as the bourgeoisie rules, state capitalism, as its collective instrument, would still serve to oppress and exploit the working class.

Now we have a different situation in Russia – one in which the workers' state has taken control of industry and is leading it through the methods of the capitalist market and capitalist calculation. We once had a period in Russian history during the time of serfdom – I believe there are parallels in the history of other countries and peoples – when the Russian bourgeoisie had factories, then called manorial factories, which utilised peasants who were serfs. Thus was modern production developed in the form of old legal relationships. But this took place under the rule of tsarism and the aristocracy. Now, we are going through a great historical experiment dictated by the historical necessity that a new class must build a new economy, utilising old methods that cannot be replaced because no new ones are available. New methods can only evolve out of the old ones.

We began this turn to a new policy with the peasantry. Lenin identified and explained the political causes of this turn. But this is only one part of the overall task of allocating productive resources and forces of labour in the framework of a national economy. It was the situation of the peasantry that was most challenging, because of their economic fragmentation and cultural backwardness. So we decided to initiate the New Economic Policy (NEP) precisely in this broad terrain.

Let me give you an example to show that the NEP is not only a concession to the peasantry but also a necessary step in the socialist development of production. It concerns the railroads. Railroads, railway transport, and the railway network form the one undertaking that was already largely nationalised under capitalism and where the technology itself had dictated a certain degree of standardisation and centralisation. We took over half of it from the state and the other, smaller half from the private companies. We now possess the entire railway network. Truly socialist management, of course, has to view this as an entirety – not from the point of view of property in this or another railway line, but from that of transport needs of the country as a whole. For there are locomotives of various types, built at various times by various companies in various factories. Various railway shops simultaneously refit and repair different kinds of locomotives. The task is to categorise the locomotives by model, to allocate the railways to different railway shops. Standardisation, that is technically unifying the locomotives and their replacement parts, must be promoted and carried through ruthlessly. For capitalist society wastes an enormous amount of labour-power through the diversity and kaleidoscopic nature of its material productive apparatus. It is thus necessary to begin with the standardisation of transport, of the railway system, because this is where it can most readily be done.

Standardisation, it has rightly been said, is socialism in technology. It is just as important to standardise the economy as to electrify it. Technology without standardisation will not achieve great triumphs. We set about this but immediately ran into great obstacles. The fact that a railway line belongs to a given company brings with it the settlement of its accounts with the economy as a whole through the market. Its balance sheet was always front and centre. This fact was economically essential, although, in terms of technology, as we have seen, it was very harmful. Economically, it was under the given conditions unavoidable, because whether a railway line should be maintained or abandoned depends entirely on the degree to which it is economically essential. Whether something should be transported by a given line – that can be regulated through either the laws of the market or the general statistical socialist accounting system of society. And we do not have these latter methods. Such sophisticated methods of socialist accounting have yet to be developed.

The old methods were lost through war and revolution. They were thrust aside, while new methods were not yet available. Yes, it was possible to carry through the standardisation, the technical-socialist reconstruction of the railway network, but, in the process, contact was lost between the individual railway lines and the society as a whole. The allocation of railway wagons and labour-power can be temporarily determined through capitalist calculation. By enforcing payment for every trip, every shipment of goods, and by drawing up balance sheets, we gain the ability to assess each separate railway line and the transportation system as whole and, at a later time, direct it all in centralised fashion. This requires a step backwards, allowing individual railway lines, or groups of lines, to exist as more-or-less independent entities. That shows that the abstract technological goals and requirements, however justified they may be, and formal socialist goals cannot in themselves get us around certain economic stages in the evolution from capitalism to socialism.

All this applies even more to industrial enterprises. For example, we have machine factories in the Urals, the south, and Bryansk province, among which we must allocate coal, raw materials, and other supplies on the basis of entries in account books of the central apparatus in Moscow. In the process, we completely lost a feel for reality. We did not know whether a factory was working well or badly, whether it was utilising coal properly or not. We had a rather dubious central statistical office and no economic, commercial calculation for each enterprise as such – the enterprise that must function somewhat as a unit of the socialist organism and demonstrate its usefulness to the workers' state, rather than functioning on its own responsibility. This is made possible through the New Economic Policy, which is simply the more gradual construction of a socialist economy through the workers' state, with the aid of the methods of calculation, accounting, and evaluation of the usefulness of an enterprise created during the development of capitalism. This is the path by which we arrived at the recreation of the market.

But the market needs a universal equivalent. And our equivalent is in a sorry condition. Comrade Lenin has already spoken extensively of the need to achieve the stability of the rouble, and that our efforts in this direction have not gone entirely without success. Our industry is now constantly complaining about the lack of working capital, and in these complaints we often hear notes of capitalist fetishism, even without capitalism. And, truly, we do not have capitalism, for when we sometimes call our conditions 'state capitalism', that is only, as I have said, in a very conventional sense, and I prefer to avoid the term. But old-time fetishism is still with us, lodged in the brains of many comrades. In an instant, we called this devil into being.

There are complaints that our commissariat of finance is not providing enough money. 'If we only had a couple more miserable roubles, we could

have produced so much more. In exchange for these wretched roubles, you would right away have received textiles, shoes, or other necessities.' So we are suffering from a crisis of working capital. What does that mean? Since we are now carrying out the allocation of productive forces using capitalist methods, all our difficulties, of course, take on an appearance to which we are very accustomed from capitalist society. For example, metalworking enterprises lack sufficient working capital. What does that tell us? It means, above all, that we are very poor and must begin to revive industry, employing our technical and financial resources where it is most urgent. But it is most urgent where consumption takes place – among the workers, peasants, and Red soldiers. Obviously, financial resources must migrate there initially. Only when the finished-goods industry has developed will there be a possibility for heavy industry to evolve in a healthy manner. The finished-goods industry now works for the market, that is, in an arena of competition between various state and private enterprises. Only in this way will we become accustomed to working well. Neither moral education and sermons nor a centralised economy will achieve this entirely. Rather, it's necessary that each plant manager be subject to control not only by the state, from above, but also from below, by consumers, who determine whether his products are purchased and paid for – that is, whether they are good. That provides the best control over the conduct of the enterprise and its management. To the degree that the finished-goods industry makes it possible for us to gather real riches from the land and generate a profit, we will also obtain a foundation for heavy industry.

Thus the financial crisis of industry is explained by the development of the economy as a whole. Obviously, our financial commissariat cannot respond to every enterprise that claims to need working capital for its work by printing more money. What would that mean? First, of course, that the market would spend all this superfluous paper money in a fashion that would cause a catastrophic fall in the value of the rouble, so that the purchasing power of all the money in circulation would be less than that of the present quantity of roubles. And, secondly, this would mean that we would make the printing of money a disorganising factor in the economy. Because, when we utilise capitalist methods, we must correct them only very carefully and not intervene like barbarians, spewing out paper money and bringing the entire economy into complete chaos.

Certainly, it is fully justified to say that the NEP presents a great danger, for, if you offer the devil your finger, you will have to give him your hand, your arm, and, ultimately, your entire body. Markets, competition, free trade in grain – where is this all headed? First of all, to the increased importance of circulating capital and to its increasing accumulation. Once this circulating capital exists, it will push its way into productive activity, into industry.

It receives industrial enterprises from the state through leases. That leads to accumulation no longer merely in commerce but in industry as well. Speculators, go-betweens, and lessees are genuine capitalists, becoming more numerous in the workers' state. In this way, true capitalism will become stronger and stronger, seizing control of a constantly increasing portion of the national economy, abolishing a socialism still only in evolution and ultimately taking state power as well. For we know just as well as Otto Bauer that the economy is the foundation and politics is the superstructure. Capitalist forces always have the accursed tendency to grow, through the accumulation of capital. And, by giving free rein to these forces, we are in permanent danger of being overrun by capitalism. Yet Bauer calls this the only possible way for us to save ourselves, in order not to fall to pieces entirely.

From an abstract, theoretical point of view, it was entirely possible that Kolchak and Denikin could have taken Moscow. We were engaged in struggle – a military struggle. When we were asked whether there was not truly a danger that Kolchak might come to Moscow, or earlier that the Hohenzollern regiments might reach Moscow, we answered that, of course, this possibility exists, which could become reality through a defeat of our troops. But our goal is not defeat but victory.

And what is the situation today? We are now locked in a similar struggle. Peasant agriculture is its focus. The Civil War was actually a contest for the soul of the peasant. The Red Army, on one side, and the aristocrats and bourgeois, on the other, wrestled to draw the peasants to their side. Similarly, the workers' state and capitalism are struggling, not for the peasants' soul but for their market. It's always necessary in battle to evaluate accurately the means available to our side and to the enemy. What are our means? Our strongest instrument is state power, an excellent instrument for economic struggle. That is shown by the entire history of the bourgeoisie and is confirmed by our short history. We have additional means: possession of the most important productive forces, including national transportation, and of the land, giving us the possibility of collecting the tax in kind. And also we have the army and all the rest. Those are our assets.

If the now developing capitalism, that is, the so-called state capitalism, evolves further, it will become not a true capitalism but a true socialism. The more that the so-called state capitalism prospers, the more it will approach socialism. That is no danger for us. The danger is found rather in the development of genuine private capitalism, enjoying free rein. This true capitalism is competing with our state economy and state industry. And, now, I'd like to ask what instruments it has available. It does not have state power and does not enjoy much sympathy from the state. On the contrary, the state exerts

itself to keep capitalism bridled. This is essential in order that the young fellow not get too puffed up and that its trees do not grow up to the sky. The workers' state still holds the shears to prune back excess growth.

First of all, there are taxes. In addition, the state has charge of the leased enterprises. I must comment on this, because it's often referred to as a capitulation. Let's leave aside transportation (with 956,952 workers all told), since it is fully in the hands of the state, and consider only the industrial enterprises organised as [state] trusts. In the present very unfortunate state of our economy, these concerns now employ one million workers. By contrast, the factories we have leased out employ eighty thousand workers. But what is decisive is not only the numbers but the level of technology. And, here, you will get the picture from the fact that the average number of workers in the leased enterprises is eighteen, while in the state enterprises it is 250.

So the most important and technically best-equipped enterprises are fully owned and operated by the state. I said there were a million workers in the state enterprises and 80,000 in the leased ones. But, even these 80,000 workers are not all in private concerns, because half of these enterprises are not run by private capitalists but by cooperatives or by individual commissariats, who lease the concern from the state and run it on their own account. So, the number of workers in purely private capitalist enterprises is not more than 40–45,000 workers, as against a million workers in state enterprises. This whole story is very recent. From here to the point where this private capital really overtakes state capital, there is ample time to calculate everything and if necessary to make changes. Even if the revolution in the West does not occur in the next few years, our private capital will be able to develop for an extended period without coming anywhere near the level of state capital.

In the sphere of commerce, private capital plays a bigger role. Statistical estimates are difficult here. Our experts, who are not always what they pretend to be – not from any lack of good will, but for objective reasons – say that private commercial capital now makes up about 30 per cent of the commercial capital now in circulation, with the other 70 per cent provided by state institutions and by cooperatives that are subsidised and in fact led by the state.

The two processes run along side by side and, at the same time, are in opposition. Despite everything, they provide each other with mutual support. Private capital organises itself around our state trusts, competes with them, and yet is nourished by them. On the other hand, our state enterprises would no longer be able to function if they had to do without the deliveries of certain smaller private undertakings. Our state enterprises are now going through a period of *primitive socialist accumulation*. If we do not receive any credits [from abroad], we will have to develop our economy in an isolated national state,

although not exactly as List proposed,⁶ accumulating not in a capitalist but in a socialist sense. On the other hand, once again a process of primitive *capitalist* accumulation is taking place. Reality will show us which of these two processes takes place more quickly. The workers' state has greater advantages; it holds the trumps. Of course, these could be lost. But, analysing the situation before us, we see that all the advantages are on our side except one. And that is that, behind the back of private capital, now passing for a second time through the epoch of primitive accumulation, stands world capitalism. We are still encircled by capitalism. We therefore can and should pose the question whether our incipient socialism, which is still functioning with capitalist methods, will not be bought up by the real capitalism.

Now, there are always two parties to a purchase: the one that buys and the one that sells. Power is in the hands of the workers' state. A monopoly exists in the most important industries and in foreign trade. This monopoly is therefore, for us, a matter of principle. It is our defence against a capitalism that wants to buy out our incipient socialism.

As for concessions, Comrade Lenin has already told you: big discussions, small concessions! (*Laughter*) It has often been stressed that world capitalism is undergoing a severe crisis and that it needs Soviet Russia. Britain needs the Russian market; Germany needs grain; and so on. Viewed abstractly, that seems quite correct, if we examine the world in pacifist fashion, from the standpoint of good common sense, which is always pacifist. (*Laughter*) It would therefore seem that British capital would set its course for Russia, striving with might and main to occupy Russia economically, while Germany would limp along behind it. But that is not happening. Why? Because we find ourselves in a very difficult time of disrupted economic equilibrium, and capitalism is not in a position to draw up and carry out great economic plans. Russia certainly represents an enormous potential for Britain, but not tomorrow. In Britain, the army of the unemployed is still one million strong. The Russian market cannot eliminate that army overnight. Perhaps this could be achieved in the course of three, five, or ten years, but then the calculations must also be spread over a ten-year period. And that is impossible. Everything is so uncertain in this shattered world!

That is why all the economic policies of the capitalist governments reckon only in terms of from today until tomorrow. That flows necessarily from the entire world situation. And, since they know that Russia does not offer them immediate salvation, they postpone again and again starting up the announced concessions, credits, and so on and so forth. There are no grounds

6. The German theorist Friedrich List (1789–1846) elaborated an analysis of economics on a national basis that he called the National System.

whatsoever to fear that we could be overwhelmed and crushed by these concessions. As you see, our party's official newspaper (*Pravda*) is now running a series of lengthy articles devoted to a very large concession – to Urquhart.⁷ In them we are soberly calculating – and I concede that we are perhaps making many arithmetical errors – whether this concession is beneficial or harmful to us. What does that mean? It means that the accounting is being done by the workers' state, which is weighing whether it will grant this concession or not.

In a word, the danger that real capitalism, whose development is inevitable if we grant it a free market, will outgrow the workers' state is far smaller than the possibility of the conquest of power by the European working class. That dictates that we follow a policy of sticking it out until the working class of Europe and the rest of the world has taken state power.

That is roughly the answer to be given to the compounded wisdom of the late Two-and-a-Half International – well, at least languishing in its deathbed. On our fourth anniversary, Otto Bauer devoted a pamphlet to our economy,⁸ in which he said neatly and logically all the things that our enemies in the socialist camp are in the habit of saying. First, he says that the New Economic Policy is, of course, a surrender, but a positive one. For the final outcome of the Russian Revolution, you see, could only be a bourgeois-democratic republic, and he predicted that already in 1917. Yet I recall that, in 1919, the prophecies of these people – Otto Bauer and the Two-and-a-Half International – had a different ring. At that time, they conceded that we were at the outset of an epoch of social revolution. No one will believe that, at a moment when world capitalism as a whole is headed for destruction, it will be in full flower in revolutionary Russia, which is under workers' rule.

And so, in 1917, when Otto Bauer still maintained his virginal belief in the rock-hard durability of capitalism, he wrote that the Russian Revolution must end with a bourgeois state. A socialist opportunist is always impressionistic in politics. In 1919, overwhelmed and overtaken by the tide of revolution, he recognised this as the beginning of an epoch of social revolution. Now he says, thanks be to God that the tide of revolution did not rise that high, and he hurries back to his prophesy of 1917, for he always has two prophecies in his pocket that he can choose from, to suit the occasion. (*Laughter*) Further on, he tells us: 'What we are witnessing in Russia is a capitalist economy rising up again, dominated by a new bourgeoisie, which rests on millions of peasant

7. Regarding the Urquhart concession, see p. 95, n. 10.

8. Bauer's pamphlet, *Der 'neue Kurs' in Sowjetrussland* [*The New Course in Soviet Russia*], was published in 1921.

operations and to which state legislation and administration have no choice but to adapt themselves.'

So, even a year ago he was proclaiming that our economy and state were dominated by a new bourgeoisie. As for the leasing out of enterprises, of which I have spoken – that is, the forty thousand workers employed by small and poor enterprises against the million workers in the best enterprises of the state, once again this is, of course, a 'surrender by the Soviet government to industrial capitalism'. And, in order to establish a framework for all this, he informs us as follows: 'After long hesitation, the Soviet government has now finally (!!) decided to recognise the foreign debts of tsarism'.

Since many comrades will naturally be hazy about the exact details of our history, I must remind you that in a radio transmission of 4 February 1919, we proposed the following to all the capitalist governments:

- 1.) The recognition of the debts of earlier Russian governments.
- 2.) The offering of our raw materials in pledge to guarantee the payment of loans and interest.
- 3.) Provision of concessions at their convenience.
- 4.) Territorial concessions in the form of military occupation of certain districts by the armed forces of the Entente.⁹

All this we proposed to the capitalist world by radio on 4 February 1919, and, in April of that year, we repeated this offer even more fully and precisely to the unofficial American representative – what was that guy called? (*Laughter*) Yes, Bullitt.¹⁰ Now, comrades, if you compare these proposals with the ones that our representatives in Genoa and The Hague put forward, or rather rejected, you can see that, far from broadening our concessions along this road, we moved in the opposite direction, toward a firmer defence of our claims.

Of course, this evolution leads to 'democracy' – that's obvious: Bauer and Martov came to agreement on that long ago. Bauer lectures us that the transformation of the economic foundation must lead to a transformation of the entire political superstructure. It is quite true that changes in the economic foundation bring with them changes in the superstructure. But, first of all, the economic basis does not change simply on instructions from Otto Bauer, and

9. For a discussion of the Soviet offer of 4 February 1919 and references to the various forms in which it was published, see Carr 1966, 3, pp. 118–20.

10. William Bullitt, a junior US diplomat, was sent by US President Woodrow Wilson and British Prime Minister David Lloyd George on a confidential mission to Moscow to ascertain Soviet peace terms. He met with Lenin and obtained written Soviet proposals, which received no response from the Allied powers. For the Genoa and Hague Conferences, see p. 120, n. 4.

also not on instructions from Mr. Urquhart, who carries much more weight in this matter. Moreover, to the extent that the economic basis is in fact changing, this is happening at such a pace and to such an extent that we are far removed from losing political control because of this process. The bourgeoisie has granted many reforms to the workers, making many concessions to the working class. We must not forget that. From the start, many of these experiments were rather risky, for example, universal suffrage. Marx called the legislated shortening of the working day in Britain a victory of a new principle. What principle? That of the working class. But, from the limited victories of this future principle to the conquest of political power by the British working class lies an entire extended historical period.

We do not require any such lengthy moratorium. We must and can confidently say that if concessions to capitalist methods, on the one hand, and the capitalist world, on the other, continue to develop, accumulate, deepen, compound, and multiply, eventually we could come to a point where the foundations would have suffered such changes that the superstructure of the workers' state would necessarily collapse. But that is simply the dialectical character of this situation. For the superstructure, once created, itself becomes a factor influencing the foundation, which, for its part, gains a firm footing in the superstructure. And, secondly, we are not talking here about eternity, but about a defined historical period, until the appearance on stage of the great Western reserves, destined to become the vanguard. However, if we measure the historical events not quantitatively but qualitatively – and you know, as dialecticians, that, at a certain point, quantity is transformed into quality – if we liberate historical development from the factor of time – rather as in Einstein's relativistic interpretation – if we consider history as timeless and speculate on into eternity, then it goes without saying that the New Economic Policy will have a fatal impact on us. Because, if it lasts forever, socialism will never achieve its triumph.

That is about the limit of Otto Bauer's wisdom. However, he winds up by saying that we have to speed up the transformation of the superstructure. He says, 'The reconstruction of a capitalist economy cannot take place under the dictatorship of a Communist party. The new economic course requires a new course in politics'.

So this man who has achieved such wonders in Austria (*Laughter*) tells us: Take note, capitalism cannot possibly flourish under the dictatorship of your party. Just so. And that is precisely why we maintain the dictatorship of our party! (*Loud laughter, applause*)

There is one more important question that I have not dealt with, comrades. I am referring to productivity, the output of labour.

Socialism is one economic system; capitalism is another. The advantages of socialism cannot be proven by lectures; they must be demonstrated by an increased output of labour. For, just as the capitalist economy's superiority over feudalism was based on having made human labour more productive, socialism has the same advantage over capitalism. At present, we are very poor, and that is the decisive factor. If we look at matters from this side, our enemies can advance very powerful arguments. Agricultural and industrial production have both fallen substantially in comparison to the prewar period. The harvest last year was about three-quarters of what it was on average before the War, and industrial production was about one-quarter of the prewar level.

At first glance, this seems to represent a great danger. We are based in industry, while agriculture provides a foundation for the accumulation of private capital. Now, we must not forget here that the peasant sets aside the greater part of his production for his own consumption. If the harvest this year reaches three-quarters of its prewar level, he is in a position to supply the market with, at best, 100 million poods [1.7 million tonnes], after paying 314 million poods to the state as the tax in kind. Only the portion of agricultural production that appears on the market is of significance for private capital or for state-commercial capital. And this quantity is rather small, and is hardly likely to grow more rapidly than industrial development.

All in all, we have not proven in life that socialism is a more advantageous economic method than capitalism, because we are poorer than the country was before the War and before the Revolution. That is a fact. It is explained by another fact, namely, that the revolution as a method of economic transformation is a very expensive undertaking. All revolutions in world history have shown this. Let us take the Great French Revolution. In Genoa, the French expert Colrat, now minister of justice, told Comrade Chicherin: 'You have no right at all to take part in economic matters given your country's present economic condition compared to ours'. Well, conditions in France today developed on a capitalist basis out of the Great French Revolution, and France as it exists today, with its wealth, its civilisation, and its corruption, would be inconceivable without that revolution. And the same Colrat of course speaks on July 14 about the Great French Revolution as the mother of modern democracy.¹¹ With regard to his speech, I checked a couple of historical works such as the one by the French historian Taine and the history of socialism by

11. The storming of the Paris fortress of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 symbolises the destruction of the feudal order by the French Revolution.

Jaurès and came up with the following facts.¹² First, after the ninth day of Thermidor,¹³ that is, after the beginning of the counter-revolutionary period, the impoverishment of France takes hold. Ten years after the beginning of the Revolution, that is, under the first consul Bonaparte, Paris received only 300 to 500 sacks of flour daily, compared to its requirement of a minimum of 1,500 sacks. Thus, Paris, then a city of five hundred thousand inhabitants, was receiving only one-eighth to one-quarter of its most essential foodstuff.

Here is another example. In the same period, between nine and ten years after the French Revolution, the population had declined in 37 of 58 departments through the impact of hunger, epidemics, and so on. Ten years, if you please! We are only at the beginning of the sixth year. The picture that we now present is not enviable but it is far more favourable, according to statistical data, than that of France after ten years of its bourgeois-democratic revolution. Surely it is clear that history pursues its goal of raising the power of human labour through temporary devastations. That is history's discordant style, for which we are not responsible. In the last few days, I saw a speech that I would recommend especially to the French comrades. It is the speech of the French chemist Berthelot, son of the more celebrated Pierre Berthelot, who had the following to say as a delegate to the Academy of Science. I translate from *Le Temps*:

In all epochs of history, in the fields of science, politics, and social phenomena alike, it has always been the splendid and terrible privilege of armed conflicts to hasten the birth of new epochs.

Of course, he is referring mainly to wars, and he is right, because wars, especially those defending a new historical principle, have always exerted immense propulsive force. But he is speaking of armed conflicts in general. Revolutionary conflicts involving devastation signify also the birth of new epochs. This enables one to ascertain that the expenses and costs of revolution are not *faux frais*, not unnecessary expenses. And we ask our friends to allow us another period of five years – and they will surely grant us this – in order to be able in the tenth year of the revolution to demonstrate the power of socialism compared to capitalism not merely by speculation but by material reality.

12. Hippolyte Taine wrote three volumes on the French Revolution as part of his five-volume historical work, *Les origines de la France contemporaine*; an English translation has been published under the title *The French Revolution* (see Taine 1962). Jean Jaurès wrote four volumes on the French revolution as part of the series, *Histoire socialiste, 1789–1900*; it has been published separately as *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française*. See Jaurès 1968–73.

13. Regarding the ninth of Thermidor, see p. 339, n. 14.

However, if the capitalist world lasts another several decades, well, that would be a sentence of death for socialist Russia. In this regard, however, we have no reason to modify or doubt the opinions, positions, and theses formulated at our third congress. The British minister of foreign affairs, Lord Curzon, characterised the world situation excellently in a speech on 9 November, the anniversary of the birth of the German Republic. I do not know if comrades have read it. I will therefore read a couple of sentences of this speech. Here is what he said:

All the powers have emerged from the War weakened and broken. We carry a heavy load of taxation, which weighs down on industry. We have a large number of jobless in every field of work. As for France's situation, the country is burdened by enormous debt and is not in a position to receive reparations. Germany is politically very frail, and its economic life is crippled by a terrible currency crisis. Russia still stands outside the family of European peoples. It is still under the banner of communism –

He doesn't entirely agree with Otto Bauer (*Laughter*)

and carries out communist propaganda in every corner of the world.

Which isn't even true! (*Laughter*)

Italy has gone a series of internal disruptions and governmental crises –

Not 'gone through' at all; only 'going through' (*Laughter*)

The Near East is in conditions of complete crisis. This situation is dreadful.

Even the Russian Communists could not come up with better propaganda on the world situation. 'This situation is dreadful', we are informed on the fifth anniversary of the Soviet Republic by the most renowned representative of Europe's strongest empire. And he is correct. But this dreadful situation must be changed.

An Italian journalist once asked me how we assess the world situation at present. I gave the following rather banal answer: 'Capitalism is no longer capable of ruling'. – Lord Curzon has just fully confirmed that. – 'The working class is not yet capable of taking power. That is the distinctive feature of our time'. And, three or four days ago, a Berlin friend sent me a clipping from one of the recent issues of *Freiheit* where we read: 'Kautsky's victory over Trotsky'. (*Laughter*) It says there that *Rote Fahne* doesn't have the courage to attack my capitulation to Kautsky – although *Rote Fahne* always had the courage to attack me, even when I was sometimes correct. But that relates to the

Third Congress, not the Fourth.¹⁴ (*Applause and laughter*) I had said, 'Capitalism is incapable, but the working class is not yet capable; that is the distinctive feature of our time'. And to that responds *Freiheit*, of blessed memory,¹⁵ 'What Trotsky puts forward here as his point of view was Kautsky's opinion long ago.' Aha, plagiarism! Well, you must understand giving interviews is not an agreeable profession and never takes place voluntarily. It's always done on order of our friend Chicherin. There are still some matters here that remain centralised. The assignment of interviews is handled by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. (*Laughter*) When you have to subject yourself to an interview, you only trot out the most banal commonplaces. (*Loud laughter*) As for my observation that capitalism is already incapable but socialism is not yet capable of wielding power, I did not consider it to be my invention. Now I discover that Kautsky is its spiritual father.

I have made every honest effort to understand in what way I was capitulating. The fact that the proletariat is not yet capable of wielding power is a result of the still very strong traditions and influences of Kautskyism. (*Laughter*) That is exactly the reason why it is unable to take power, and that is the thought that I expressed to the Italian journalist, without naming Kautsky, because everyone knows what was meant.

Capitalism is undergoing a historical crisis. The working class is today not yet capable of ending this crisis by seizing political power.

At the Third World Congress, we made every effort – and that should be mentioned here – to draw a very clear distinction, both in our speeches and our theses, between the historical crisis of capitalism and a conjunctural crisis.¹⁶ You also recall the discussions that took place around this point, partly in the commission and partly in plenary session. We now have a pressing practical interest in confirming specifically this aspect of the theses. At that time, many comrades, beginning with the premise of a historical crisis, considered that it would automatically grow more acute, and that its economic pressure would make the proletariat more revolutionary, radicalising its methods of attack and driving it to an uprising. We emphasised then that the historical crisis of capitalism necessarily includes conjunctural cycles expressed in a wave-like motion. We held that the acute conjunctural crisis that began in 1920 would necessarily be followed in the capitalist world by a certain improvement – that

14. At the Third Congress, in mid-1921, Trotsky presented an analysis of the world situation that was criticised by many in the KPD leadership, including its majority current.

15. On 30 September 1922, the USPD's main newspaper, *Die Freiheit*, ceased publication, merging into the SPD's *Vorwärts*.

16. For Trotsky's report and theses at the Third Congress on the world economy, see Trotsky 1972b, 1, pp. 174–226.

is, first, a worsening, but followed later by an improvement, large or small. Many comrades said then that this view represented an inclination to opportunism with the intention of finding a way to postpone the revolution.

Imagine where we would be today if we had adopted this mechanical theory of a continually worsening crisis. We would then face the fact that, in the most important capitalist countries, the crisis has given way to improvement or to stagnation, which is, in itself, an improvement compared to the crisis. In the strongest country, the United States, we now have prosperity. How long this will last and whether it has deep roots is quite another question. Conditions in Europe are a given, along with a decay on a world scale. These are plain facts, which determine the broad historical crisis. But the conjunctural upturn is also a fact. Suppose we had gone along with the comrades who then demanded that we recognise the principle that the crisis would always, and, under all circumstances, be a more revolutionary factor than prosperity. Suppose we had accepted that there was no reason to acknowledge in our theses that an improvement in the economic situation was possible. In that case, we would now have to revise our entire conception of the revolutionary character of our epoch and subject it to a new theoretical examination.

This would surely have been a major blunder! No, we were quite right, and today we are well equipped to face our opponents of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. We did not call this epoch revolutionary because a severe conjunctural crisis in 1920 followed on the deceptive prosperity of 1919. Rather, our view was based on our assessment of the entire world situation and its interrelationships. I think this lesson will be useful to many comrades, which gives us a strong reason to confirm our Third Congress theses.

But our theses and speeches also proclaimed the opening of a new stage. Some comrades criticised us for projecting too far into the future, for looking too far ahead. But, here too, I believe that our theses were correct. I recall what Comrade Lenin said in one of his speeches to the Third Congress, or perhaps it was in a congress commission, 'Comrades, of course we are strongly in favour of speeding up the pace of revolution, but if revolution does not come in a year, and even not in two years, we will still hold out in Russia and wait. We are absolutely not pressing you to act prematurely.' Many comrades were amazed, thinking: Two years! Many comrades viewed that as something dreadful. Now, fifteen months have gone by. We are closer to the revolution, but not yet all that close. Russia can now say with more justification and security that if the world-revolution takes another year or two, it will find Soviet Russia even stronger than it is today.

This perspective grows out of the fact that, in 1919, we did not overthrow the bourgeoisie on an international level. That situation gave rise to our

struggle to win the broad masses of the proletariat and to the development of our organisation and our methods. We were forced to inscribe the partial demands of the working class on our banner, and to lead the working class on this level as well. But what is the difference between us and the old Social Democracy, if we too advance partial demands? It consists in our evaluation of the character of this epoch. That is the key factor.

Before the War, the bourgeoisie, as a ruling class, was able to make concessions. We can view the nineteenth century as a whole as an epoch in which the bourgeoisie made concessions to the working class and to specific layers of the working class. These concessions were always reckoned in the framework of the bourgeoisie's balance sheet, so as not to undermine its power and its rule. The new epoch – we can now say this with certainty – began not after the War but already in 1913–14. The crisis of 1913 was not conjunctural in character, following a period of prosperity, but the beginning of a new epoch of capitalism, whose framework had now become too narrow for the productive forces. The bourgeoisie was no longer in a position to make further concessions. The War made this situation more acute. That by no means gives us the right to conceive of our task as automatic or predetermined. For, even in the new revolutionary epoch, it is very possible for one side or other to stumble into a bog, and immediate demands can be conceived of as just such a path into the bog.

At the Third Congress, the overwhelming majority of delegates called to order those forces in the International who were creating a danger that the excessively hasty advance of the vanguard would shatter against the passivity or immaturity of the broad masses of the working class and against the persistent strength of the capitalist state. That was then the greatest danger, and the Third Congress issued a warning aimed at drawing attention to this danger. To the degree that this represented a retreat, it proceeded in parallel with the economic retreat in Russia. Certain comrades could well get the impression that the International's whole course was now directed against the left danger.

Of course, that is quite wrong. What was then commonly called the 'left danger' is, of course, the danger of errors that any of us can make. The right danger, on the other hand, is and remains the bogging down of the Communist parties under the pressure of bourgeois society as a whole. This danger flows from the inherent characteristics of a preparatory period. In 1919, as powerful waves of discontent washed over every country, and politics as a whole reflected this revolutionary movement, the bourgeoisie itself was politically disoriented. Today, in relatively quieter times, we have to advance immediate demands in our struggle for the workers' soul. This creates a situation

where the capitalist world once again enjoys greater possibilities of inserting its agents into the ranks of our world revolutionary party. We, therefore, have not only the right to refer to the revolutionary character of the epoch, but also the duty to speed up the course of this epoch. We do this by carefully cleansing the International so that, when the great battle comes, it will be fully armed and fit for combat.

The difficulties that the West European parties must overcome are incomparably greater than those that we faced in the revolution. For example, pacifist and reformist illusions have by no means vanished. In France, it is inevitable that pacifism and reformism will emerge in full flower, if the revolution begins at an early date as a result of some unpredictable combination of events. After the illusions of war and the intoxication of victory, the petty-bourgeois illusions of pacifism and reformism will take hold in France in the form of a bloc of left-wing forces for power. In this epoch, a strong wave of such illusions can grip the working class as well. Our French party has the highest interest in eliminating from its ranks those who could serve as transmitters of such pacifist and reformist illusions.

The same holds true for Britain. I do not know what the result of the present elections will be. But, if the Conservatives and National Liberals take the helm once more, their splendour will not long endure. It is inevitable that the Conservative orientation in Britain will be replaced by one that is pacifist and democratic. Now imagine this picture: In France 'le Bloc des Gauches' [Left Bloc], that is, a democratic-pacifist government; in Britain a Labour government in alliance with the independent Liberals! What will then happen in Germany? The lungs of the German Social Democrats will breath fresh air. We will get a new edition of Wilsonism, on a broader basis. We cannot say that we are fully secured against a new and, in its way, impressive time in which the working class is dulled down and benumbed by pacifist and reformist tendencies. But the epoch is revolutionary, its contradictions are irresolvable, and the tensions within capitalism itself are unusually acute. So, such a period could only be the final flaring of a candle that is burning out. We are assuming that no revolution breaks out before such a period, which is by no means certain. The experience of such a pacifist high tide could of course lead to a profound psychological crisis. After it ebbs away, the French and British working class will feel the need to look about to find the party that did not deceive them. There must be a party that does not deceive the world working class in such a period of likely – indeed inevitable – pacifist lies, a party of truth, of the rough, brutal truth. This can only be the Communist party.

We are therefore more obliged than ever before to check through our ranks and constantly keep watch on them. A French comrade – it was Comrade

Frossard – once said, ‘Le parti c’est la grande amitié’ – the party is a great friendship. That phrase has been often repeated. It is quite a pretty turn of phrase and I am prepared to accept it, to a limited degree. But let us bear firmly in mind that the party undergoes a profound process of selection in order to grow into such a strong friendship. This selection must, however, be careful and, when necessary, ruthless. In other words, the party must first pass through a great selection, before it becomes a great friendship! (*Loud, long applause*)

Adjournment: 8:25 p.m.

Session 11 – Wednesday, 15 November 1922

The Capitalist Offensive

Speaker: Radek

Convened: 12:30 p.m.

Chairperson: Kolarov

Chair: Four reporters have spoken on the Russian Revolution. I believe that there is no delegation wishing to put forward a different viewpoint. If it is only a matter of making a declaration of solidarity with the Russian proletariat, the Congress has already done so in handsome style on a number of occasions. The Presidium has therefore decided to give the floor only to delegations that wish to defend a point of view different from that of the reporters. Does anyone wish to speak?

Since that is not the case, we will go to the next agenda point, which is 'The Capitalist Offensive'. I give the floor to the reporter, Comrade Radek.

Radek: Comrades, brothers and sisters: The topic of all the policy debates that we have conducted and will conduct here is actually a single question: the world offensive of capitalism against the proletariat and the proletariat's measures for self-defence. Whether we are discussing the combat readiness of the French Communist Party, or the united front, or the workers' government, the practical issue underlying these tactical questions is always and only the offensive of capitalism.

In discussing this offensive, we often define the question too narrowly, conceiving of it as directed mainly toward reducing wages and lengthening the

working day. On the other hand, the Social Democrats divide the world-revolution, as a whole, into two phases that are artificially kept apart: the proletariat's offensive and capitalism's counteroffensive. They regard this second phase as definitive for the foreseeable future, indeed as a victory of counter-revolution. In my opinion, therefore, we will best understand the situation and also the stance the Communist International should adopt by reviewing in broad strokes the development of the world-revolution in the concrete forms it is displaying before our eyes. At the risk of presenting the most important events to you only as subject headings, I will nonetheless undertake this task.

1. The offensive of the proletariat

The Russian Revolution, which we discussed so extensively under the previous agenda-point, was understood by the proletariat as an event of international importance. But there is no doubt that the world bourgeoisie understood to a much greater degree than the world proletariat that the Russian Revolution was the first episode in an international offensive by the proletariat. It is enough to read the secret memoranda sent in 1917 and the beginning of 1918 by the leaders of the Central Powers [Germany and Austria-Hungary] to their governments. I refer here to the memorandum of Count Czernin, which shows that immediately after the March Revolution, before the October victory, the leaders of the Central Powers understood extremely well that, following on a period of war in which the bankruptcy of Social Democracy had enabled various bourgeois cliques to battle each other on the backs of the passive popular masses, the Russian March Revolution had knocked a breach in the capitalist defences, and a new historical force had appeared on the world stage. In his memoirs, Ludendorff describes how Germany's military situation compelled him to let the Bolsheviks through to Russia, although he recognised the danger, and how he therefore felt himself all the more obliged to crush the Russian Revolution.¹ It was world capitalism's undoing that Ludendorff's internal contradictions gave the Russian Revolution a breathing space in which to get organised.

Comrades, after the defeat of Germany, the second wave of proletarian revolution began. The collapse of Germany and Austria, which threw the crowns of Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns into the street, into the mire, created a situation where the proletariat, worn down and exhausted by the War and Social-

1. In April 1917, a group of Russian revolutionists in Switzerland – Bolsheviks except for a few members of the Bund – received permission from German authorities to travel by train through Germany to neutral Sweden, from which they proceeded to Petrograd. Among the forty travellers were Lenin and Radek.

Democratic politics, was required to take the power into its hands, because no other force was available that could try to grab hold of it. The Communist International has been much mocked for having had illusions about the world situation at the time of its formation. The former centrists, now members of the Second International, talk of how overoptimistic and short-sighted we were when the Communist International was founded, orienting its policies toward the victory of world-revolution. Please permit me to read you a document written at almost the exact moment that the Communist International's First Congress was convened. It was written by Lloyd George. This document was kept secret by Lloyd George and his people until its publication this year by the former Italian Prime Minister Nitti in his book, *Europe Without Peace*. In this secret memorandum sent to the leaders of the Versailles Conference, Lloyd George says the following:

Today the situation is quite different. *The revolution is still in its infancy.* Russia is ruled by a fierce terror. *Europe is filled with revolutionary ideas.* The working class harbours a deep sentiment not of disrespect but of *anger and rejection* with regard to living conditions before the War. The population of all Europe views all the present political, social, and economic institutions with mistrust and estrangement. In some countries, like Germany and Russia, this disquiet has turned to open rebellion. In other countries, like France, Britain, and Italy, it is expressed through strikes and a certain disinclination to work. There is every indication of a longing not simply for higher wages but just as much for social and political change.

Under the pressure of the proletarian offensive, he then considered the living conditions of 1914 to be inhuman. We know the extent to which he has since changed his mind.

To a considerable degree, this discontent should be greeted with pleasure. We will never achieve enduring peace if we remain stuck on the goal of creating living conditions like those before 1914. With that approach we would risk driving the mass of the European population into the arms of the radicals, whose basic proposal for the rebirth of humanity consists of their desire to tear down entirely all the social institutions that presently exist. In Russia, these people achieved victory. But the price of this victory was fearsome. Hundreds of thousands of inhabitants have lost their lives. Railways, cities, the entire Russian state structure is almost entirely destroyed. Nonetheless, they have succeeded, in many respects, in keeping the Russian people reined in, and even more significantly, in *organising a great army, whose soldiers appear to be well led, well disciplined, and by and large prepared to sacrifice their lives for their ideals.*

Let another year pass by and Russia, *inspired by fresh enthusiasm*, will have forgotten its need for peace, because *it has at its disposal the only army that has confidence in the ideals for which it is fighting*.

And after this description, which is worth being made known to the broadest popular masses, Lloyd George portrays the immediate danger that capitalism then faced. This portrayal can serve as a legal indictment against the Social-Democratic parties, above all in Germany. He says:

The greatest danger that I can perceive in the present situation is that Germany might be capable of placing its fate in the hands of the Bolsheviks, and of putting its riches, its spirit, and its magnificent organisational capacities at the disposal of these revolutionary fanatics, who dream that Bolshevism will conquer the world through armed force. This danger is no mere phantom. The present German government is weak; its commands little respect; its authority is scanty. Nonetheless it holds on. Its departure would mean calling in the Spartacists, for which Germany is not yet ripe. But the Spartacists always present an argument that never fails to strike home, namely, that only they will be capable of freeing Germany from the unbearable conditions into which it has been plunged by the War.

And he goes on to say:

If Germany goes over to the Spartacists, it is unavoidable that its fate will be closely linked to the Russian Bolsheviks. If that happens, *all of Eastern Europe would be thrust into the stew of Bolshevik Revolution*, and within a year *we would face almost three hundred million people, formed and trained by German generals and German instructors into a gigantic Red Army, armed with German machine guns and prepared at any moment to renew the assault on Western Europe*.

Comrades, we will gladly give Lloyd George the German military instructors, but the picture that this most intelligent leader of the European bourgeoisie then had in mind is not something that would shock Clemenceau and the others. It is a photograph of the situation in which the world found itself in this second phase of the proletarian revolution, as the German Revolution began. The capitalist world responded to this situation by combining a *defensive stance in the West* with the *first capitalist offensive in the East*.

If you take a look at the strike statistics for 1919 – and I will not tire you by reading out all the figures – you will see a wave of proletarian offensives not only in Germany but also in Britain and the United States. The British workers attained a wage increase in 1919 that was bigger than everything they achieved during the entire War, when their labour was absolutely indispen-

sible to save Entente capitalism. During the War as a whole, they won wage increases of not more than seven shillings per week and per person, but, in 1919 alone, they gained an increase of one pound sterling [20 shillings]. They shortened the working time of seven million people by three to four hours.² In 1919, 60%–80% of British workers began working eight hours a day or less. The British government responded to the demand for nationalisation of the coal mines by appointing the Sankey Commission, which accepted the miners' demands in principle. In the United States, one wave of strikes followed another. What is more – and this is important in characterising the situation – in this individualist country, the railway workers were seriously considering a plan for nationalisation of the railways.

In Germany, the bourgeoisie spent billions to keep the price of food low and thus ease the discontent of the working masses. 'Socialism is on the march', cried the Social Democrats and the government, and a 'socialisation commission' was hard at work in order to create the impression that the working class could achieve its goals by peaceful means.

Across all the Western countries of industrial capitalism, the bourgeoisie held to a purely defensive stance toward the working class, to avoid the danger that excessive resistance would drive the working class of West Europe and America into the arms of communism.

At the same time, the bourgeoisie launched its first offensive, which we know as the Entente invasion of Soviet Russia. Comrades, this brought about the first great test of armed strength between the world proletariat and world capitalism. The Russian proletariat did not merely blast the first breach in the world capitalist system, but stood alone in this breach, fighting for survival, while the West European proletariat contented itself with improvements in its conditions. The only part of the Central-European proletariat to launch a supportive attack was the Hungarian workers. They aimed to ease the pressure on Soviet Russia and liberate the Hungarian proletariat. Their attempt was defeated, and the Hungarian soviet republic was destroyed.

Comrades, not only did Soviet Russia beat back the offensive of world capitalism, but also, in 1920, on the knife edge between the two previous epochs in the development of world-revolution, on the edge of the shift in the economic conjuncture, Soviet Russia passed *from defence to attack*. The battle in Poland represented an attempt to make this transition. There is no need for me to indulge in fantasies about what it would have meant for the world situation if the Russian proletariat had been victorious at Warsaw. I need only recall the fact that, at the very moment the Russian proletariat advanced to the attack, an offensive also began by the first large segment of the Western-European

2. The Russian text reads, 'shortened the working day by three to four hours'.

working class, the Italian movement to occupy the factories. Imagine for a moment what would have been the impact of the extension of the first proletarian state's boundaries past the Vistula and the conquest of power in Italy. *It would have placed the agrarian countries of East and Southeast Europe between the pincers of two proletarian states, placing them at the disposal of Europe's industrial proletariat.* We need only ponder these possibilities, which were then very present in the situation, to get a grasp of the weight of the defeat of Soviet Russia and the Italian workers in 1920.

Soviet Russia's military offensive on Warsaw and the proletarian offensive in Italy collapsed for different reasons. Soviet Russia was shown to be too weak militarily; the Italian working class was too weak politically. There is absolutely no doubt that this defeat was the turning point in the history of the first phase of proletarian revolution. Rudolf Hilferding later declared emphatically that it was the Independents [USPD] who fought the Battle of the Marne against the Bolsheviks.³ This learned spokesman for Austro-Marxism, who is now pursuing a post as a representative of capitalist Germany abroad, had no cause to take credit for the victory over Soviet Russia. The Red Army was repulsed not by the eloquence of the leader of Germany's centrists but by the bayonets of the army of the Polish *szlachta* [gentry] and the cannons of French imperialism, which, to my knowledge, have not yet joined the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. The collapse of the Red Army offensive near Warsaw and that of the Italian workers, which heralded the second phase of world-revolution, came just as the fictitious boom, which had provided the basis for world capitalism's concessions to the West European workers in 1919 and 1920, was ebbing away. The world economic crisis began.

2. The capitalist counteroffensive

I now come to this second phase. This change is based on a fact that will, over time, seal the defeat of world capitalism but, temporarily, very much strengthened it, namely, the celebrated shift in the economic conjuncture. Thanks firstly to the economic results of the War, which are now starkly apparent, and secondly to the results of the Versailles Treaty, world capital has reached the limits of its expansion. In every country, an economic crisis is beginning, whose implications for world capitalism's policy toward the proletariat is well portrayed in an intellectually prominent mouthpiece of

3. In the two battles on the Marne River, fought in 1914 and 1918, the Entente armies turned back advancing German forces.

British capitalism, the *Westminster Gazette* – as you know, it's now the voice of Asquith. It says:

The working class can be quite sure of the fact that no force on earth can protect it from the reduction of its living standard, so long as there are hungry people struggling among themselves for the right to live. The existence of such people creates conditions under which it is quite impossible to establish any minimum standard of living.

That is what the *Westminster Gazette* wrote at the outset of the world economic crisis, and that is the basic reason why capitalism around the world is stronger. Because millions of workers in the Western industrial countries are unemployed – I'll speak of Germany in a moment – the ability of the employed workers to struggle is broken. The simple fact that workers who are unemployed can be played off against those with jobs breaks the offensive power of the trade unions and the workers' will to struggle.

I am not going to lard my report with statistics. It's hard to listen to figures. The Executive has commissioned an exhaustive report on the state of the capitalist offensive in different countries. It's by a very qualified comrade, Z. Leder. We have, unfortunately, not yet published the report, because it was received too late, but we intend to publish it in all languages. I will use just a few basic figures to indicate the decisive changes.

Let us take the figures for Britain:

- In 1918, there were 1,250 strikes, with 1.1 million participants. The strikes lasted 6.73 million days.
- In 1919, the number of strikes rose to 1,411, with 2.5 million participants. The strikes lasted 34 million days.
- In 1920, we had 1,715 strikes. The number of participants declined to about two million, and they struck for 27 million days. The result: six to seven million workers won a wage increase of £7 million weekly.
- Working time was shortened in 1919 by six hours a week for 6.5 million workers; in 1920, by 3.5 hours a week for 500,000 workers. As a result, 60%–80% of workers had a working day of eight hours or less.
- In 1921, only 118,000 workers struck. Wages for eight million workers decreased by £11 million weekly.
- In 1922, there were further wage reductions, and, up to August, weekly wages of 7.5 million workers were reduced by another £3.5 million. Only 18,000 workers received increases, amounting to a paltry £3,000 a week.

British capitalism is not satisfied with these results. The following memorandum comes not from an individual writer but from the authoritative voice

of British capitalists, the British Industrial League. I quote from the *London Economist*:

It may be necessary to go even further. Unless business gets better, workers must be prepared to accept a wage that *provides them with a standard of living lower than what it was before the industrial depression and even before the War*. Moreover, in order to carry out these wage reductions without inappropriate conflicts, it is advisable that the movement be as extensive and unified as possible. (11 February and 11 March 1922)

In the United States, we see the same process all down the line. The employers are not content to reduce wages and cut working hours. A struggle is flaring up on a broad front in the West against the rights won by trade unions. In the United States, we see the movement for the 'open shop'. The trade unions are asked to give up the right to limit the workplaces to organised workers and exclude those who are not organised – a right they won through decades of struggle. During the strike of railway shop workers this year, we saw that the highest American courts are having recourse to the same tactic as with the Taff Vale decision in Britain, which, at that time, crippled the British working class.⁴ Trade unions were made liable for damages to the capitalists' economic interests caused by the struggle.

In Britain, a struggle is under way to completely eradicate the factory councils. A leader of the British capitalists summed up the situation as follows: 'We must settle whether the factories are going to be run by the employer or the soviets.' And, at the same time, the British Conservative Party is taking a swing at the Labour Party through a parliamentary motion that forbids trade unions from using their resources to conduct political struggles.

I will not provide data on a number of other countries, like Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland, which do not offer anything fundamentally different, and I will speak separately about Germany. Clearly, what we have here is a worldwide and *very wide-ranging economic and political plan* based on the results of the World War. World capitalism planned during the War to cope with its economic results through the integration of economic regions. On one side, the Middle-Europe plan, the main pillar of German imperialism; on the other side, Wilsonism. These were simply plans to create broad imperialist regions where the burdens of the World War could be apportioned, making it possible to surmount the War's results. The Middle-

4. In the Taff Vale case (1900–1), the British House of Lords ruled that a union could be held liable for economic loss caused to employers by decisions of its leaders in industrial disputes, effectively making strikes illegal. The ruling was nullified in 1906 by the passing of the Trades Disputes Act.

Europe plan collapsed along with German imperialism itself. Wilson's plan to create a vast Anglo-American empire was the real basis for the idea of the League of Nations. This plan however shattered against the resistance of national capitalist groups.

Versailles represented a different plan, which aimed to load the costs of capitalist reconstruction on the defeated countries. This plan was wrecked by the resistance of Soviet Russia and the financial impotence of Germany. Given this situation, world capitalism had no option left for its reconstruction but to shift the burden of these costs onto the broad shoulders of the working masses of all countries. During the War, we said that only the working class will be defeated in this War. Now, world capitalism is saying, yes, capitalist reconstruction is possible only if the working class bears the cost. This has become capitalism's all-encompassing plan. The more that the economic situation worsens, the clearer it is that, in contrast to the situation after the Napoleonic Wars, world capitalism is not capable of overcoming its world crisis.

If you read Owen's memorandum to Metternich,⁵ you will find that he poses the question of how Britain overcame the broad economic destruction, and answers that after the economic crisis of that time, Britain introduced machinery. This increased the productive forces, enabling Britain to overcome the crisis and develop into an economic power of the first rank. World capitalism is now faced with the need for massive resources to carry out its reconstruction. For a tenth of what the War cost Italy, that country could be delivered from its present tribute to Britain and the United States for coal, but the resources for that are unavailable. A second method to overcome the crisis would be to expand markets, but that is excluded. That is why the capitalist offensive is not just taking temporary advantage of a weakening of the working class; it is an ambitious plan for a decade.

If this offensive breaks down, world capitalism will be repulsed by the working class, at least in the decisive countries of Europe. Because the stakes are so high – a life-and-death contest – it obviously cannot be fought out using the weapons of strike on one side and, on the other, lockout, wage reductions, and increasing the hours of work. *And that brings me to the political forms of the capitalist offensive.*

Comrades, at the Berlin Conference of the three Internationals and in our general agitation, we have often pointed out that world capitalism's struggle to reverse the nationalisation of factories in Russia forms part of this broader

5. During a European journey in 1837, British utopian socialist Robert Owen obtained an interview with the Austrian foreign minister, Metternich, and laid before him proposals for social reform through producers' cooperatives. Owen later explained that his presentation was based on two memorials presented to European governments in 1818. See Claeys 1993, 1, pp. 253–67; and 4, pp. 320–4.

offensive.⁶ Many considered this notion to be far-fetched. In addition, the interrelationship of Stinnes's struggle for power with the world offensive of capitalism against the proletariat was also not well understood. Therefore permit me to describe briefly this side of the matter, which we do not often take up and which is the decisive aspect of the struggle for the preconditions for capitalism's economic victory.

If world capitalism wants to hurl the working class back to pre-1914 conditions and to force it to its knees, the leaders of world capitalism can certainly achieve this through a combination of struggles with the working class within each country and world political struggles. The first precondition for achieving the plans underlying the world capitalist offensive was revealed in Genoa and The Hague.⁷ And, in Britain, the efforts of workers to achieve the nationalisation of the main branches of industry were parried. Last year, the British workers were no longer fighting for nationalisation of the mines but fought simply to maintain their previous wage levels. And, even in this struggle, they were defeated. In the United States, the remains of the movement for nationalisation were swept away. In Germany, when it was a matter of halting the workers' advance in 1919, they wrote 'socialism' on their placards; now they are close to selling off the railroads to private industry. The only state where industry is in the hands of the working class is Russia.

That is why the struggle against Soviet Russia, aiming to force us, through a financial boycott, to give up the factories, is not some special goal adopted by capitalism in order to obtain bigger profits in Russia. No, it is a fundamental component of capitalism's world offensive. And yet more is involved. The capitalist world offensive requires that the German question be resolved in a form that permits, first, the salvation of capitalism on German soil, and, second, the provision of resources for capitalist reconstruction in the Entente countries. The policies of German capitalism, represented in their crudest form by Stinnes, seek a way out of conditions of catastrophe and have found it, at least in theory.

The solution consists of selling off state property, selling the mines and railroads, and also a big loan raised by Germany on the American and British markets. The financial plan of Stinnes aims to pay the interest on this loan and the reparations by easing the burden on industry and increasing it on the broad masses, as a way of renewing German capitalism's accumulation. That may seem to be a purely internal German political question, unrelated to the world offensive of capitalism. But we need only note this policy's interrelationship with that of France, in order to see that much more is at stake here.

6. Regarding the Conference of the Three Internationals, see p. 137, n. 17.

7. For the Genoa and Hague Conferences, see p. 120, n. 4.

The military wing of the French bourgeoisie and some of its industrialists are thinking of pursuing the offensive against the revolution through the occupation of the Ruhr, creation of a buffer state in the Rhineland, incorporation of the Ruhr coal and coke in French industrial territory, and also the separation of southern from northern Germany, and creation of a French vassal state of Austria and Bavaria, linked to France through the buffer state on the Rhine. Meanwhile, another wing of French industrial circles have quite a different idea in mind. Their concept is the creation of a Franco-German steel-and-coal syndicate, which would provide France with the necessary resources for reconstruction, while enabling Stinnes to push through his policies, overriding Germany's present relationship of forces – and thus freeing France from the need for military adventures. The French press and the hangers-on of French foreign policy have said quite often what is at stake. Stinnes's plan must be implemented. The German public sector must shrink; non-essential workers must be laid off; the intensity of labour must be increased; working hours must be longer. Unless this is done, there is no saving capitalism either in Germany or in France.

But Stinnes cannot carry this out all on his own. When he made his proposal to privatise the railways, he ran into stiff resistance. That is why implementation of the Stinnes plan requires an ultimatum from the French government, an order from the French to the German government. What the German Social Democrats will never accept when it is pressed on them by Stinnes, they and the German working class will swallow if it is posed by France as a precondition for peace. Comrades, if this plan is not carried through, it will certainly not be because of the resistance of the German Social Democrats. If it fails, it will be only because of the resistance of British capitalism, which is threatened by the creation of a Central-European iron-and-coal syndicate, which would exert pressure on it, simultaneously with American capitalism. If the plan fails, it will be because of contradictions within the counter-revolution, not the resistance of the German working class, which at the moment is quite limited. The Stinnes plan, along with the economic trends it represents, is not limited to Germany alone.

Just read Mussolini's speeches and programme before the victory of Fascism. I'd like to read a couple of quotations that illuminate sharply the social and political issues here. Read Mussolini's taxation programme, his economic and political plan, and you will see that the very forces at work in Germany and personified by the representative of heavy industry [Stinnes] are at work in Italy. Mussolini says in the Fascists' programme:

Amend social laws that restrict production. For a new tax system on a simpler, more rational, and more successful basis.

You will learn just what this new basis consists of when you hear Mussolini say the following:

We must finally have the courage to state openly the following truth, which *contradicts demagoguery*. Today it is the working masses that carry the lightest tax burden, although they earn more than the middle class, which is overburdened by taxes. We must also not forget that restricting production with appalling direct taxes on capital also acts as an indirect tax on the lower classes, but in an even more dreadful form, since curbing capitalist enterprise results in joblessness and the reduction of wages. *Nothing could be more mistaken than the demand to load the 'rich' down with taxes, in order to protect the poor.*

Moving on to France, it is enough to take Caillaux's book, *Where Is France Going?* Or articles by Caillaux and other French experts in the issue of the *Manchester Guardian* on reconstruction to see that their entire policy is based on burdening the working masses and, as much as possible, easing the load on the propertied to a degree that goes far beyond the bourgeoisie's former fear of taxes.

Comrades, these plans of the bourgeoisie demand corresponding political measures. For, in all Europe, we see a pull to the right. The fall of Briand after the Cannes conference and the coming to power of Poincaré marked a shift in the external relationship of forces and in the framework of the National Bloc.⁸ Nonetheless, there is no doubt that this shift arose from a determination to place the initiative, which was in danger of slipping away from the capitalists, into the hands of their most dynamic sector.

Consider the political significance of the current elections in Britain. Read the speeches being made by the Conservatives during the present election campaign and the responses by Lloyd George. At first glance, this must seem like a madhouse. Lloyd George is pursuing a conservative policy, and the Conservatives propose the very same programme. Formally, nothing has changed, but reaction's real face is expressed in two slogans: first, that of Bonar Law, 'Create order in the country', and second, the simple fact that, once the Conservative Party was freed from Liberal influence, the most ruthless wing of the Conservatives took control. Although the government contains only a small number of diehards, there is no doubt that, if the situation becomes more acute, this most reactionary wing of the Conservatives will take over.

8. The Cannes Conference of the five main Allied powers met 6–13 January 1922 to formulate a response to Germany's failure to pay reparations as demanded. During the Conference, on 12 January, the French government headed by Briand fell. He was replaced as premier by Poincaré, who demanded greater intransigence in imposing reparations. The Conference agreed on temporary adjustments of reparations payments, but most issues were left unresolved.

Bourgeois forces are consolidating in order to emerge from their overall decay and save what can be saved. Bonar Law's first action was an attempt to get rid of the Ministry of Labour with the statement that the state should interfere as little as possible in the economy – a counterpart to Mussolini's statement that, in economic terms, he is an old liberal, in the true sense of the word: No interference in the economy! That means giving capitalism the chance to utilise its superior strength ruthlessly against the working class.

3. The victory of Fascism

Comrades, this same policy is given a much more conscious form by the counter-revolutionary conspiratorial organisations. It is a depressing fact that a reading of the underground circulars and writings of counter-revolutionary groupings clearly shows that they are a thousand times better informed about what we are doing and about our most recent thoughts on revolutionary strategy, even of small moves on the chessboard, than we are with respect to them. (*Very true!*)

Although it now rules within the law, *counter-revolution has an illegal existence*, which unites its most conscious forces. Only their deeds reveal the plan guiding this most purposeful sector of counter-revolution. There is not the slightest doubt that the German counter-revolutionary circles led by Colonel Bauer are closely linked to the Russian monarchists, with the Horthy régime in Hungary, and with Mussolini, and that they maintain links to the French militarist party that will one day be revealed in garish colours. If you observe the moves of this right wing of counter-revolution, you see clearly that in Central Europe there are three possible seats of proletarian revolution: industrial Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Italy. Their plan is therefore to erect a barrier between these three countries. Efforts to create a fortress of counter-revolution in Bavaria go hand in hand with those to subject Austria to counter-revolutionary rule.

The beginning of this process is seen in the Geneva treaty, the thrusting aside of Austria's parliament, and the abolition of its weak army, which, in Vienna, was still made up of proletarian forces.⁹ As soon as the counter-

9. Postwar Austria, as delimited by the Paris peace treaties, was economically unviable – cut off by tariff barriers from traditional markets, barred from seeking economic integration with Germany, and burdened by reparations. By 1922, the Austrian currency had collapsed; the government, deeply indebted to foreign powers, was bankrupt; and much of the population was destitute. In August 1922, Austria appealed for help to the League of Nations, which demanded in return full control of Austrian national finances. The Austrian government accepted this condition, which was embodied in a protocol adopted by an international conference in Geneva on

revolution places the Wittelsbachs back on the [Bavarian] throne, the connection with Austria will be restored through Tyrol. The Hungary of Horthy will shift toward Central Europe. The victory of the Fascists in Italy forms part of this policy, which partly results from conscious leadership and partly arises spontaneously from the politics of the situation. I believe it is important for the Communist International to understand the Fascists' victory and their character. I hope you will permit me to speak of this at greater length than would perhaps correspond to Italy's importance. I hope that Comrade Bordiga will bring to bear his more intimate understanding of the facts to give us a more detailed picture and possibly correct what I say.

I see the victory of Fascism not merely as a triumph of their arms, but as the greatest defeat that socialism and communism have suffered since the beginning of this period of world-revolution. It is a greater defeat than that in soviet Hungary. For the victory of Fascism results from the present intellectual and political bankruptcy of Italian socialism and the entire Italian workers' movement. The Fascists represent bourgeois counter-revolution; that needs no further demonstration. Those who wreck workers' organisations and maintain the power of the bourgeoisie are counter-revolutionaries.

If we stop short at the banal statement that the bourgeoisie has triumphed there, we would not understand something that will be extremely important for the German and Czechoslovak movements, perhaps as soon as in the next few months. (*'Very true!'*) The question is this: *How was the victory of Fascism possible; what is its base of support; and what does it represent that is new in the spectrum of European counter-revolution?* We only need to ask whether Mussolini is equivalent socially and politically to Stinnes or Bonar Law, or whether he represents something different. I believe Mussolini is something different, even though his programme is just the same as that of Bonar Law and Stinnes. And his distinctive character is extremely important.

Let us recall who the Fascists are and how they originated. Back from the War came the lower bourgeois layers – the intellectuals, pharmacists, school teachers, veterinarians, and so on, all of whom had played a social role in the War. (Intellectuals have always played a much greater role in Italy than in other countries. We need only recall that, before the War, our Italian sister party included about seventy university teachers; that shows how broad the intellectual layer is there.) They came back from the War as nationalists, dis-

4 October. The League appointed a Commissioner General to take charge of Austrian finances; control of Austria's currency was transferred to a League-supervised bank; and eighty-four thousand public employees were dismissed. Austria obtained additional loans of US\$130 million during the League's trusteeship, which lasted until 1926. See report and resolution on Austria, pp. 915–25.

heartened that despite its victory, Italy had not obtained what the nationalist programme demanded.

Back they came to a country whose economy was entirely ruined, whose state is not capable of providing for them. They saw the growth of a revolutionary workers' movement. This movement looked on them with hostility, not only because it is a workers' movement, but because, as supporters of intervention in the War, they had battled against the Socialist Party. And the Socialist Party did all it could to turn away these layers – and not them alone, but even the disabled veterans. Many Socialist-led municipal governments abandoned the disabled veterans in 1919 because they had been in the War. The Socialist Party was not able to give active expression to the sentiment that something new was afoot and that one could not stay stuck in the old rut. When you review these facts, you understand the birth of Fascism. Recall that, in the December 1919 elections, Mussolini received only four thousand votes in Milan, although he took a stand for control of parliament by workers' councils, distribution of landed property to the peasants, and generalised nationalisation of industry. The Fascists were then partly with D'Annunzio in Fiume [Rijeka],¹⁰ partly dispersed in little groups. Meanwhile, the tide of revolution swept through the country. It was not just a matter of strikes but of the complete dissolution of bourgeois Italy.

In preparing my report, I came across an article by the Polish counter-revolutionary writer Nowaczynski, who makes an interesting contribution to this picture of ruin. The article takes up the evolution of Italian literature in the years 1918–22. This article provides interesting evidence, and I tried to confirm the facts with Italian comrades and by checking literary reviews. It appears that, following 1918, *belles lettres* in Italy were pacifist, social reforming, and pornographic – a sure sign of the bourgeoisie's breakdown. After the victory over the working class, this literature became nationalist.

One of our diplomatic representatives abroad spoke of an Italian diplomat, who told him in 1920, 'Well, we recognise that the revolution is winning. Let us hope it at least gives us the chance to continue our work.' That was the state of mind of the bourgeois Italian. Socialism was growing in strength, but this strength was frittered away. A bourgeois paper in Germany published a report on Mussolini's decision to seize power to this effect: The reporter asked Mussolini, 'Will you risk taking power illegally?' Mussolini answered, 'Legally or illegally, I will do it. The Socialists were defeated because their

10. Possession of the city of Fiume, on the northern Adriatic, had been disputed at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference by Italy and newly constituted Yugoslavia. While negotiations continued, in September 1919, an Italian nationalist militia-detachment led by D'Annunzio seized the city. Fiume retained de facto independence until 1924, when the territory was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia.

words did not lead to any deeds.’ Mussolini sensed that his military organisations and the large following he had won to his side would turn against him if he did not seize power. It was the Socialist Party’s inability to lead the masses into struggle that gave birth to the Fascists. When the workers occupied the factories, the Italian bourgeoisie was so powerless that Giolitti, the fox from Cuneo, said he could not send soldiers into the factories because that would result in his defeat in the streets. But, with the aid of the Italian reformists, the workers were induced to leave the factories. At that point, the Italian bourgeoisie no longer knew fear and shifted to the offensive.

But the question then is why they did not do this using its state apparatus, the *carabinieri* [national police], the bourgeois courts and bourgeois parties?

The bourgeois parties were in disarray. They had led the war and ruined the state and economy, and they had lost the confidence of the soldiers, officials, and petty bourgeois. But Mussolini and the nationalist petty-bourgeois intellectuals displayed a new will for power. The Fascists offered a new approach. They said: ‘Socialism is not capable of doing anything new; we will mediate between workers and capitalists, forcing the capitalists to satisfy the needs of workers. But you workers must work. You must build the nation.’

Rosa Luxemburg once said that the bourgeoisie’s best defenders are those who have illusions. Only the petty bourgeoisie nourishes illusions, and, since Italian socialism had shown itself to be illusory, the Fascists could counterpose to it the illusions of the petty bourgeoisie. They fell upon the workers’ organisations, which did not know how to defend themselves. In the cities and centres of industry, the masses still held their own. But, in the small towns and villages, where workers were dispersed, they fell victim to Fascism. First, it used armed force to conquer their organisations; then it took leadership of them. The worker masses in the industrial centres inwardly still rejected them. But there is no doubt that, in the countryside and small towns, the workers were conquered not only by weapons but in part by the Fascists’ demagoguery. The first result of their assault was a growth of reformism.

In Livorno, the reformists were still a small handful. At the last trade-union congress, five hundred thousand votes were cast for a coalition with the bourgeoisie. Reformism emerged from the war defeated. But without a doubt, the fact that the proletariat did not know how to defend itself against Fascism drove many of the workers into the reformists’ arms. Because the Socialist Party did not show the workers how to conduct a revolutionary defence against the Fascists, many of the workers followed the reformists, who promised to protect them from the worst through a coalition with the bourgeoisie and participation in the bourgeois government. But they missed the key point. The reformists’ negotiations with the wing of the bourgeoisie that feared the Fascists’ victory – not trusting them to administer the state –

were one of the factors leading the Fascists to speed up plans to overthrow the Facta government.

Comrades, the fact that Fascism has now triumphed without the slightest resistance by the working class justifies us in saying that we have reached the low point in the course of events in Italy.

I have avoided criticising specific comrades regarding these events – even though we should also not adopt the approach of the Roman senate, which would celebrate the return of a defeated general. But this we must say: if our comrades in Italy and the Socialist Party of Italy do not understand the reasons for Fascism's victory and for our defeat, Fascism will long rule in Italy. Building an illegal organisation does not just demand courage, which is characteristic of Italian communism, but requires that Fascism be politically defeated. Only if the Italian Communists are capable of inspiring in the working masses – despite all they have been through – a new confidence that socialism can bring victory, will they be soon capable of initiating the struggle against Fascism.

The Fascists represent the petty bourgeoisie, which has come to power with bourgeois support and will now be required to carry out the programme not of the petty bourgeoisie but of capitalism. And that is why this great counter-revolution is also the weakest of Europe's counter-revolutionary powers. Mussolini arrives with his great train of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and, right away, he runs into a government deficit of seven billion. He proposes programme of thrift and reduction of the bureaucracy. But, behind him, stand hundreds of thousands of those expecting posts in the government. Mussolini created an army of Blackshirts, and then, on the day when the king receives him and confirms him as prime minister, he says, 'Now we have only one army'. But these people did not travel all over Italy because of Mussolini's pretty face. They lived from their profession as white brigands. And, if Mussolini relies only on the regular army and sends these people home, they will present their bill.

When Mussolini and the Fascists helped the bourgeoisie suppress the working class, they absorbed all counter-revolutionary bourgeois forces. In Fascism, we see an agrarian wing and an industrial wing. And the struggle that the Northern-Italian industrial bourgeoisie must carry out against the Southern-Italian agrarians will lead to conflicts that will undermine Fascism. Mussolini portrays a policy of the master race, of hostility to democracy. But, by drawing the broad democratic masses into his movement, he has created within it a democratic wing.

And the very strength of Fascism also represents the occasion for its death. Because it is a broad petty-bourgeois party, it was able to combat us on a

broad front and muster up enthusiasm. But, for this very same reason, it will not be able to carry through the policies of Italian capitalism without provoking revolts in its own ranks. A few years ago, Comrade Serrati protested against our agrarian programme.¹¹ But now the resurrection of the Italian Party will be dependent on whether we are able to organise peasants against Fascism. If our Italian Communist friends want to have a small, pure party, I must tell them frankly that a small, pure party can be readily accommodated in prison. There, it can cultivate its spirit in a purified environment. But, if the Italian Communist Party wants to become powerful, it will have to mobilise the proletarian and petty-bourgeois masses against Fascism. Theoretical resolutions on the united front and reflections on Fascism are not enough. Yes, even the heroism of a small band of Communists is not enough. We must be the masses' cry for liberation.

4. The battle against the capitalist counteroffensive

Comrades, the capitalist offensive is now unfolding with growing strength in both economic and political spheres. This whole offensive poses, of course, the question: 'What are its prospects? Are we faced here with a wave of counter-revolution, taking over from the wave of revolution, as was the case in 1849? Have we passed through the entire cycle of revolution and counter-revolution?' That is the basic question, and answering it is a precondition for all of our future policies. And, here, we must note that *counter-revolution's victory in 1849 was based on the economic upswing brought about by the opening of the California gold mines*.

I will not delve into this; you can find it in the third volume of Marx's papers.¹² The European counter-revolution triumphed because it drew profits from the capitalist upswing, pressing it to make a compromise with the agrarians and provide some bread to the young working class, which diverted proletarians from thought of an uprising. The wave of counter-revolution now flowing over the world is best characterised as not based on a period of generalised economic upturn but, rather, as *an attempt to use instruments of power to halt an economic decline*. We need only consider the present situation of the British government to see that counter-revolution not only provides no solution but on the contrary aggravates the situation. It is enough to mention

11. See Serrati's comments in the Second Congress, Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 653–4.

12. Radek is probably thinking of Volume 3 of Marx's *Theories of Surplus Value* (Marx 2000). The California gold rush is also briefly mentioned in Chapter 35 of the third volume of Marx's *Capital* (Marx 1977–81, 3, p. 699).

the most basic facts. British capitalism is challenged to end unemployment in conditions of a crisis in the Orient that it can delay but not resolve, as well as of increasing American competition, contraction of the British market, a catastrophic decline of the [German] mark, and sharpening conflict in India. The Conservatives will try to use force to halt this evolution, but they will only speed it up.

They will reinforce the chaos. In this regard, Lloyd George is quite right to say, 'You will only smash up everything', opposing from his bourgeois point of view a victory of either the Labour Party or the Conservatives. Consider the policies of French reactionaries. Without a doubt, they have temporarily strengthened France, but at the cost of producing a situation where one can say that France and Britain are effectively at war in the Orient. The Entente and European peace were saved only because both powers, on the edge of the abyss, pulled themselves together and stepped back.¹³

But a compromise between British and French imperialism has become even less likely now that the most radical wing of British imperialism has triumphed, even though it poses as friendly to France. And, as for Germany, there is no doubt that the collapse of the Wirth government and the coming to power of Stinnes will immensely aggravate the contradictions.¹⁴ *Counter-revolution cannot provide bread or peace. That is why the present counter-revolutionary offensive, despite its ruthlessness, has no hope of success.* Its duration will depend on the extent to which we are capable of going over to a counter-offensive. Its social basis is definitely narrow. It has neither the striking power nor the connections and foundations to wage a lengthy and victorious war.

Comrades, this brings us to the third aspect of our topic: the question of the working-class resistance. Comrades, even we Communists cannot say that we immediately understood the signs of the times. Last year, when the capitalist offensive was already in full swing, we were still striving to overcome the dispute about the proletarian offensive.¹⁵ But there is can be no doubt that we were the first to understand the signs of the times and to take the field to initiate proletarian resistance – and, where possible, to go over to a counteroffensive. It all began back in January 1921, with our policy of the 'Open Letter' in Germany.¹⁶ This was only an empirical step, as was shown by the March

13. Regarding the crisis in the Near East, see p. 651, n. 2.

14. Wirth, who headed a coalition government with the SPD, had resigned as chancellor of Germany the day before Radek's speech, on 14 November 1922. He was replaced on 22 November by Wilhelm Cuno, leading a government considered to represent leading figures in German industry such as Stinnes.

15. Regarding the 'dispute about the proletarian offensive', see p. 173, n. 15.

16. Regarding the 'Open Letter', see p. 145, n. 28.

events,¹⁷ which would have been impossible if we had thought through to the end the situation that led us to the 'Open Letter'. Since the Third Congress, we have understood the objective situation more and more thoroughly. When the Communist International launched the united-front tactic, it showed that it is capable of leading not only the proletariat's advance but also its defence.

Comrades, what are our plans for defence? Clarifying its foundations simultaneously provides an answer to our policy questions. The period of proletarian offensive was characterised by broader and broader masses joining in the assault against capitalism. Recall the mood of the proletariat in Germany in 1919, when not only Communists and Independents but also workers in the Scheidemann-party [SPD] were convinced in the workplaces that socialism was on the march and that the only disagreement with Communists concerned method. Recall that in Britain, in 1919, broad masses were thinking in terms of socialism, and that because of a foreign-policy question, support for Soviet Russia, Britain in the summer of 1920 was close to a mass strike.¹⁸ There is thus no question that what characterised the period of offensive by the working masses was a conscious struggle for power.

What characterises the world we now live in is that *although world capitalism has not overcome its crisis, and the question of power is still objectively the core of every question, the broadest masses of the proletariat have lost the belief that they can conquer power in the foreseeable future*. They have been forced onto the defensive.

Comrades, we combat the notion of coalition with the bourgeoisie, and we are right to do so. However, we observe that what is posed today is not a coalition of Social Democracy, of the workers' parties, with the bourgeoisie. Rather, the workers' parties and even some of the liberal parties are being kicked out of all the bourgeois governments. And, even given this fact, the working class in its majority remains passive. How else can we explain the response to the Social Democrats' declaration at Görlitz that they were prepared to ally with Stinnes?¹⁹ Every worker understood that this was a capitulation by Social Democracy. And, to be sure, in some localities, groups of workers came into motion. But there was no storm of protest by the German workers. The feeling in the working class that its strength is disappearing is perhaps the strongest reason why the unification of the Independents and the

17. The 'Open Letter' proclaimed the KPD's united-front approach; the party's March Action of 1921 broke with this policy. See p. 78, n. 17.

18. The foreign-policy question that sparked a labour upsurge in 1920 was the British government's plan to aid Poland in its war against Soviet Russia. See also p. 636, n. 12.

19. Stinnes was a leader of the right-wing DVP (German Peoples' Party). The SPD's Görlitz Convention of September 1921 accepted the possibility of joining in a governmental coalition with the DVP, which had not previously been an SPD coalition partner.

SPD took place so smoothly. (*Germans: 'Very true'*) The workers are convinced that their power has vanished. That is why even the Independent workers, who were against coalition with the bourgeoisie, are now ready to unite with the Social Democrats, in order to cling to the last scrap of power.

This situation is thus that the idea of a struggle for power is for the moment not present among the broadest worker masses. Rather, the entire situation has forced them backwards, and the great majority of the working class feels powerless. Given these facts, *the conquest of power is not on the agenda as an immediate task*. That is a historical fact. And, if Communists answer every question, even that of state administration of dentistry, by saying that only under the dictatorship of the proletariat will teeth be extracted without pain, (*Laughter*) well, repeating that may possibly have propagandistic value, but it does not alter the fact that our own comrades, Communist workers, are convinced that the struggle for power is not possible at this time – even though we know that, sooner than some suppose, many states will tremble before a struggle for proletarian dictatorship.

From this it flows that – even leaving aside the question of the united-front tactic – if we are going to pose only the political tasks that tie us to the broadest worker masses, we must, above all, conduct a struggle around questions *that have the greatest immediate relevance to the broad working masses: questions of wages, hours of work, housing, defence against white danger, against the war danger, and all the issues of working people's daily life*. Communism does not consist of sticking one's head in the sand and saying that it is not appropriate for such a good Communist as me to bother with things like this. Simply in order to hold to the banner of communism the workers we have already won, we must concentrate our struggle around these questions. *Only in the broadening, deepening, and heightening of these struggles will a struggle for [proletarian] dictatorship arise*.

The worker sees in the factory and in every strike that he cannot struggle for the most immediate and vital goals unless he does this together with the other workers.

And not just that. He sees that workers in their masses are united on these questions, without regard to their party affiliation. And, because that is so, the Communist party's politics must explain *how to deal with the fact that the workers put forward the same demands but are politically divided*. Comrades, if we do not succeed in speaking to the masses as supporters of the conception of a proletarian united front, we will shrink down to a little handful. What gives our workers the strength to stay with the Communist party in this period, indeed to draw new masses around them, is not merely our goal, not only the growing understanding of their most advanced layers that a proletarian

dictatorship is necessary, but also the feeling that we are the *unifying force* in the working class. Never did I feel that more strongly than at the end of 1920, when I attended the unity convention in Berlin and spoke to comrades there.²⁰ We split off all the forces from Social Democracy that were prepared on the basis of their previous experience of revolution to embrace the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat. The workers who could not take that step perceived only the split. Meanwhile, the entire situation had temporarily driven our final goals into the background of the masses' consciousness. Given this, our comrades believed that propaganda regarding the final goals and the split, no matter how indispensable and vital, cannot win over new and broad masses of workers.

They believed that they had to talk to workers about what the workers are thinking and feeling, how they are oppressed by unemployment and lack of food, indeed how they go hungry even when they are working. For the working masses, the idea of a united front means gathering the working class for a struggle against the suffering inflicted on them by capitalism in its disintegration.

The second question was, given the need for a united front, *how was it to be implemented?* Should it be by addressing the broadest masses of the proletariat with the call: struggle with us under the banner of communism? Should we tell the workers that we reject all negotiations with the trade unions and leadership bodies?

It takes little thought to see that the idea of trying to achieve a united front in this manner is total nonsense. The Social-Democratic workers know that their party is against the dictatorship [of the proletariat]. But they believe that the Social-Democratic Party defends their interests, and that is why they still belong to it. Given that these workers are convinced that Scheidemann, Grassmann, Renaudel, and Jouhaux want to fight for the eight-hour day, they will say to us: 'Yes, quite right, we must fight together, but have you talked about this with Scheidemann, Renaudel, and Henderson?'

Should we reply by telling them that Scheidemann is a traitor? If they agreed with us in this judgement of Scheidemann, we would not have to preach to them about that, they would be with us. But this judgement is precisely what divides us. That is why, despite this opinion, if we want a united front, we must negotiate with the leaders of the Second International. The difference between the Second and the Communist International does not lie in the fact that we are for the dictatorship of the proletariat, while they are determined to fight for socialism with the methods of democracy. No, it is that they do

20. At the Berlin Convention of 4–7 December 1920, the KPD (Spartacus League) and the pro-Comintern majority of the USPD joined to form the VKPD (United Communist Party of Germany).

not want to fight at all, not even for a crust of bread. When they have compromised themselves, when we have shown the masses in life that they do not want to fight and why they do not want to fight, then the road to the united front will be open.

Many comrades will say at this point that, since we know this, we should avoid strengthening the illusions of the proletariat if it is only in order to then refute them. But this is not a matter of strengthening illusions, but rather of refuting them. They must be refuted not with words but with deeds. There are some odd birds in our party who are afraid the Social Democrats will not allow themselves to be exposed, but will perhaps struggle. I do not think there is anyone of sound mind who would not welcome it if the Social Democrats wanted to struggle. And, when the Social Democrats reproach us, saying: 'You come to us hiding a dagger. You want to embrace us in order to crush us', we reply, '*That depends on you.* Show that you want to fight, and then we will travel at least a part of the road with you.' We do not fear that in the least.

When we came to the conference of the three executives,²¹ it was not with the intention of executing a manoeuvre and some dances that would make it clear that we were good dancers and the others were not. We came *to organise the proletarian united front, if possible from above*, in order to enable the working class if not to move immediately to a counteroffensive, then at least to defend its positions. This plan failed. And not on the question of a world workers' congress. If you analyse the situation, you will see that it failed because the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals *counterposed to our plan for defence their plan for capitulation*.

Comrades, the Russian question played a very great role here. And I must therefore spend a little time on this. It seemed to many comrades that the Social Democrats were engaged in a manoeuvre to utilise our struggle against the Mensheviks – who are members of the Two-and-a-Half International – to drive the latter away from the Communist International. Comrades, I do not overestimate the intellectual calibre of the Social-Democratic leaders. It is possible that they were only carrying out a tactical manoeuvre. But the facts are what they are, even if this is not reflected in the mind of someone like Wels.

With regard to the Russian question, the Social Democrats of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals demanded from us that we legalise – I'm speaking not of how they presented it but what the content was – legalise the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, and then they would support Soviet Russia. What did that signify? What is Soviet Russia fighting for? Soviet Russia is fighting to keep the factories and the land in the hands

21. Radek is referring to the Conference of the Three Internationals held in Berlin, 2–5 April 1921. See p. 137, n. 17.

of the workers' state. What is the programme of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries? The Mensheviks have now presented their programme in great clarity in articles by Martov and Dan: it is a return to capitalism and the abandonment of nationalised production. Martov formulates this position as follows: 'End the obstacles to capitalist development in Russia!'. Thus, the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are willing to support Soviet Russia only if Soviet Russia legalises the parties that want to compel Soviet Russia to capitulate. And they pursue this goal in part through an alliance with Entente capitalism. We got the impression during the Genoa Conference that these people were too stupid and blind to see that Soviet Russia is fighting so that the international working class will not be thrown back to the starting point of the revolution, back to 1914, when the factories were in the hands of capitalism in every country of the world, when there was not yet a proletarian state. The Mensheviks' current statement shows that it is not just stupidity and blindness; it is their programme. Halt the struggle for socialism in Russia because, as Martov puts it, world-revolution has been thrown back all down the line.

And what was the position of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals regarding defence of the elementary basic interests of the West European proletariat? When we called for a struggle for the eight-hour day and against reductions in wages, they, of course, did not openly tell us 'no'. They told us they would not work with us unless we dissolved the Red International of Labour Unions. What does that mean? It means that, until the Communists have given up the struggle against the trade-union bureaucracy that sacrificed the eight-hour day internationally, carried through the lengthening of work shifts in Germany, betrayed the struggle of British miners on Black Friday,²² and is not only retreating all across the line but has already capitulated. When negotiations were broken off in Berlin, this meant, socially and politically, that *we came with a plan for a defence campaign, and our opponents demanded of us that the Communist International and the portion of the working class supporting it should abandon the struggle*. These were the social concepts that were starkly expressed around the question of a world workers' congress. The leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals were not prepared to struggle, and that is why the attempt to establish a united front from above broke down.

Comrades, the question we now face is whether we should abandon our efforts to establish the united front not only from below but from above. Our

22. On Black Friday (15 April 1921), leaders of the British transport and rail workers' unions broke their pledge of unity with the mine workers' union by rejecting strike action in support of the miners' struggle against wage reductions.

answer is that not only are we not giving up this plan, but *we will redouble our efforts to bring it to reality*. The Social-Democratic leaders know very well that the beginning of such a campaign will have, as its first result, a break of their coalition with the bourgeoisie. They will have to quit the coalition before they get thrown out. And then, when Stinnes, Bonar Law, and Poincaré are in office, the whole situation will be so clear that they will have to rally their own forces to begin the struggle. And we must know that they will use every means to defend themselves against that, but we must work to create circumstances where they will be compelled to retreat from this stand. If they were able in May to sabotage the first attempt to create an inclusive united front, this is because we were not able to conduct a strong agitation for this idea among the masses. When our Berlin organisation was not able to bring delegations from five hundred factories to the Reichstag, it was clear that no matter how loud the proclamations in *Rote Fahne*, it would leave Wels cold. Things went better in the Rhineland and in Eberfeld, but the impact of events in the outlying regions is felt more slowly than those in the centre.

In France, the French comrades sabotaged this policy, even though without it they would decline not merely to the level of a political sect, but to one of political dilettantes.

In Italy, our friend Bordiga came upon the devilishly clever idea of a united front in the trade unions but not in politics!

When we talk of a struggle for the united front, we must first of all admit to ourselves that *we have not yet conducted it as a unified Communist force. We have only taken the first steps in that direction.*

Further, if our pressure was too small, we must increase and heighten it. But we may still not succeed *all at once, on an international level*, in inducing the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals to go with us, all the more in that they are now unifying. But that does not mean that we should reject negotiations at the leadership level. We should *orient to the countries where the pressure is greatest*. Our opponents have set up a barrier, and we will break through it frontally at the point where the pressure of the working masses is greatest. Of course, we do not know whether this will succeed on an international scale. *If it does not succeed, so much the worse for the Second International*. For that would show that it is ordained to perish, that it does not understand how to jump off the bourgeoisie's wagon and will crash down with this wagon into the abyss. This will take a great deal of work and time, but it is the only way to bring the masses into struggle and to the banner of communism.

In my concluding section, comrades, permit me to speak briefly regarding the slogans raised in struggle.

5. The slogans of our struggle

Our activity begins with the demand for wage increases, maintenance of the eight-hour day, and building the factory-council movement. But these demands are not enough. Not only Communist workers but those with no party affiliation understand and will demand that they be paid one thousand marks a day, if they are unable to live on five hundred. But they will see that raising nominal wages is no solution. In the first stages of the struggle, these demands are sufficient, but *the more that the struggle expands*, the more it will be necessary to raise political and organisational slogans. This is the moment at which we go over *from defence to attack*.

We have already raised these slogans at the Second World Congress, based on our general analysis of the decay of capitalism and the tasks of the proletariat. I examined them in my report at the Third Congress. We proposed first of all the slogan of *control of production*. This demand is needed to give workers a perspective, showing them that the proletariat is capable of halting economic disintegration.

It shows them a perspective of economic reconstruction that leads out of the chaos. The struggle for this demand will lead to the question of state power, because the bourgeoisie will do all possible to block reconstruction carried out at their cost.

The Communist parties must therefore not merely advance the slogan of control of production from time to time in an article or some congress, but make it a central factor in their movement. They must succeed in showing the workers that, if we do not utilise control of production in the factories and workplaces to take hold of the power, the economic chaos will grow worse every day. Control of production is a slogan that shows the masses a way forward, an idea guiding them through the next period. Suppose that we raise a slogan against taxes, namely that the bourgeoisie should carry the burden through seizure of material assets,²³ this slogan is left hanging in the air unless bodies of proletarian control exist that are capable of rooting the slogan in reality.

Comrades, these questions will be discussed on a broad scale by the Communist parties as part of the question of our programme. Some comrades of the International may believe, for example, that the notion of confiscating material assets is just a German specialty, but given the escalating devaluation of the currency in France, Italy, and a number of other countries, this issue can

23. Galloping inflation in Germany made it impractical to finance the government through taxes calculated in currency. Workers' organisations, including the SPD, responded in 1921–3 by demanding 'confiscation of real values' as a means of taxing the rich. The KPD advanced a radical version of this demand.

become the starting point of proletarian struggles. In such a struggle, we will be met by bourgeois violence. This raises the need for a slogan regarding our relationship to armed force. The demand that armed power be concentrated in the hands of the workers, organised in trade unions, is closely related to the proletariat's defensive struggles and will arise spontaneously everywhere.

6. Workers' government

And I now come to a question that plays a major role in our struggle against the capitalist offensive and to which Comrade Zinoviev gave considerable attention in his presentation on tactics: the workers' government. Comrade Zinoviev offered an abstract classification of the possible forms of a workers' government. I agree with this attempt at classification. I would expand it only with reference to the forms of workers' and peasants' governments possible in countries like Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, and so on.

It is important for us here to replace the abstract classification with the question: *'What do the worker masses – not just the Communists – think of when they talk of a workers' government?'* I will limit myself to the countries in which this concept has already won a response: Britain, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. In Britain, they think of the Labour Party. Communism does not have mass influence there. In the countries where capitalism is in decomposition, this concept is closely bound together with the united front. Workers think that united front means that, when there is a strike in the factories, Communists and Social Democrats do not fight each other but work together. The idea of a workers' government has the same meaning for the working masses: *they think of a government of all workers' parties.*

What are the stakes for the masses here, both practically and politically? This question demands an answer. And how do we approach this question? If we look into the question of how likely it really is for such a workers' coalition government to come into being, we can come up with a thousand stimulating answers. We can say that the workers' government is not inevitable, but possible. Or, following Comrade Zinoviev, we can say paradoxically that it is not inevitable but is likely the most improbable road. The question will be decided politically by *whether Social Democracy will stand by the bourgeoisie right to its death.* If that is the case, then a workers' government is possible only as a dictatorship of the Communist proletariat. We cannot decide the policies of Social Democracy. The question we must decide when we go to the masses in our struggle against the capitalist offensive is *whether or not we are prepared to struggle for a workers' coalition government and create the preconditions for it.*

Supposedly theoretical calculations can only confuse this question for the masses. In my opinion, in our struggle for the united front, we should say frankly that *if the Social-Democratic worker masses force their leaders to break with the bourgeoisie, we are ready to take part in a workers' government, provided this government is a vehicle for class struggle*. But, let me stress, only if Social Democracy is prepared to fight together with us. Imagine that we had a situation where chickens fell fully roasted from the skies, where nothing had changed in the German state: Stinnes had the coal; the monarchists had the army, and Scheidemann had only Wilhelmstrasse.²⁴ Imagine we too were invited to Wilhelmstrasse, and our Comrade Meyer appears, dressed in tails, (*Laughter*) taking by the arm Comrade Ruth Fischer, who is bristling, (*Laughter*) and escorts her into the Reich Chancellery. If such historical conditions existed, such a proposal would run into a hitch, as follows. First of all, a lieutenant with ten men would appear and remove comrades Meyer, Scheidemann, and Ruth Fischer, and that would be the end of the workers' government.

But the struggle against the capitalist offensive is not a matter of parliamentary coalitions but a *platform to mobilise the masses and wage a struggle*. What's at issue is whether the Social Democrats will continue to rot in the coalition; or whether they will be heaved out and will sit in some quiet corner complaining; or whether we will help the masses to compel them to take up the struggle. It could be countered that there's no reason for us to cudgel our brains over what they will do. If it were just a matter of the Social-Democratic leadership, we would certainly prefer to just let them rot. But, if it is a question of mobilising the Social-Democratic worker masses, we must have a positive programme. To what degree does this contradict the dictatorship of the proletariat and civil war? The contradiction is similar to that between the porch and the front door. (*'Very true!'*) If the house is locked, we can also get in through the wall or down the chimney.

Urbahns: Blood has flowed down that chimney.

Radek: This is the first time I've heard that the proletariat prefers to build its barricades on the roof. Even if the bourgeoisie in some country hands over the government to Social Democracy and the Communists, and the Hungarian example shows us that this is not excluded, this will lead to a period of fierce struggles. There can also be a situation similar to Germany on 9 November [1918], when the bourgeoisie simply vanished.²⁵ They may

24. Wilhelmstrasse, a street in central Berlin, was the administrative centre of the German state, housing the Reich Chancellery.

25. On 9 November 1918, a workers' and soldiers' revolution brought down the imperial German government, and power passed momentarily into the hands of

find themselves in a situation where they hand over power to us in the hope that we will not be able to hold it. Whether we come to power through civil war or through a breakdown of the bourgeoisie, workers' government will lead to civil war. The working class will not be able to stay in power without civil war. Not that we Communists believe that we cannot live without civil war, the way Tom Sawyer got the black man to believe he would be freed by an underground gang, when, in reality, the doors stood wide open. It's not that we would say we refuse to accept power without a civil war, that without a civil war we will simply be miserable (*Laughter*) but for the simple reason cited by Comrade Zinoviev: the bourgeoisie may break down at this or that moment, but, ultimately, it will not surrender power without a bitter struggle.

If the Social Democrats are not capable of struggle, then we will advance right over them. If a workers' government comes into being, it will be only the starting point for a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie will not tolerate a workers' government, even if it is democratically constituted. The Social-Democratic worker simply has no choice. He must become a Communist and wage civil war to defend his rule. I therefore believe that, in practice, as events unfold, we are will not be threatened by major dangers of getting stuck in the mud. Provided, of course, that it's a matter of genuine class struggles, not of parliamentary governmental combinations in small isolated regions like Brunswick or Thuringia, where we can take part in the government without civil war – not that I am saying that such questions count for nothing. The workers' government slogan is important to guide us. It conceives of the united front as a unified political goal. The moment when workers come together to fight for the workers' government and control of production will mark the beginning of our counteroffensive. For our offensive begins when we no longer limit ourselves to defending what exists and what is passing away, *but, rather, struggle for new conquests*.

The Communists cannot bring this offensive about artificially. The great error of the March battles [1921] was the attempt to substitute our own party's will to struggle for the struggle of the broad masses. Our will to struggle must find expression in the way we appeal to the masses and organise them. It is characteristic of the state of the workers' movement that, even in the countries where we have the best Communist parties, our Communist agitation is abstract in nature and is not carried forward by the passion of masses who are convinced that they are fighting for goals that can really soon be achieved.

workers' and soldiers' councils. However, an SPD-USPD provisional government organised a rapid transition to parliamentary capitalist rule.

It all gives the impression of pure agitation. Comrades, we don't want our discussions to die of anaemia; we don't want our congresses to sink to the level of a party caucus, in which discussion is limited to theoretical tendencies of development. To avoid that, our parties must in fact pursue a different practical political course – different not in terms of its political line but in terms of the energy of their struggle. And, in discussing the capitalist offensive, comrades, we must recognise that to carry out a change before we can break through to the non-Communist masses.

Many comrades have the impression that the Communist International can only flourish rosy-cheeked at a moment when the revolutionary tide is rising and the proletarian masses are on the attack.

The Communist International is not only the party that will conquer power but also the party of the struggle for power. That is why it is nonsense to think we're suffering through some kind of hangover in which the party cannot fight. This would make the Communist International a parasite of proletarian world-revolution, instead of a fighter. We must avoid a mood of disappointment and of waiting for the revolution. Our slogan must be *struggle for every inch of ground*. All our discussions have a common purpose, namely to grasp that we can build Communist parties only if this is done not in some room where resolutions are written and studied but by carrying out our duties in the practical struggle, in the proletarian united front, in struggle over the questions posed to us today by history. And anyone who sees a contradiction between the line of united front and the process of unifying and strengthening the Communist parties understands nothing about the tasks of the Communist International. We must have solid parties in order to sustain the united front, just as we must fight for the united front in order to have strong parties. (Loud applause)

Adjournment: 3:55 p.m.

Session 12 – Thursday, 16 November 1922

Fascism; the Capitalist Offensive (Continued)

Speakers: Bordiga, Šmeral, Pullman, Urbahns

Convened: 12:20 p.m.

Chairpersons: Kolarov, later Marchlewski

Chair: The congress is now in session. I give the floor to Comrade Bordiga for the report on Fascism.

Bordiga (Italy): Dear comrades, I regret that unusual circumstances affecting communication between our delegation and our party prevent me from having access to all the source material on this question.¹

There is a written report from Comrade Togliatti, but I do not have it here; in fact, I have not had a chance to read it.

With regard to the precise statistical data, I must refer comrades who wish detailed information to this report, which will surely arrive soon and will be translated and distributed here.

I have just received new information from a representative of our party's centre who arrived in Moscow yesterday evening and informed us regarding the most recent Fascist attacks on Italian comrades. I will take up this news in the last part of my report.

Given what Comrade Radek said here yesterday in his talk regarding the Communist Party's response to Fascism, I must also take up another side of the question.

1. The 'unusual circumstances' flowed from Mussolini's assumption of power on 31 October 1922.

Our Comrade Radek criticised the stance of our party toward the question of the Fascists, now the dominant political issue in Italy. He criticised our position – our so-called position – as being that we want to have a small party and judge all issues solely from the point of view of the Party's organisation and its immediate role, without addressing the great political questions.

Since time is short, I will try to be brief. In discussing the Italian question and our relationship to the Socialist Party, we will also have to take up the question of the new situation in Italy created by Fascism. Let me go directly to my report, beginning with the origins of the Fascist movement.

What you might call the immediate and outward origin reaches back to the years 1914 and 1915, the period leading up to Italy's entry into the World War. It began with groups supporting this intervention, which included representatives of different political currents.

There was a right-wing current including Salandra, representing owners of heavy industry, who had an interest in war. In fact, before they came out for war on the Entente side, they actually had favoured war against the Entente.

In addition, there were currents of the left bourgeoisie: the Italian radicals, left-wing democrats and republicans whose tradition demanded liberation of Trieste and the Trentino.² And, thirdly, the intervention movement also embraced some elements of the proletarian movement: revolutionary syndicalists and anarchists. And this grouping also included an individual of particular importance, Mussolini, the leader of the Socialist Party's left wing and the director of *Avanti!*

By and large, the middle group did not take part in the Fascist movement and was reabsorbed into traditional bourgeois politics. What remained in the Fascist movement were the far-right groups plus those from the far Left: ex-anarchists, ex-syndicalists, and ex-revolutionary syndicalists. In May 1915, the country was dragged into the War against the will of the majority of the population and even of parliament, which found no way to resist this sudden political coup. This was a big victory for these political groups. But, when the War ended, their influence dwindled – in fact, they were aware of this even during the war. They had imagined the War as a very simple undertaking. As people saw that the war was dragging on, these groups completely lost their popularity, which, to be frank, was never that great.

When the War ended, these groups' influence became minimal. During and after the period of demobilisation, toward the end of 1918, during 1919, and

2. Trieste and the Trentino were territories with a substantial Italian population that had been retained by Austria-Hungary after the process of Italian unification of 1859–70; both were awarded to Italy in 1919.

the first half of 1920, amid the generalised discontent generated by the results of the War, this political tendency was completely ineffective.

Nonetheless, there is a political and organisational connection between the movement that then seemed almost extinguished and the powerful movement now deployed before our eyes. The *fasci di combattimento* [fighting bands] never went out of existence. Mussolini remained leader of the Fascist movement, whose paper is *Il Popolo d'Italia* [*The Italian People*].

In the elections at the end of October 1919, the Fascists were utterly defeated in Milan, where their daily paper and leadership was located. Their vote total was extremely small, yet they continued their work.

Thanks to the revolutionary enthusiasm that had taken hold of the masses, the revolutionary-socialist current of the proletariat became much stronger after the War. There is no need for me to go into the causes for that here. Nonetheless, this current did not know how to utilise this favourable situation. In the final analysis, this tendency withered away completely because all the favourable objective and psychological conditions for strengthening a revolutionary organisation were not matched by the existence of a party capable of utilising this situation to build a stable organisation. I do not claim, as Comrade Zinoviev has done, that the Socialist Party could have made the revolution in those days. But, at the very least, it could have succeeded in endowing the revolutionary forces of the working masses with a solid organisation. It was not capable of carrying out this task.

We therefore had to witness the decline of the popularity previously enjoyed by the socialist current in Italy, with its consistent anti-war stance. And, in this crisis of Italian social life, to the degree that the socialist movement made one mistake after another, the opposite movement, Fascism, began to gain strength. In particular, Fascism succeeded very well in taking advantage of the crisis that now gripped the economy and whose effects were increasingly felt by the proletariat's trade-union organisations.

At the most critical moment, the Fascist movement gained strength from D'Annunzio's expedition to Fiume, which endowed it with a certain moral authority.³ Although D'Annunzio's movement was distinct from Fascism, that event led to the rise of its organisation and armed strength.

We have referred to the conduct of the proletarian-socialist movement, whose mistakes were repeatedly criticised by the International. These mistakes led to a complete reversal in the attitude of the bourgeoisie and other classes. The proletariat was divided and demoralised. As the working class saw victory slip through its hands, its mood shifted radically. It can be said that, in 1919 and 1920, the Italian bourgeoisie had somewhat come to terms

3. Regarding the Fiume expedition, see p. 387, n. 10.

with the fact that it would have to witness the victory of the revolution. The middle class and petty bourgeoisie were inclined to play a passive role, following in the wake not of the big bourgeoisie but of the proletariat, which was on the edge of victory.

But, now, the mood changed fundamentally. Rather than witnessing a proletarian victory, we see instead how the bourgeoisie is gathering its forces for defence. As the middle class saw that the Socialist Party was not able to organise itself to get the upper hand, they gave expression to their dissatisfaction. They gradually lost the confidence they had placed in the proletariat's determination and turned toward the opposite side. At this moment, the bourgeoisie launched the capitalist offensive, capitalising above all on the mood of the middle class. Thanks to its very heterogeneous composition, Fascism was able to solve this problem; indeed, it was even able to rein in somewhat the offensive of the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

Italy is a classic example of the capitalist offensive. As Comrade Radek explained here yesterday, this offensive is a complex phenomenon, which must be examined not only in terms of wage reductions or extension of the hours of work, but also in the general arena of the bourgeoisie's political and military campaign against the working class.

In Italy, during the period of Fascism's development, we have experienced every form of the capitalist offensive. From its very beginnings, after a critical discussion of the situation, our Communist party indicated to the Italian proletariat its tasks in unified self-defence against the bourgeois offensive. It drew up a coherent plan for the proletariat's mobilisation against this offensive.

In order to examine the capitalist offensive as a whole, we must analyse the situation in general terms, particularly with reference to industry, on the one hand, and agriculture on the other.

In industry the capitalist offensive took advantage above all of the economic conditions. The crisis had begun, and unemployment was spreading. A portion of the workers had to be laid off, and it was simple for the employers to throw out of the factories the workers who led the trade unions, the extremists. The industrial crisis enabled the employers to reduce wages and to place in question the disciplinary and moral concessions they had previously been forced to grant the workers of their factories.

At the outset of this crisis, the employers formed a class alliance, the General League of Industry, which organised this struggle and directed the campaign in each separate branch of industry.

In the major cities, the struggle against the working class did not begin with the immediate use of force. In general, the urban workers were in large groups; they could readily gather in large numbers and offer a serious defence. The

proletariat was, above all, driven into trade-union struggles, which, under the conditions of acute economic crisis, had unfavourable outcomes. Unemployment was growing steadily. The only way to successfully withstand the economic struggles unfolding across industry would have been to transfer activity from the trade-union domain to that of revolution, through the dictatorship of a genuinely Communist political party. But the Italian Socialist Party was not such an organisation.

During the decisive confrontation, it was not able to shift the activity of the Italian proletariat into a revolutionary framework. The period in which Italian trade unions had won major successes in improving working conditions now gave way to one of defensive strikes by the working class. The trade unions suffered one defeat after another.

In Italy, the revolutionary movement of agricultural classes, especially rural wage workers and also layers that are not fully proletarianised, has great importance. The ruling classes had to utilise a weapon of struggle to counter the influence that red organisations had won in the countryside.

In a large part of Italy, namely the plain of the Po, which is economically the most important, the situation looked surprisingly like a local dictatorship of the proletariat or at least of the rural workers. The Socialist Party had won control of many municipalities at the end of 1920 and instituted a municipal tax policy directed against the agricultural and middle bourgeoisie. We had flourishing trade-union organisations there, plus significant cooperatives and many branches of the Socialist Party. And, even where the movement was led by the reformists, the rural working class took a revolutionary stand. The employers were forced to pay taxes to the organisation, a certain sum that would provide a sort of guarantee that the employer would respect the contract imposed on him by trade-union struggle.

The situation was such that the agricultural bourgeoisie could no longer live in the countryside and was forced to retreat to the cities.

The Italian Socialists committed certain errors, especially with regard to the acquisition of land and the tendency of poor tenants after the War to purchase land in order to become smallholders.

The reformist organisations forced these tenants to remain, as it were, slaves of the movement of rural workers. That enabled the Fascist movement to gain solid support here.

In agriculture, there was no crisis of vast unemployment, which would have enabled the landowners to wage a victorious counteroffensive on the level of trade-union struggles.

It was in this situation that the expansion of Fascism began, based on use of physical violence and armed force. Its base was the rural landowning

class, and it also utilised the dissatisfaction aroused among the middle layer of agricultural classes by the organisational errors of the Socialist Party and the reformist leaders. Fascism based itself on the overall situation: the steadily growing discontent of all petty-bourgeois layers, the small merchants, the small landholders, the discharged soldiers, and the former officers, who, after the role they had played in the War, were disappointed by their current status.

All these elements were utilised, organised, and formed up into contingents. And then this movement tackled the task of destroying the power of red organisations in the Italian countryside.

The method utilised by Fascism is quite distinctive. Fascism assembled all the discharged soldiers who could not find their place in society after the War and put their military experience to work.

Its first step was to form its military detachments, not in the big industrial cities but in the localities that can be viewed as centres of Italian agricultural districts, like Bologna and Florence. They found support here from the municipal authorities, of which more later. The Fascists had weapons and transport, enjoyed immunity from the law, and made use of these favourable conditions even in districts where they were numerically still smaller than their opponents. To begin with, they organised 'punitive expeditions'. Here is how this was done.

They overran a specific small territory, destroyed the headquarters of proletarian organisations, forcibly compelled the municipal councils to resign, if necessary wounding or killing the leaders of their opponents, or at least forcing them to leave the region. The workers of this locality were not in a position to mount resistance against these contingents, armed and supported by the police and pulled together from all parts of the country. The local Fascist group, which previously had not dared challenge the strength of the proletarian forces in that area, could now win the upper hand. Peasants and workers were now terrorised and knew that if they dared mount any kind of campaign against this group, the Fascists would repeat their expedition with much stronger forces, against which no resistance was possible.

In this way, Fascism won a dominant position in Italian politics, marching across the land, one district after another, according to a plan that can very easily be traced on a map.

Its starting point was Bologna. A socialist city administration was installed there in September and October 1920, accompanied by a big mobilisation of red forces. There were incidents: [city council] sessions were disrupted by provocations from outside. Shots were fired at the benches of the bourgeois minority, perhaps by *agents provocateurs*. This occurrence led to the first big

Fascist attack. Reaction was now unleashed, carrying out destruction, arson, and acts of violence against leaders of the proletariat. Aided by the government, the Fascists took control of the city. These events on the historic day of 21 November 1920 launched the terror, and the Bologna municipal council was never able to return to office.

Spreading out from Bologna, Fascism followed a path that we cannot describe here in all its details. We will say only that it expanded in two geographical directions: firstly to the industrial triangle of the Northwest: Milan, Turin, and Genoa; secondly to Tuscany and the centre of Italy, in order to surround and threaten the capital. It was clear, from the outset, that the same factors that had blocked the emergence of a large socialist movement in southern Italy also prevented the growth of a Fascist movement there. So little is the Fascist movement an expression of the backward sector of the bourgeoisie that it appeared initially not in Southern Italy but precisely in the area where the proletarian movement was most developed and the class struggle was most evident.

Given these facts, how should the Fascist movement be understood? Is it a purely agrarian movement? That was not at all what we meant when we explained that the movement grew up primarily in rural areas. Fascism cannot be described as an independent movement of any specific sector of the bourgeoisie. It is not an organisation of agrarian interests opposed to those of industrial capitalism. Let us note that, even in districts where Fascist actions took place only in the countryside, it built its political/military organisations in the big cities.

By participating in the elections of 1921, the Fascists obtained a parliamentary caucus. But, at the same time, independently from Fascism, an agrarian party was formed. In the course of further events, we saw that the industrial employers supported Fascism. A decisive step in this new situation was the recent declaration of the General League of Industry, which proposed that Mussolini be asked to form a new cabinet.

But even more significant in this regard is the phenomenon of the Fascist trade-union movement.

As I said, the Fascists knew how to profit from the fact that the socialists never had an agrarian policy, and that certain forces in the countryside, who were not clearly part of the proletariat, had interests counterposed to those of the Socialists.

The Fascist movement had to employ every instrument of brutal and savage violence. Yet it was able to combine this with the use of the most cynical demagoguery. Fascism attempted to build class organisations of the peasants and even the rural wage workers. In a certain sense, it even opposed the landowners.

There were examples of trade-union struggles under Fascist leadership that were quite similar in their methods to those of the earlier red organisations.

This movement, which uses compulsion and terror to create Fascist trade unions, is not in any way a form of struggle against the employers. On the other hand, it would also be wrong to conclude that Fascism is a movement of the agricultural employers as such. In reality, Fascism is a large and unified movement of the ruling class, capable of turning to its advantage and making use of every means and all particular and local interests of different groups of agricultural and industrial employers.

The proletariat did not succeed in unifying in a united organisation for a common struggle to take power, subordinating to this goal the immediate interests of small groups. It was not able to resolve this problem at the proper time. The Italian bourgeoisie seized on this fact and set out to do this in its own right. And this is an enormous problem. The ruling class built an organisation to defend the power that it holds, pursuing a unified plan for an anti-proletarian, capitalist offensive.

Fascism created a trade-union movement. What was its purpose? To conduct a class struggle? Never! The Fascist trade-union movement was built with the slogan that all economic interests have the right to an association, be they workers, peasants, merchants, capitalists, great landowners, and so on. They can all organise around the same principle. The actions of all professional organisations must be subordinated to national interests, national production, national prestige, and so on.

This is class collaboration, not class struggle. All interests are welded together in a so-called national interest. We know well what such national unity means: the absolute and counter-revolutionary preservation of the bourgeois state and its institutions. In our opinion, the creation of Fascism can be put down to three main factors: the state, the big bourgeoisie, and the middle classes.

The first of these factors is the state, which played an important role in Italy in the creation of Fascism. Reports of the Italian bourgeois government's crises, occurring in quick succession, give rise to the belief that the Italian bourgeoisie possesses a state apparatus that is so precarious that a single blow would suffice to overthrow it. That is entirely wrong. The bourgeoisie was able to build up the Fascist organisation precisely to the degree that the state apparatus stabilised.

During the period immediately following the War, the state apparatus experienced a crisis. Its obvious cause was demobilisation: all the forces that had been engaged in the War were suddenly thrown onto the labour market. At this critical moment, the machinery of state, which, up until then, had

been busy delivering all the means of struggle against the external foe, had to change into an apparatus to defend its power against internal revolution. For the bourgeoisie, this posed an immense problem, which could not be resolved either technically or militarily through an open struggle against the proletariat. It had to be dealt with politically.

This was the period of the first left-wing governments after the War, when the political current led by Nitti and Giolitti was in power. It was precisely this policy that made it possible for Fascism to secure its subsequent victory. First there had to be concessions to the proletariat, and then, at the moment when the state apparatus had to be consolidated, Fascism appeared on the scene. When the Fascists criticise these governments for cowardice against the revolutionaries, this is pure demagoguery. In reality, the Fascists owe their victory to the concessions and democratic policy of the first postwar governments.

Nitti and Giolitti made concessions to the working class. Certain of the Socialist Party's demands were met: demobilisation, a liberal internal régime, and amnesty for deserters. These various concessions were made in order to win time to restore the state on a solid foundation. It was Nitti who created the 'Guardia Regia', that is, the Royal Guard, which was not exactly a police agency but, rather, had an entirely new military character. One of the reform Socialists' major errors was in not seeing the fundamental nature of this challenge, which could even have been countered on constitutional grounds by protesting the fact that the state was creating a second army. The Socialists did not grasp the importance of this question, viewing Nitti as someone that one could work with in a left government. This is yet more evidence of how incompetent this party is to develop any understanding of the course of Italian politics.

Giolitti completed Nitti's work. His war minister, Bonomi, supported Fascism's first stirrings. He placed himself at the disposal of the movement then taking shape and of the demobilised officers, who, even after their return to civilian life, continued to draw the greater part of their wage. He placed the entire state apparatus at the disposal of the Fascists, providing them with all the means needed to create an army.

When the factory occupations occurred, this government understood very well that, with the armed proletariat taking charge of the factories, and the revolutionary upsurge of the rural proletariat headed toward taking the land, it would be an enormous error to launch into battle before the counter-revolutionary forces had been organised.

The government prepared the organisation of the reactionary forces that would one day smash the proletarian movement. In this, it drew support from the manoeuvres of the treacherous leaders of the General Confederation of

Labour, who were then members of the Socialist Party. By conceding the law on workers' control, which was never implemented or even voted on, the government succeeded at this critical moment in rescuing the bourgeois state.⁴

The proletariat had taken control of the factories and the land. But the Socialist Party showed, once again, that it was incapable of resolving the problem of unity in action of the industrial and agricultural working class. This error enabled the bourgeoisie to soon achieve unity on a counter-revolutionary basis, a unity that put it in a position to triumph over the workers both of the factories and in the countryside.

As we see, the state played a most important role in the Fascist movement's development. After the governments of Nitti, Giolitti, and Bonomi came the Facta government. This government provided a cover giving Fascism full freedom of action in its territorial offensive. During the August 1922 strike, major battles took place between the workers and the Fascists, who were openly supported by the government.⁵ Let us take the example of Bari. Although the Fascists mustered up all their forces, they were unable, during an entire week of fighting, to defeat the workers of Bari, who retreated to their homes in the old city and defended themselves arms in hand. The Fascists had to retreat, leaving a great many of their forces on the field of battle.

And how did the Facta government respond? During the night, it had the old city occupied by thousands of soldiers, hundreds of state police, and soldiers of the Royal Guard, who advanced to the attack. A torpedo boat stationed in the port aimed its fire on the houses. Machine guns, armoured cars, and artillery were brought up. The workers, surprised while they slept, were defeated, and their headquarters was taken.⁶ That happened throughout the entire country. Wherever it was evident that the workers had forced Fascists to retreat, the government intervened, shooting workers who resisted, and arresting and sentencing workers whose only crime was self-defence, while Fascists who had demonstrably committed despicable crimes were systematically set free by the authorities.

4. For the agreement on workers' control, see p. 183, n. 26.

5. An ad hoc Labour Alliance [*Alleanza del lavoro*], composed of the trade-union federations, called a general strike on 1 August 1922 for 'the defence of political and trade-union freedoms'. Only two days were allowed for preparations, and the action was hampered by sectarianism among left parties. The strike failed and gave way to a sweeping Fascist offensive against labour organisations, backed by the army and police. However, in Parma and Bari, where united fronts had been achieved locally, workers won striking victories over Fascist attackers.

6. The workers' successful defence of the old city in Bari, and also their simultaneous and decisive victory in Parma, flowed from the achievement of fighting unity of anti-Fascist forces, including the *Arditi del Popolo* [People's Commandos] – a unity rare at that time. See Zinoviev's remarks on pp. 1053–4. See also Francescangeli 2000, pp. 130–1 and Behan 2003, pp. 77–88.

So much for the first factor, the state.

The second factor in Fascism is, as I have said, the big bourgeoisie. The big capitalists of industry, the banks, commerce, and the big landowners, have a natural interest in the founding of an organisation of struggle that defends their offensive against working people.

But the third factor also plays a very important role in constituting Fascist power.

In order to create an illegal reactionary organisation beside the state, forces must be recruited that are different from those that the high ruling class can find in its own social milieu. This is achieved by turning to the layers of the middle class that we have mentioned and advocating their interests, in order to ensnare them. That is what Fascism set out to do, and it must be admitted that they succeeded. It recruited forces from the layers that are closest to the proletariat among those discontented because of the War, among petty bourgeois, middle-level bourgeois, merchants and traders, and, above all, among intellectual bourgeois youth. In joining up with Fascism, they find again the energy to lift themselves morally and cloak themselves in the toga of combating the proletarian movement, achieving an exalted patriotism in the interests of Italian imperialism. These layers provided Fascism with a significant number of supporters and enabled it to organise militarily.

Those are the three factors that enabled our opponents to confront us with a movement that knows no equal in brutality and savagery, and yet is a solid movement with a leader of great political dexterity. The Socialist Party was never able to grasp the meaning of the enemy organisation springing up in the form of Fascism. *Avanti!* had no understanding of what the bourgeoisie was preparing as it seized on the disastrous errors of the proletarian leaders. It did not want to mention Mussolini, fearing that emphasising his role would serve as an advertisement.

We therefore see that Fascism does not represent any new political doctrine. But it has a powerful political and military organisation and an influential press, which is managed with much journalistic skill and eclecticism. But it has no ideas and no programme. And, now that it has taken the helm of state, it faces concrete problems and has to address the organisation of Italy's economy. Once it passes over from its negative to its positive efforts, it will show signs of weakness, despite its organisational talent.

We have examined the historical factors and the social reality out of which the Fascist movement took shape. We must now address the ideology that it adopted, along with the programme it used to win the various forces that are following it.

Our analysis leads to the conclusion that Fascism has added nothing to the traditional ideology and programme of bourgeois politics. All things

considered, its superiority and its specificity consist of its organisation, discipline, and hierarchy. Aside from this exceptional and militaristic exterior, it possesses nothing but a reality full of difficulties that it is unable to overcome. The economic crisis will constantly renew the causes of revolution, while Fascism will be unable to re-organise the social apparatus of the bourgeoisie. Fascism does not know how to go beyond the economic anarchy of the capitalist system. It has a different historical task, which lies in combating political anarchy and the organisational anarchy of political groupings of the bourgeois class.

Different layers of the Italian ruling class have traditionally formed political and parliamentary groupings that, although not based on firmly organised parties, struggle against each other and compete to advance their particular and local interests. This leads to manoeuvres of every kind in the parliamentary corridors. The bourgeoisie's counter-revolutionary offensive requires that the forces of the ruling class unite in social and governmental politics. Fascism meets this requirement. By placing itself above all the traditional bourgeois parties, it gradually deprives them of content. Through its activity, it replaces them. And, thanks to the blunders of the proletarian movement, it has succeeded harnessing to its plan the political power and human material of the middle classes. But it is incapable of developing an ideology and a specific programme of administrative reform of society and state that is any better than that of traditional bourgeois politics, which is bankrupt a thousand times over.

The critical side of the Fascists' supposed doctrine is of no great merit. It portrays itself as anti-socialist and also anti-democratic. As for anti-socialism, Fascism is clearly a movement of anti-proletarian forces and must take a stand against all socialist or semi-socialist economic forms. However, it does not succeed in offering anything new in order to shore up the system of private ownership, other than clichés about the failure of communism in Russia. It says that democracy must give way to a Fascist state because of its failure to combat the revolutionary and anti-social forces. But that is no more than an empty phrase.

Fascism is not a current of the bourgeois Right, based on the aristocracy, the clergy, and the high civilian and military officials, seeking to replace the democracy of a bourgeoisie government and constitutional monarchy with monarchical despotism. Fascism incorporates the counter-revolutionary struggle of all the allied bourgeois forces, and, for this reason, it is by no means necessarily compelled to destroy the democratic institutions. From our Marxist point of view, this situation is by no means paradoxical, because we know that the democratic system is only a collection of deceptive guarantees, behind which the ruling class conducts its battle against the proletariat.

Fascism expresses simultaneously reactionary violence and the demagogic adroitness that the bourgeois Left has always been able to use in deceiving the proletariat and guaranteeing the supremacy of big capitalist interests over the political needs of the middle classes. When the Fascists go beyond their so-called criticism of liberal democracy and reveal their positive, ideological notions, preaching an excessive patriotism and drivel about the people's historical mission, they are fashioning a mythology whose lack of serious foundations will be evident as soon as it is subjected to true social criticism, which exposes the land of illusory victories that bears the name Italy.

As regards influencing the masses, we see here an imitation of the classical stance of bourgeois democracy. When it is asserted that all interests must be subordinated to the superior interest of the nation, that means that class collaboration is upheld in principle, while, in practice, the conservative bourgeois institutions are supported against the proletariat's efforts to free itself. That is the role that liberal bourgeois democracy has always played.

What is new in Fascism is the organisation of a bourgeois ruling party. Political events on the floor of Italy's parliament have awakened the belief that the bourgeois state apparatus has entered a crisis so profound that one blow from outside would be sufficient to break it. In reality, the crisis is merely one of the bourgeois methods of government, which arose because of the impotence of the traditional groupings and leaders of Italian politics, who were not able to conduct the struggle against revolutionary forces at a time of acute crisis.

Fascism created an organism that was capable of taking over the role of heading up this country's machinery of state.

But, when the Fascists move from engagement in their struggle against proletarians to elaborating a positive and specific programme for the organisation of society and administration of the state, basically they have merely repeated the banal themes of democracy and Social Democracy. They have not created their own consistent system of proposals and projects.

Thus, for example, they have always maintained that the Fascist programme will lead to a decrease in the bureaucratic state apparatus, beginning at the top with a reduction in the number of ministries and then carrying forward in all domains of administration. Now, it is true that Mussolini did decline the prime minister's personal railway car. But he otherwise increased the number of ministers and governmental undersecretaries, in order to find posts for his praetorian guard.

As for the question of monarchy or republic, Fascism made various republican or enigmatic gestures, only to opt for pure loyal monarchism. Similarly, after a great outcry about parliamentary corruption, Fascism has taken over entirely the practices of parliament.

Fascism showed so little tendency to adopt the features of unalloyed reaction that it allowed broad scope for trade unionism.⁷ At its Rome Congress of 1921, where Fascism made almost comical efforts to specify its doctrine, an attempt was made to portray Fascist trade unionism as the primacy of the intellectual categories of labour. But this supposed theoretical conception has long since been refuted by ugly reality. The Fascist trade-union organisations are based on naked force plus the monopoly over job opportunities that the employers are offering in order to break the red organisations. However, it has not succeeded in extending its reach to the categories of work demanding greater technical specialisation, which give the worker an advantage. It achieved success only among the agricultural workers and some of the less qualified categories of urban workers, such as the longshoremen, for example. It did not succeed among the more advanced and intelligent sector of the proletariat. It did not even give an impulse to the trade-union movement among office workers and tradesmen. Fascist trade unionism has no serious theoretical foundation. The Fascists' ideology and programme contain a tangled jumble of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas and demands. Its systematic employment of violence against the proletariat by no means prevents it from scooping up opportunism from Social-Democratic sources.

One indication of that is the stance of the Italian reformists. For a time, their policies were guided by anti-Fascist principles and the illusion that they could build a bourgeois-proletarian coalition government against the Fascists. Now they are joining up with the victorious Fascists. This rapprochement is not at all paradoxical. It was encouraged by many circumstances and was predictable, based on many indications. Consider, for example, the D'Annunzio movement, which was linked to Fascism, and nonetheless made the attempt to win the support of proletarian organisations on the basis of a programme derived from the Fiume constitution that was supposedly based on proletarian or even socialist principles.

I should mention a few other things that I consider quite important to the Fascist phenomenon, but I lack the time. The other Italian comrades will be able to expand on my remarks when they take the floor. I have also left out everything relating to the feelings and sufferings experienced by Italian workers and Communists, because that did not appear to me to be essential to the question.

7. Both the German and Russian texts for the preceding words translate as 'broad scope for syndicalism'. This is an apparent mistranslation of Bordiga's remarks, which were delivered in French, and would have used the word 'syndicalisme' – 'trade-unionism'.

I must now take up the most recent events in Italy, regarding which the Congress expects a precise report.

The most recent events

Our delegation left Italy before the most recent events and was at first rather poorly informed about them. Yesterday evening, a delegate of our Central Committee arrived and gave us a report. I can assure you that this is an accurate report on the facts we have received regarding the recent events in Italy, which I will now present to you.

As I said earlier, the Facta government afforded the Fascists the broadest freedom of action to carry out their policies. Here is an example. The fact that each successive government has included strong representation from the Italian Catholic peasant People's Party did not prevent the Fascists from pursuing their struggle against the organisations, leaders, and institutions of this party. The existing government was a total sham, whose only activity consisted of promoting the territorial and geographical drive of the Fascists toward power.

In reality, the government was preparing the ground for a Fascist putsch. Meanwhile, a new governmental crisis broke out. Demands were raised that Facta resign. The most recent elections had produced a parliament in which the party representation was such as to prevent the bourgeois parties from constituting a stable majority in their traditional ways. It was customary to say that Italy was ruled by a 'huge liberal party'. But that was not a party at all, in the usual meaning of the word. Such a party never existed and was not formed as an organisation. It was just a mishmash of personal cliques of this or that politician of the North or South, plus cliques of industrial or rural bourgeois, run by professional politicians. These politicians, taken together, formed in fact the core of every parliamentary coalition.

Now, the moment had come when Fascism had to change this situation, if it was to avoid a severe internal crisis. An organisational question was also involved. The needs of the Fascist movement had to be met, and the organisation's costs paid. These material resources had been supplied on a massive scale by the ruling classes and, it seems, by governments abroad. France had given money to the Mussolini group. A secret session of the French cabinet debated a budget that included significant funds passed on to Mussolini in 1915. The Socialist Party came upon documents of this type, but it did not pursue the matter, thinking that Mussolini was washed up. On the other hand, the Italian government always made things easier for the Fascists, as for example in enabling large groups of Fascists to use the railways without paying. Nonetheless the enormous expenses of the Fascist movement would

have caused great difficulties, had they not made a direct bid for power. They could not wait for new elections, even though they could be sure of success.

The Fascists already have a strong political organisation with three hundred thousand members; they claim it is even larger. They could have won by 'democratic' means. But they were in a rush to bring things to a head.

On 24 October, there was a meeting of the Fascist National Council in Naples. This event, trumpeted by the whole bourgeois press, is now claimed to have been a manoeuvre aimed at distracting attention from a coup d'état. At a certain moment, the congress participants were told to stop deliberations; there was something more important to do. Everyone was told to go back to their district, and a Fascist mobilisation began. That was 26 October. In the capital, there was still complete calm.

Facta had stated that he would not resign until he had convened parliament one more time, in order to observe the usual procedure. Nonetheless, despite this statement, he presented the king with his resignation.

Negotiations began regarding formation of a new government. The Fascists marched on Rome, the focus of their activity. They were especially active in central Italy and Tuscany. Nothing was done to stop them.

Salandra was asked to form a new government, but he declined because of the attitude of the Fascists. It is very probable that the Fascists, if not appeased by Mussolini's appointment, would have risen up like brigands, even against the will of their leaders, plundering and destroying everything in the cities and countryside.

Public opinion was somewhat aroused. The Facta government stated that they would declare a state of siege. This was done, and a major clash was expected between the government's forces and those of the Fascists. Public opinion waited through a long day for this to happen; our comrades were highly sceptical regarding this possibility.

The Fascists did not encounter serious resistance anywhere during their advance. And, nonetheless, there were some circles in the army disposed to counter the Fascists. The soldiers were ready to take on the Fascists, while most of the officers supported them.

The king refused to sign the declaration of a state of siege. That meant accepting the Fascists' conditions, which had been printed in the *Popolo d'Italia*, namely: 'Mussolini should be asked to form a new ministry, and this will provide a legal solution. Otherwise, we are marching on Rome and will take control of it.'

Some hours after the state of siege had been lifted, it was learned that Mussolini was headed for Rome. Measures had been taken for military defence; troops had been assembled; the city was surrounded by cavalry. But the

agreement had already been finalised, and, on 31 October, the Fascists triumphantly entered Rome.

Mussolini formed a new government, whose composition is well known. The Fascist Party, which has only thirty-five seats in parliament, has the absolute majority in this government. Mussolini is not only the head of the council of ministers but also holds the portfolios for internal and external affairs. Members of the Fascist Party divided up the other important portfolios and made themselves at home in most of the other ministries.

Since there had not yet been a full break with the traditional parties, the government included two representatives of the socially inclined democrats – that is, left-bourgeois forces; as well as right-wing liberals and a supporter of Giolitti. The monarchist forces were represented by General Diaz in the Ministry of War and Admiral Thaon di Revel in the Ministry of the Navy.

The People's Party, which is very strong in parliament, concluded a skillful compromise with Mussolini. On the pretext that the Party's leading body could not meet in Rome, responsibility for accepting Mussolini's proposals was thrust onto a semi-official gathering of parliamentary deputies. Nonetheless, they succeeded in persuading Mussolini to grant some concessions, and the newspapers of the People's Party were able to state that the new government did not propose any major changes in the electoral system or parliament.

The compromise embraced even the Social Democrats. For a time, it seemed that the reform Socialist Baldesi would take part in the government. Mussolini was sufficiently adroit to relay the offer to Baldesi through one of his lieutenants. When Baldesi declared he would be glad to accept this post, Mussolini stated that the offer had been a personal initiative by one of his associates, for which Mussolini took no responsibility. And thus it was that Baldesi did not get to join the cabinet.

Mussolini did not accept a representative of the reformist General Confederation of Labour on the grounds of opposition by right-wing forces within his cabinet. But Mussolini is of the opinion that this organisation should be represented after all in his 'broad national coalition', now that it is independent of any revolutionary political party.

We see in these events a compromise between the traditional political cliques and the different layers of the ruling class – the great landowners and the financial and industrial capitalists, who lean to support of the new government created by a movement that has secured the support of the petty bourgeoisie.

In our view, Fascism is a method to secure the power of the ruling classes by utilising every means available to them, including even making use of the lessons of the first proletarian revolution, the Russian Revolution. When

faced by an economic crisis, it is not enough for the state merely to maintain its power. It needs a unified party, a unified counter-revolutionary organisation. Through its contact with the entire bourgeoisie, the Fascist Party represents, in a certain sense, what the Communist Party is in Russia, thanks to its relationship to the proletariat, that is, a well-organised and disciplined body that leads and supervises the state apparatus as a whole. The Fascist Party in Italy has placed its political commissars in almost every significant post in the branches of the state apparatus. It is the leading body of the bourgeois state in the period of imperialist decline. In my view, that is an adequate historical explanation of Fascism and of the recent developments in Italy.

The first actions of the new government show that it does not intend to alter Italy's traditional institutions.

When I predict that Fascism will be liberal and democratic, I do not, of course, mean that conditions will be favourable for the proletarian and socialist movement. Democratic governments have never given the proletariat anything other than declarations and promises. For example, Mussolini's government guarantees that it will respect freedom of the press. But it did not refrain from adding that the press must be worthy of that freedom. What does that tell us? It means that the government will pretend to respect freedom of the press, while permitting its Fascist military organisations to strike out against Communist newspapers whenever they choose, as has already happened in the past. We must also note that the Fascist government is making certain concessions to the bourgeois liberals. Little confidence should be placed in the Mussolini government's assurances that it plans to convert its military organisation into sport clubs, or something of the like. However, we do know that dozens of Fascists were taken into police custody because they had resisted Mussolini's order to demobilise.

What is the impact of these events on the proletariat? It found itself in a situation where it could play no significant role in the struggle and had to behave almost passively.

As for the Communist Party, it always understood that a victory of Fascism would be a defeat for the revolutionary movement. We had no doubt about the fact that we are not at present in a position to take the offensive against Fascist reaction, and had to assume a defensive posture. The question is therefore chiefly whether the Communist Party's policies succeeded, in this framework, in protecting the Italian proletariat to the greatest extent possible.

If, instead of a compromise between the bourgeoisie and Fascism there had been an outbreak of a military conflict, the proletariat could perhaps have played a certain role in establishing a united front for a general strike, and achieving some success. But, in the given situation, the proletariat did not

take part in the actions. Although the unfolding events had enormous significance, we must also bear in mind that the change on the political stage was less abrupt than it appeared, since conditions had become more and more acute before Fascism launched its final attack. The only example of a struggle against the government and Fascism was in Cremona, where six persons were killed. The proletariat fought only in Rome. The revolutionary worker-contingents had a clash with the Fascist bands. There were some wounded. The next day, the Royal Guard occupied the workers' district, robbing them of all means of defending themselves, and the approaching Fascists shot the workers down in cold blood. That is the bloodiest episode that took place during these struggles in Italy.

When the Communist Party proposed a general strike, the General Confederation of Labour disarmed the Communists, calling on the proletariat to ignore the dangerous directives of the revolutionary groups. A report was spread about that the Communist Party had dissolved; this was at a time when our newspapers were unable to publish.

In Rome, the bloodiest episode for our party was the seizure of the editorial offices of *Comunista*. The print shop was occupied on 31 October, just at the moment the newspaper was to appear, while one hundred thousand Fascists held the city under occupation. All the editors managed to slip out through side doors, except for the editor-in-chief, Comrade Togliatti. He was in his office, and the Fascists came in and seized hold of him. Our comrade's conduct was frankly heroic. He boldly declared that he was editor-in-chief of *Comunista*. He was quickly put up against the wall, in order to be shot, while Fascists drove back the crowd. Our comrade escaped only thanks to the fact that the Fascists got news that the other editors had fled over the roof and rushed up to capture them. All this did not prevent our comrade from speaking a few days later at a rally in Turin on the occasion of the anniversary of the Russian Revolution. (*Applause*)

But what I have just reported is an isolated event. Our party organisation is in rather good shape. The fact that *Comunista* is not appearing results not from a governmental decision but because the print shop does not want to publish it. The difficulties in publishing were economic, not technical.

In Turin, the *Ordine nuovo* building was occupied, and the weapons stored there were seized. But we are printing the newspaper at another location.

Also, in Trieste, the police seized our paper's print shop, but this paper too is coming out underground. Our party is still able to function legally, and our situation is not that bad. But we do not know how things will develop, and I must therefore be cautious in speaking of our party's future situation and activity.

The comrade who has just arrived is a leading worker in one of our important local party organisations. His has an interesting point of view, also shared by many other militants, namely, that we will now be able to work better than was the case before. I do not say that this opinion is a well-established fact. But the comrade with this viewpoint is a militant who works directly with the masses, and his opinion has great weight.

As I said, our opponents' press has spread the false report that our party has dissolved. We have published a denial and established the truth. Our central political publications, our underground military centre, our trade-union centre are working actively and their relationships to other regions have been restored in almost every case. The comrades who stayed in Italy never lost their head for a moment, and they are doing all that is required. *Avanti!* was destroyed by the Fascists, and a few days will be needed to enable this paper to appear once more. The Socialist Party's central headquarters in Rome was destroyed and all its private files burned, right down to the last piece of paper.

Concerning the position of the Maximalist Party [SP] regarding the polemic between the Communist Party and the General Confederation of Labour, we have not seen a declaration of any kind.

As for the reformists, it is clear from the tone of their newspapers, which are still appearing, that they will unite with the new government.

With reference to the trade unions, Comrade Repossi of our trade-union committee believes that it will be possible to continue our work.

That completes the information that we have received, which dates from 6 November.

I have spoken at length. I will not take up the question of our party's position during the course of Fascism's development, and instead reserve that for other points on the congress agenda. We only want to address here the prospects for the future. We have said that Fascism will have to cope with the dissatisfaction created by the government's policies.

Nonetheless, we know very well that when a military organisation exists alongside the state, it is easier to cope with dissatisfaction and unfavourable economic conditions.

Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, that was true in a much deeper sense, because historical development is on our side. The Fascists are excellently organised and firm in their views. Given this, it can be foreseen that the Fascist government will be far from unstable. You have seen that I have in no way exaggerated the conditions under which our party has struggled. We cannot make that into a matter of sympathy.

Perhaps the Communist Party of Italy has made mistakes. It can be criticised. But I believe that, at the present moment, the comrades' conduct

demonstrates that we have accomplished a great task, the formation of a revolutionary party of the proletariat, which will provide the basis for an uprising of the Italian working class.

The Italian Communists have the right to ask for your respect. Their conduct has not always met with approval. Yet they believe they cannot be reproached for anything with regard to the revolution and the Communist International.

Chair: We will now begin the discussion of the reports of Comrades Radek and Bordiga. Comrade Šmeral has the floor.

Šmeral (Czechoslovakia): Comrades, in my opinion, we are entering a period in Czechoslovakia which could lead in the foreseeable future to a government of a type corresponding internationally to the model of Fascism. Czechoslovakia is now experiencing both an economic and a political crisis, both of which are of such acuteness and substance that they cut at the roots of the bourgeois state. There is hardly any possible way out other than an effort by the government to use Fascist methods. I will attempt to describe these two crises briefly, and then indicate the policy we are following.

First, the economic crisis. I outlined the characteristics of this crisis at the summer session of the Expanded Executive. The state is over-industrialised. It has the industrial machinery, apparatus, and workforce for sixty million to seventy million customers. But there are only fourteen million inhabitants. Now that the state structures of Central and Eastern Europe have been shattered, the German mark has collapsed, and the large states of the Entente have achieved political, technological, and commercial dominance, Czechoslovakia has no scope for exports. This is the heart of the economic crisis. As early as in the summer, I explained here that the capitalist offensive that must necessarily arise out of this crisis finds expression in a plan of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie – massive, well considered and well executed – to reduce the wages of the working class by fifty per cent on average.

At that stage in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, we were still in the summer months. Since then, four months have passed by, and we face an entirely new phenomenon. It is no longer a matter of just reducing wages. Rather, capitalism in Czechoslovakia has taken a very clear, conscious, and definite decision to close down most of industry once and for all.

Three months ago, we witnessed a quite sudden rise in the exchange rate of the Czechoslovak crown. The rate in Zurich rose over a four-week period from 8–9 centimes for a crown to 18–20. This rise was arranged through manipulation by Czechoslovakia's banks. And what was the purpose of artificially raising the value of Czechoslovak currency? The goal was to make it absolutely impossible to obtain raw materials abroad for the exports that were

still possible. In the deliberations of the Czechoslovak chambers of commerce and banks, it was said quite openly that the leaders of the Czechoslovak state were promoting this revaluation quite deliberately in order to exclude small and middle-sized industry, so far as it still exists, from possibilities for export, purchase of raw materials, and production. All small factories are to be eliminated – not merely shut down for a transitional period but definitively removed from the structure of the Czechoslovak state.

This method is similar to what US plantation owners did during the periodic crises of the prewar period. When the harvest was too great, they would destroy a part of it, coffee or grain, in order to maintain their business plan and keep the prices high. This is a far more sophisticated variant of the policy we experience in marginal states that artificially block the development of an industry in order to avoid creation of a proletariat. A situation now exists in Czechoslovakia where even established and technologically sound industrial enterprises are being closed, given the present political structure of capitalism, not just for a transitory period but definitively, in order to obtain a breathing spell. The Czechoslovak state is undergoing a very acute economic crisis. Please note that there are signs that this dismantling of industry can ease the intense social tension for a period of several months, but not for long.

The factories are destroyed, but the population remains, workers grouped around the cities where the factories were located. How will this affect the popular mood into the future? The dismantling of industry is carried out under the pretext of building the inner equilibrium of the national state. From a nationalist point of view, this is similar to the result of defeat in war, which ends with the loss of territories. Indeed, it is even worse. Because, if Czechoslovakia were to lose a third of its territory, it would also lose the population living on that territory. But Czechoslovakia has not been diminished horizontally but vertically, in terms of its industrial structure. By losing the factories, it loses the possibility of sustaining its population – but the population is still there. Under such conditions, the crisis of the state becomes very acute – indeed insoluble.

That brings us to the political crisis. The structure of the Czechoslovak state is distinguished by the fact that a third of the population is in fundamental opposition for nationalist reasons. (The state is composed of Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Poles, Hungarians, and Ukrainians.) The parliamentary government must be put together from the two-thirds majority of the Czechoslovak population. In this section, from which the parliamentary majority must be constituted, the Communists are a mass party. No elections have taken place in Czechoslovakia since the founding of the Communist Party. The municipal voting this year was to be the first election since our party was formed.

Although the date was fixed by law, the elections were postponed by one year because of fear of the Communist results. It will be difficult to postpone the elections by another year. And the elections will probably yield the statistical result that a bourgeois-Social-Democratic majority no longer exists in Czechoslovakia. The national bourgeois state formed only recently will land in a situation where the bourgeois parliamentary system can no longer carry out its tasks. The crisis of bourgeois democracy has become so acute that, just like the industrial crisis, it almost puts in question the existence of the state in its bourgeois form.

And there is a third factor, comrades. Before the economic and parliamentary crises give way to the exercise of power in a new form, we will experience a great wave of national struggles. The feeling will be aroused among broad layers of the non-Communist population that national sovereignty is threatened. It is possible that irredentist, nationalist elements of the German and Hungarian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will seek to use this situation to their benefit. This possibility complicates the consciousness of the masses. In the capitalist structure of states, small nations must serve as either anvil or hammer. This wave of nationalism can greatly arouse the masses, and the bourgeois world can utilise this for fascist goals and against the working-class struggle.

So we see three important factors: an immediate economic crisis; a crisis of democracy striking at the roots of the state as the parliamentary structure becomes unworkable; and a panicky fear among national circles of the loss of national sovereignty. All the blame is heaped on the Communists. Already, the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie has sent its most authoritative figures into the government. Now that Masaryk, Beneš, and Švehla have hit rock bottom, the Czech bourgeoisie has no authoritative figure left. There is no other solution but for the government to be done with democratic forms and to declare that maintenance of the national state comes before everything. This, in my opinion, will lead in the foreseeable future to the formation of a government that is based not on parliament but on the white-guard organisations, the Sokols [Falcons], Siberian legionnaires,⁸ and other such organisations that are present among the people and that are very popular in the non-Communist portion of the population.

8. The Sokols were a Czech nationalist athletic and cultural society. The Siberian legion refers to an army formed in Russia during the World War consisting of about fifty thousand soldiers, chiefly Czech former prisoners of war. It fought against the Soviet government in Siberia in 1918–19 and was repatriated in 1920 via Vladivostok to Czechoslovakia.

Comrades, given my analysis of the situation, and that the entire Party shares this assessment of the facts, how can anyone believe that we are so foolish and stupid as to count on an easing of class antagonisms and a dulling of the methods of struggle? How could we give even a thought to this possibility? Who could think that, under these circumstances, a current could arise in Czechoslovakia that wanted to give communism a European haircut?⁹ That is hardly likely, and it does not reflect reality. We know very well that in these complex conditions, the Communist Party must certainly expect to become the object of a fearsome attack. Our youth organisation has already been forced underground. In the new year, the present parliamentary majority will probably force through parliament a law for protection of the republic. The organisations of bourgeois counter-revolution – the Sokols, the legionnaires, and similar groups – are systematically encouraged in the press and through subsidies and state support. The legal centre of bourgeois counter-revolution is alert and ready to arouse feeling against us through national slogans and lies. We must consider how we can withstand this danger.

I will not speak at length over the final stages of this process. Everyone here knows that these final stages are: a life-and-death struggle for power and the [workers'] dictatorship. The question before us *now* is only what we have to do in the first phase. Here we must adopt policies and raise slogans that enable us to drive the masses as much as possible away from the counter-revolution and draw them over to our side. The more influence we gain over the masses, the more we will be able to paralyse the assault of counter-revolution. We will consider in our discussion of tactics what the slogans should be.

In the first period of this process, we will raise partial slogans, which for us are actually not a dogma, not something definitive. Yet we must raise them with confidence, so the masses will know that we genuinely stand behind these slogans, even if for us they represent a manoeuvre aimed at bringing the masses into motion and enabling them to learn through their own experience. Lenin raised the demand in March and April 1917 that the banks and large enterprises be drawn together into trusts, that commercial secrecy be abolished, and that unions of consumers be formed. Lenin did not say before public opinion and to Kerensky that this was a deception, a lie, and just a tactic. Rather he said: 'We want to fight for these slogans and we consider them to be immediately achievable.'¹⁰ Because the slogans were presented in this form, the masses were carried along and led into the struggle. At a later stage,

9. See Fischer's comments on 'styling hair in "Western" fashion', p. 147.

10. For Lenin's views on these subjects during April 1917, see Lenin 1960–71, 24, pp. 24, 73–4, and 311.

through their own experience, they came to the conclusion that they must go beyond these slogans.

As for the policy of gathering forces, I'd like to say that we must be even more clever, because our bourgeoisie has also studied Russian Bolshevik policies before the seizure of power. They understand the dialectical character of our policies. They know that for us a slogan that was ideal yesterday may today be inappropriate, and vice versa.

Thus, we must know how to manoeuvre. But to manoeuvre, the Party must be internally consolidated and ruled by trust, authority, and discipline. Without such trust, we would be able to express our inner thoughts only to the bourgeoisie. We would limit ourselves to dogmatic rhetoric, out of fear that we could be bested by a comrade in a faction fight – and thus we would make victory over the bourgeoisie much more difficult. In the various periods that come one after another as events unfold, it is absolutely necessary to have freedom and flexibility in our policies. (*Very true!*)

If a Communist party has a leadership that does not enjoy the confidence of the International, of the general staff of our revolutionary struggle, then we can confidently say to this leadership, 'Begone!' If a party leadership enjoys the confidence of the International, it must receive the authority to manoeuvre without hindrance through mistrust and discord, in order to bring the masses into motion.

I do not have time to explain in detail these policies in the transition period in Czechoslovakia. I will only note here that in the present situation, the workers' government is not a dogma for us and is no definitive solution for the evil we face, but rather a slogan to bring the masses into motion. As for the national-socialist workers,¹¹ who could play a very important role in the struggle against an Orgesch or fascist government, we aim to at least win their sympathy. With the aid of this slogan, we will snatch all proletarian forces away from a coalition with the bourgeoisie and from the influence of pacifist circles. We will also use it to spark the formation of independent organs of the proletarian class. Using this slogan, we will find a road into the army, for propaganda in the army is – next to our efforts to win the proletarians – the second wall that we must erect against fascist efforts. I have only indicated here a broad outline; I do not have the time to go into it further.

Pullman (Johnstone, United States): Comrades, the imperialist war has destroyed the normal equilibrium and mutual relations among the countries that hold weight in the world capitalist economy. Even the United States, which suffered least from the War, was obliged to learn this. The powerful

11. Regarding Czechoslovak national socialists, see p. 134, n. 11.

and class conscious capitalist class of the United States utilised the industrial depression and launched a severe attack against the workers' organisations, who had succeeded during the War in making significant gains. On the excuse of the decline in military procurement, industry began to be generally dismantled. Layoffs at many factories created an enormous army of the unemployed, which at one point embraced a total of six million workers. In order to deal a death blow to the organised workforce, a league of employers was founded with working capital of \$15 million. The attack began under the slogan of the 'open shop' and the so-called 'right' of workers to unlimited freedom to labour.

The first victim was the unorganised part of the working class. The workplaces that closed were above all those employing unorganised workers. When they reopened, it was with only a portion of the previous workforce, and at reduced wages. In some cases, this reduction was more than sixty per cent. Immediately thereafter, the workers in insufficiently organised branches of industry began to feel the thrust, and finally the attack took aim against the strong union federations.

As a result of the capitalist offensive, the economic basis of the working class has been shattered and their battle lines broken apart. During this period, the number of organised workers has declined substantially. The American Federation of Labor alone has lost a million members. The workday was extended, wages reduced, working conditions worsened, seniority rights eliminated including with regard to promotions.

In the metal industry, the number of unionised workers fell from 800,000 to 275,000. Wages were cut by 25%–40%, and the working day was lengthened to 9–10 hours from 8 hours.

In the steel industry, where there were more than 350,000 workers at the time of the recent strike, today the trade unions are virtually absent. Wages were cut by 22%–40%. The steel barons insisted on maintaining the 12-hour day and, when shifts rotated, even a 24-hour day.

In the packing industry, of 200,000 unionised workers, fewer than 10,000 are left. Wages here were reduced by 25%–35%, and the eight-hour day lengthened to ten hours.

In the needle trades, the number of unionised workers has fallen by 80,000. Wages were cut by 15%–25%.

In the oil fields and metal mines, unionisation is quite absent; the white terror is all-powerful.

In the automobile industry, the number of workers employed was reduced by a proportion equal to the increase in production by the remaining workers. Take for example the Willis Overland company. Before, 14,000 workers

produced 550 cars a day; afterwards, the workforce was reduced to 7,000, who produced 500 a day. This year 650,000 coal miners were on strike for five months. A temporary agreement with the employers secured the maintenance of the existing working conditions until March 1923. Thus all the heroism and sacrifice of the workers did not lead to any tangible gain, although they did succeed in partially halting the capitalist offensive.

The railway workers' strike also ended in defeat, as a result of interference by the government and betrayal by the trade-union bureaucracy. The workers were forced to accept a wage reduction of 15%. At the beginning of the strike, the government was inactive and appeared neutral. But, as the workers' resistance grew stronger, the government hurried to offer open assistance to the railway magnates.

As a rule, in every industrial conflict, the government rushes to aid the capitalists, by putting the entire power of the judicial and military apparatus at their disposal. This was particularly clear in the decision of the Supreme Court of Colorado, which made the unions responsible for all damage caused by a strike. The most blatant example of government interference was in West Virginia, where government troops suppressed a strike. In Herrin, Illinois, the persecution was financed and incited by the state chamber of commerce. In the railway workers strike, the federal attorney general, Daugherty, obtained an injunction against the unions that in fact crippled any strike activity by declaring it illegal. When obtaining this injunction, Daugherty declared quite openly that the government would support the struggle for the 'open shop'.

On the heels of the capitalist offensive came the attacks on the Communist Party and the left wing of the unions. The arrest and deportation of active union members became a daily occurrence, along with the lynching, tarring and feathering, and torture of political prisoners. Constitutional rights were denied even to the yellow socialists. The labour boards and compulsory arbitration courts were used to crush the workers. In many states, a state constabulary was created to support the railway, steel, and mining magnates in maintaining the white terror.

As for fascist organisations in America, we have the American Legion, organised by a group of officers under the pretext that it provides its members with savings, pensions, bonuses, and medical treatment. It has been able to attract a great many discharged soldiers into its ranks. The capitalists also maintain a large army of private detectives and factory guards. A secret organisation known under the name Ku Klux Klan plays an important role in the capitalist offensive. It is especially active in the South, but it also extends into the North. It terrorises the blacks, forcing them to carry out blatant forced labour for minimal wages. Using legal pretexts of many kinds, it assists the

plantation owners in keeping up a system that amounts to peonage. At election time, the voting is closely watched, and the blacks are prevented from exercising their legal rights.

Although the capitalist offensive grew more and more zealous, the trade-union bureaucracy did not mount any active resistance. Instead, it became more and more passive, betraying the workers' interests. It surrendered the many improvements achieved by the workers during the War without any struggle. Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, is right now busying himself with the achievement of friendly relations and joint committees with the American Legion, while combating the Communists and the left-wing forces in the unions.

The bureaucracy at the head of the mineworkers' union betrayed the workers at precisely the moment when the strike was as good as won.

During the railway workers' strike, E.F. Grable, president of the United Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and Railroad Shop Laborers, prevented his 400,000-strong union from joining the strike, even though the vast majority had voted in favour of a walkout. The defeat of the railway federations is largely attributable to this betrayal.

In the political arena, the trade-union bureaucrats, as agents of the ruling capitalist parties, oppose political action by the working class and the foundation of a genuine Labor Party. The trade unions are structurally inadequate, and this major weakness enables the capitalists to carry out their attack against the working class and block the consolidation of the trade unions.¹²

Responding to the capitalist offensive, the Communist Party has tried to do its best, although, during the past year, it has been dominated by an internal quarrel. The Party made a number of attempts to unify workers against the capitalist offensive, including repeated efforts to organise the unemployed. But, at that time, the Party had no strong links with the unions, and this robbed our efforts of the success that seemed possible, given the objective conditions. The Party focused its attention on penetrating the unions, and took part actively in the creation of a left wing. Such a formation was organised in the unions, under the Party's leadership, and achieved strong influence. In order to strengthen our ties with the workers and to build a strong mass organisation, we established a legal political party, which sought to apply the united-front tactic wherever workers were engaged in struggle.¹³

12. 'Consolidation' probably refers to the need to unify craft federations in industry wide unions.

13. Regarding the legal and illegal US parties, see p. 215, n. 28.

Since American capitalism has reached the summit of its development and has created the highest level of productivity, it is searching for a solution in two directions: the first is the export of financial capital through industrial investment in backward countries; second, expansion of markets abroad. This has entangled American capitalism in embittered competition with its European equivalent, leading American capitalism to increase its pressure on the American working class. In the future, the workers' struggle, especially in the metal industry and in the mines, will lose its isolated character. American and European miners and metalworkers need to carry out a coordinated and united campaign; this will put them in a position to move to the offensive. The workers are now deeply dissatisfied. Never has the government revealed its class character so clearly to the working class. And we can count on the fact that the industrial conflict that will break out in the near future will have a political and revolutionary character.

The Party must be ready for battle. It must increase its membership. It must win the trust of the masses by uniting the workers' forces to develop the struggle for their immediate demands.

The Party must heighten the activity of its members in the trade unions and take part vigorously in their daily struggles and their fight against the trade-union bureaucracy. It must prepare them for political action. The Party must establish its nucleus in every factory, mine, and workplace. It must draw into its ranks all the militant forces and, in this way, achieve leadership of the revolutionary struggles.

In our opinion, these are the most important tasks facing the Communist Party in the United States.

Urbahns (Germany): Comrades, sisters and brothers: Let me start by explaining that I speak here not on behalf of the majority of the German delegation but in order to present the viewpoint of a minority.

Both Comrade Zinoviev and Comrade Trotsky have stated that this congress has the task of drawing a sharp line against centrism. In my opinion, however, the report of Comrade Radek did not do any great service to the Congress and the International. Rather, he provided the centrists and their friends with an opportunity to utilise his arguments and formulations to buttress their position. This significantly undermined the unity of the Congress's conceptions. It seems that in giving his report, Comrade Radek was too fascinated by the topic that he set for himself. Certainly, the capitalist offensive is now taking a sharper form, but he placed it alone in the spotlight. He forgot to indicate that this heightened offensive also unleashes resistance by the proletariat. He spoke only of defensive struggles and did not highlight the

movements now appearing internationally that are something more than purely defensive in character.

Here is something Comrade Radek said in his remarks that shows the prominence of just this aspect of the capitalist offensive:

‘What characterises the world we now live in is that the broadest masses of the proletariat have lost the belief that they can conquer power in the foreseeable future.’ And further, ‘Today the struggle for power is not possible. It will become possible, but is not possible now.’¹⁴ Given the excessive prominence of these sentences and this tone in his talk, and the lack of emphasis on the other side of the question – namely, that the proletarian movement is growing stronger and stronger – this argumentation can only bring grist to the mill of all centrists. Comrade Radek should have avoided that, and this puts him in contradiction to Comrade Zinoviev and also Comrade Trotsky.

Given my limited speaking time, I am not in a position to demonstrate this in detail. I am only citing these two quotations. And it is from this erroneous assessment of the capitalist offensive and this failure to highlight the positive potential of the workers’ movement that Radek’s tactical assessment of the united front and the workers’ government arises. This assessment of the united front is most characteristically expressed in Radek’s example of the Commission of Nine and the world workers’ congress.

Comrade Radek says, ‘We came to the Commission of Nine in Berlin in order, if possible, to organise a united front.’ And, further, ‘The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals were not willing to struggle.’¹⁵ Now, isn’t there a clear implication here that the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals just might possibly conduct a struggle?

Radek: Very true!

Urbahns: If you confirm that, then I must say very bluntly that, for us, there is no possibility of carrying out a struggle with the USPD and the SPD, because, given their past history, they cannot conceivably engage in a struggle for power. They have taken a stand against the working class, and the unfolding proletarian class struggle can end only with the destruction of their organisations, and with the crushing of the Second International in this struggle.

The policies of the Second International and the Amsterdam trade unions now extends so far that they are themselves promoting the weakening of the working class through the destruction of their organisations. That is certainly the basic difference in assessing the situation that I wish to emphasise.

14. See Radek’s remarks on pp. 392–3.

15. See pp. 395–6.

Comrade Radek explains, with regard to the world workers' congress, that this commission was not successful, first of all, because the masses were not mobilised, and also because the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals opposed the plan to organise it – Comrade Radek spoke in roughly these terms. He referred to weaknesses expressed in the fact that five hundred factories were not organised to send delegations to the Reichstag. That is quite correct. But such negotiations in the Commission of Nine cannot possibly be carried out on an empty stomach, as was done on this occasion. Political preparation is needed, and the attitude of the masses is part of that. Negotiations on the top leadership level can succeed only under the pressure of the ranks. But Comrade Radek seems to overestimate the negotiations on a leadership level, saying, 'We are still thinking in terms of organising a united front from above.'¹⁶ The united front will arise only through proletarian struggle, in which the masses will unite at the base and thus bring about temporary unity at the leadership level and concessions by the SPD, USPD, or the Second International. These organisations are not capable of carrying out a genuine struggle.

Else Baum (Edda Tennenboom): We'll talk later about that objection.

Urbahns: Comrade Radek's opinion on the workers' government arises from the same assessment. He spoke here of a porch that we must go through in order to reach the true goal of the dictatorship [of the proletariat], and he took his distance from the Left, which believes we can go in through the chimney. Well, Comrade Radek, you are telling us quite plainly that you believe it necessary for us to go across this porch. This provides justification for those who want to hang around on the porch for quite a long time, in order to be sure that they get into the right house. In my opinion, it is better not to exclude another option: that we will attempt an assault right through the chimney, instead of waiting around on the porch.¹⁷

Radek: The proletariat is too huge to make it through that chimney.

Urbahns: The proletariat is strong enough to break through the chimney and reach the house of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This evaluation of the workers' government contradicts Comrade Zinoviev's point of view, despite Comrade Radek's assurances that their positions are the same. This will be clear from the transcript. His positions on both the united front and the workers' government flow from an assessment of the situation that in my opinion is quite wrong. To a very great extent, the

16. Compare pp. 396–7.

17. See p. 400.

proletarian movement has already very largely shifted to an active phase. We can see the beginnings of this in the movement for the eight-hour day in France, and above all in the factory-council movement in Germany. It is significant that Comrade Radek did not say a word about that.

The factory-council movement in Germany is a typical sign of the awakening political consciousness of the proletariat. The worker sees that, unless he unites with other workers he cannot obtain even the historic piece of bread that Comrade Radek talks about. That is correct. But he sees more, namely, that if he struggles for this piece of bread, he is up against the security cops and the other governmental institutions. He sees the political side of the situation, namely that wage struggles are no longer enough. He sees that economic struggles must be evaluated politically. And the battle for control of production is just such a political factor, of which the working class is fully aware. The initiation of this struggle by the factory-council movement is a sign that the workers' movement is making progress, and it flows from a political awakening.

Comrades, we must not underrate the fact that the factory-council movement is not merely organisational in character, like the campaign for the Commission of Nine and the world workers' conference and even the demonstration when Rathenau was killed. It goes beyond that and has a much more positive side. Through this factory-council movement, the workers – united, at first, only locally but also already, to some degree, on a district level – have begun to counterpose their power against that of the state, and their commissions for control against the will of the state and its bureaucracies. We see this taking effect above all in the municipalities. These commissions for control have scored successes, as shown by ample evidence in Germany. The working class is well aware of this fact.

I know that this does not represent the final struggle for power. I do not wish to exaggerate the proletariat's successes. But proletarian consciousness has awakened in this movement. We must not overlook that. And, here, the positive side of the Communist International must come to the fore and not remain silent. We must not limit ourselves to showing the other side. That will only encourage the centrist currents and their friends. By stressing this positive side, we will counterbalance what the Italian Maximalists [SP] have done. The example of Italy, as Comrade Bordiga's comments clearly indicate, show that it is pointless to talk only of working-class unity. Rather, this united front must be forged in the struggle for the proletariat's most urgent essentials of life.

Adjournment: 5:00 p.m.

Session 13 – Friday, 17 November 1922

Credentials Report; the Capitalist Offensive (Concluded)

Report of the Credentials Commission. Discussion of the capitalist offensive. Protest against arrests of Polish deputies.

Speakers: Eberlein, Radić, Humbert-Droz, Radek, Ravesteyn, Stern, Harry Webb, Hoernle, Clara Zetkin, Welti, Rosmer, Radek, Zinoviev, Welti

Convened: 11:20 p.m.

Chairpersons: Kolarov, later Marchlewski.

Report of Credentials Commission

Eberlein (Germany): Comrades, when the World Congress was decided on, the Presidium sent a plan for allocation of delegates to all the Communist International's sections, which invited to the Congress in all 350 delegates from sixty-one countries. As delegates arrived, their credentials were checked by a preliminary commission, elected 16 October 1922, and consisting of Comrades Trilisser, Piatnitsky, and Eberlein. The definitive Mandates Commission, elected by the Expanded Executive, included these three comrades plus Comrades Thalheimer (Germany), Kabakchiev (Bulgaria), Scheflo (Norway), and Gramsci (Italy).

The Commission checked the mandates of delegates as they arrived and found that these mandates were, by and large, in order. The Presidium had

earlier instructed all delegates to bring a specific mandate signed and sealed by their central committee. In most cases, this was done.

I will now report on the number of delegates who have arrived and of mandates that have been approved, and I will conclude by asking that the work of the Mandates Commission be approved. To the degree possible, I will also report on the membership of their parties. However I must say that not all parties are in a position to give exact membership figures, because many of them are completely underground and therefore not in a position to give precise figures.

In addition, I wish to say that the number of delegates invited is determined not only by the number of members. It also reflects the present political importance of the parties, the country's economic situation, and finally the degree to which the party is illegal and the severity of the enemy's repression.

The *German* Party now counts 226,000 members; the membership data shows that 182,400 of them fully paid their dues in the last quarter. Twenty comrades were invited, and 23 arrived. The Mandates Commission recognised 23 comrades with decisive vote. Their mandates were in order.

The *French* Party reported 78,828 members. Twenty comrades invited; 24 arrived; 23 received decisive vote, and one received consultative vote.

The *Italian* Party reported 24,638 members. Twenty comrades invited; 21 arrived; all received decisive vote.

The *Russian* Party reported 324,522 members in Russia alone. Membership for Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Near and Far East were reckoned separately. Seventy-five comrades invited; 75 arrived; all received decisive vote.

The *Czechoslovak* Party reported 170,000 members, of whom 125,000 fully paid their dues in the last quarter. Twenty comrades invited; 17 arrived; all received decisive vote.

In addition to these large parties, the *Youth International* (760,000 members) and the *Profintern* [Red International of Labour Unions] were invited with the same number of delegates. Each sent 20 delegates. Their mandates are in order.

The *British* Party reported a membership of 5,116, although, according to the information we have received, only 2,300 are fully paid up. Ten delegates were invited; seven arrived and were recognised.

The Communist Party of the *United States* reports a membership of 8,000 members. Ten delegates were invited; nine arrived; eight have decisive vote and one has consultative vote. In addition, three representatives arrived from the Workers' Party, which has 14,000 members; they received consultative

vote. There are also representatives here from an organisation of blacks, which has 500 members. Two comrades arrived and received consultative vote.¹

The *Polish* Party reports a membership of 10,000, of which 7,000 have paid their dues in full. We must bear in mind that the Polish Party is working entirely underground. Ten comrades were invited; 20 arrived; all 20 were granted decisive vote. The delegation of the Polish Communist Party includes two representatives of the Communist Bund, which has a membership of 2,000.

The *Ukraine* Communist Party reports a membership of 80,000. Ten comrades were invited; 15 arrived; 10 received decisive vote and five received consultative vote.

The Communist Party of *Japan* has 250 members, plus 800 who have applied to join the Party but, according to the Japanese Party's rules, must pass through a probationary period prior to admission to membership. Six comrades were invited; four arrived; all four received decisive vote.

The *Norwegian* Labour Party reports 60,000 members. Six were invited; five arrived; all five received decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *Yugoslavia* reports a membership of 80,000; six comrades were invited. After the comrades arrived, significant disagreements arose regarding the distribution of mandates. The Central Committee allocated six mandates, but only four arrived. Two other members arrived on invitation of the Presidium, so that differences within the Party could find expression at the Congress. A commission on the Yugoslav question has been established.

It would be normal to admit these two comrades as invited members with consultative vote, but they protested this and demanded that they be admitted with decisive vote. This was declined by the Mandates Commission.

The two comrades, however, pointed out that, when the Central Committee elected its delegates, two of them were defeated, one by a vote of 4 to 4 and the other 3 to 5. The Mandates Commission considers that these two comrades were clearly not elected. Given that this matter is very important for the Yugoslav Party, and that the disagreements within this party are very sharp and profound, the Mandates Commission referred it to the Presidium.

The Presidium decided to grant decisive vote to both of the comrades who have arrived here, with the explicit comment that this does not imply any

1. Regarding the Workers' Party, see p. 215, n. 28. The two black delegates were Otto Huiswoud and Claude McKay, recorded here as representing the African Blood Brotherhood. See p. 803, n. 17.

judgement in the dispute in the Yugoslav Party, the settlement of which is left for the political commission.

A special resolution on this question was made known to the comrades. We therefore ask that the mandates of these comrades be accepted, with this motivation.²

The *Bulgarian* Party has 40,000 members. Six delegates were invited; six arrived; their mandates are in order.

The *Finnish* Party has 25,000 members, of which 20,000 have paid their dues in full. Six delegates were invited; seven arrived. Their mandates are accepted as valid.

The *Spanish* Party has about 5,000 members. Three delegates invited; four arrived; three received full mandates and one consultative.

The *Romanian* Party has about 2,000 members. Four delegates invited; three arrived; three full mandates.

The Communist Party of *Sweden* has 12,143 members, of which 7,843 paid their dues in the last quarter. Six delegates invited; six received full mandates.

The Communist Party of *Latvia* has 1,500 members. Six delegates invited; eight arrived; six full and two consultative mandates.

The Communist Party of *Switzerland* has 5,200 members. Three delegates invited; three arrived and were granted decisive vote.

The *Austrian* Party has 16,000 members. Three delegates invited; six arrived; four received decisive vote and two consultative.

The Communist Party of the *Netherlands* has 2,500 members. One delegate invited; four arrived; one decisive and three consultative votes.

The Communist Party of *Belgium* has 517 members. One delegate invited; one arrived and was granted decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *China* has 300 members, of which 180 have paid their dues in full. Three delegates invited; one arrived and was granted decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *India* has not given a membership count, since the comrades function completely underground. Four delegates invited; one arrived and was granted decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *Ireland*: Three delegates invited; four arrived; three decisive votes and one consultative.

The Communist Party of *Azerbaijan*: Two delegates invited; three arrived; two decisive votes and one consultative.

2. For a more detailed account of the selection of the Yugoslav delegation, see Damjanović (ed.) 1981, 5, p. 952, n. 223.

The Communist Party of *Georgia* reports 18,811 members. Two delegates invited; three arrived; two decisive votes and one consultative.

The Communist Party of *Lithuania* has 1,000 members, of which 500 have paid their dues in full. One delegate invited; two arrived; both granted decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *Estonia* has 2,800 members. Two delegates invited; three arrived; two decisive votes and one consultative.

The Communist Party of *Denmark* reports 1,200 members, of which 780 have paid their dues in full. Two delegates invited; three arrived; one decisive vote and two consultative.

The Communist Party of *Iran* has 1,000 members, of which 500 have paid their dues in full. Two delegates invited; three arrived; two decisive votes and one consultative.

Turkey now has two parties, one in Constantinople [Istanbul] and one in Angora [Ankara]. The Angora Party has 300 members. Two delegates invited; six arrived. Two decisive votes; two consultative; two were turned down. We do not have a membership count for the Constantinople Party. Two delegates invited; three arrived; two decisive votes and one consultative.

The Communist Party of *Australia* has 900 members, of which 750 have paid their dues in full. Two delegates invited; four arrived; two decisive votes and two consultative.

The Communist Party of *Argentina* has about 3,500 members. Two delegates invited; two arrived; two decisive votes.

The Communist Party of *South Africa* has 200 members, of which one hundred have paid their dues in full. One delegate invited; two arrived; one decisive vote and one consultative.

The Communist Party of *Java*: A membership count is unavailable, but there are probably 13,000 members. One delegate invited; one arrived; one decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *Canada* has 4,810 members. One delegate invited; three arrived; one decisive vote and two consultative.

The Communist Party of *Portugal* has 2,900 members, of which 1,702 have paid their dues. One delegate invited; two arrived; one decisive vote and one consultative.

The Communist Party of *Chile* has about 2,000 members. One delegate invited. The delegate arrived yesterday evening and his mandate has not yet been checked.

The Communist Party of *Uruguay* has about 1,000 members. One delegate was invited; one delegate has been recognised with decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *Brazil* has about 500 members. One delegate invited; one arrived; one decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *Mexico* has about 1,500 members. One delegate invited; one decisive vote.

The Communist Party of *Armenia*: One delegate invited; two arrived; one decisive vote and one consultative.

The Communist Party of *Khiva* [Khorezm]. one delegate invited, and he has not yet arrived.

The Communist Party of *Bukhara*: one delegate invited and granted consultative vote.³

The *Mongolian* Party: About 1,500 members. One delegate invited; one arrived. Since the Party of Mongolia has not yet joined the Communist International, he was granted a consultative vote.

The Communist Party of *Korea*: one delegate invited; four arrived. There is a very severe dispute in the Korean Party, and it is not possible to determine who actually represents the Communist Party and what other group is represented. Therefore, two comrades have been admitted as guests and two others turned away.⁴

The Workers' Party of *Iceland*: 4,700 members, but they are still following in the wake of the Mensheviks. However, there is a faction in this party of 450 Communists, and it has been admitted. One delegate has arrived and has been given consultative vote.

The Communist Party of *Fiume* reports about 150 members. One delegate is on the way but has not yet arrived. One consultative vote.⁵

The Communist Party of *Palestine*: A delegate has been invited and is under way.

The Communist Party of *White Russia* [Belarus] has about 5,000 members. One delegate invited and has received consultative vote.

The Communist Party of *Greece*: A delegate was invited but has not yet arrived.

3. The people's republics of Khorezm and Bukhara were independent Soviet states in Central Asia linked by treaty to Soviet Russia. Khorezm had been the ancient name of the prerevolutionary principality of Khiva.

4. The Korean Communist movement was organised among Korean emigrants and, by one estimate, enjoyed the support of 150,000 Koreans in Siberia. The movement was divided into two factions, generally called the Shanghai and Irkutsk currents, after their places of origin. Each wing had about 5,000 members. Both wings had armed detachments that took part in the war against White and Japanese forces in Siberia. An armed clash between the Korean factions took place on 27 June 1921, resulting in hundreds of casualties. The Comintern leadership made repeated efforts to unify the factions, including at a conference in Ulan-Ude (Verkhneudinsk) on 20 October 1922, but the dispute persisted until after the Fourth Congress. See Scalapino and Lee 1972, pp. 20–51.

5. Fiume (Rijeka) had been a separate political unit since its seizure by Italian nationalists led by D'Annunzio in 1919. See p. 387, n. 10.

The Communist Party of *Hungary*: Three delegates were invited; seven were named by the Presidium. The Mandate Commission gave them decisive vote. The Communist Party of Hungary is functioning entirely underground and has not yet been able to begin genuine work in Hungary itself.

From *Turkestan* a delegate was invited, has arrived, and has consultative vote. Also three delegates arrived from the *Uyghur* section of the Turkestan Communist Party. One was admitted with consultative vote and two as guests.⁶

The Communist Party of *Crimea* has sent a delegate, who has consultative vote.

A delegate from the *Mountain Republic* of the Caucasus has arrived and has consultative vote.

The *Egyptian* Party also sent a delegate, who has consultative vote.

Also admitted with consultative vote: one representative of the *Women's International* and one of *Famine Relief*.

That wraps up the invited representatives of Communist Parties who have arrived. Altogether, 350 delegates were invited to the Congress, and 394 arrived. Among them, 340 have decisive vote; 48 have consultative vote; and six have credentials as guests.

In addition, the International's Presidium issued special invitations to five delegates of the *Italian Socialist Party*. They have arrived and have received consultative vote.

Three comrades of the Czechoslovak opposition were invited, have arrived, and have received consultative vote.

Two comrades were invited to the meetings of the programme commission and have received consultative vote.

Also comrades *Frossard* and *Cachin* were invited from France. Neither has arrived, but according to the most recent telegram, they are under way.

Also, Comrade *Tranmael* of Norway was invited, but has not yet arrived. So, among these specially invited comrades, ten have arrived so far and ten have been given consultative vote.

In addition, a representative of the United States agrarian commission has arrived and has been given consultative vote.

Now, I will report briefly on a few cases where the Mandates Commission had to issue rejections.

6. The Uyghurs are a Turkic people of central Asia, mostly residents of the Chinese province of Xinjiang (Sinkiang). Some also live in what was then the Soviet Republic of Turkestan. The Revolutionary Uyghur Union, a Comintern affiliate formed in Tashkent in 1921, was active mainly in the Kashgar region of Xinjiang.

The Communist Party of Iran's Bureau Abroad sent two delegates. This bureau was dissolved by the Comintern more than half a year ago. Nonetheless, it seems to be still in existence, since it sent two delegates, but they were rejected by the Mandates Commission.

There were difficulties regarding accepting the mandates from the Communist Party of Austria. Three comrades arrived from Austria with credentials issued in Vienna on 17 October and 19 October. One of these comrades left Vienna on 19 October. On 22 October we received a telegram from the Central Committee of the Austrian Party, which cancelled these three mandates and transferred them all to the Party's representative in the Executive, Comrade Grün.

The telegram stated that the Austrian Party did not have the resources to pay for the travel costs of these three representatives to come to Moscow.

Despite this telegram, however, all three delegates arrived here. So here we were with Comrade Grün, equipped with three mandates, and also the three delegates with valid mandates of their Central Committee.

The Mandates Commission decided, on the suggestion of the four Austrian comrades, to accept the mandates of the first three comrades and also give a decisive vote to the fourth comrade, so that the Austrian Party is represented here by four mandates.

The *Women's Section of the Commission for the East*, represented by its leader, Kasparova, asked to be recognised with decisive vote. This was rejected.⁷

In general, where mandates with decisive and consultative vote had to be allocated among many delegates who arrived with valid mandates, the Mandates Commission gave decisive vote to comrades that came directly from the country, and consultative vote to those who have been resident for some time in Moscow.

In addition, on request of the Presidium, delegates present here for the Profintern congress were given consultative vote, and delegates who came for the youth congress received credentials as guests. The same applies to the comrades of the congress on cooperatives, of which two were admitted with consultative vote, since this question is on the agenda and both comrades must therefore work in the Commission.

That concludes the report of the Mandates Commission. I present its proposal to approve the mandates and the commission report.

Radić (Yugoslavia): On behalf of the three comrades from the Yugoslav delegation, I wish to state the following:

7. Despite this decision, Kasparova was seated as a delegate and spoke in Session 24.

The Presidium has admitted two comrades to the Congress with a decisive vote, stating that these comrades speak for a distinct grouping. These comrades and groupings have not spoken out as such. Indeed, when the Executive session discussed this delegation, the two comrades said that they do not form part of a grouping. They say themselves that they do not represent any group at all. If there is any basis whatsoever to speak of such a group, it is represented by a member of the delegation. On this basis, we maintain that the Congress must not name these two comrades as members of the delegation. If the Congress takes such a decision, and in view of the consequences it would have in Yugoslavia, the other three delegates would have to withdraw from the Congress. I make this statement on behalf of the three delegates.

Humbert-Droz (Switzerland): In the interests of resolving the crisis of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Executive considered it necessary to invite Comrades Petrović and Stanić and other representatives of the minority to Moscow in order to explain and defend their point of view here. Comrades Petrović and Stanić have arrived here.

The Presidium considers that offering them the opportunity to take part in the congress deliberations alongside the Yugoslav delegates, with decisive rather than consultative vote, would offer a moral guarantee for the settlement of the present disagreements in the Party.

This decision was taken by the Presidium in the interests of resolving the issues in the Party, and should in no way be considered as prejudging the disputed issues or as setting a precedent.

The congress will only express itself on the crisis in the Party after hearing the commission report.

Radek: Comrades, I will not speak about the substance of the dispute in Yugoslavia. I would like only to respond briefly to the Yugoslav representative. He said that if the Congress recognises the mandates, the comrades will be required to withdraw from the Congress.

The comrade's declaration shows that he has had far too little contact with the spirit and work of the Communist International. This is the first time I have witnessed a delegate saying, 'If the Congress decision is not to my liking, I will not obey it.' This sort of thing is only done by people who are now outside the Communist International. This is the kind of thing that was done by the KAPD. But here, every current, every delegate must understand that the decisions of this sovereign congress must be obeyed. For that reason, I consider the statement to be entirely uncalled-for. It can only do harm to the movement.

As for the question itself, the criteria that have guided the Presidium are explained in its declaration. I will expand on this somewhat. The Yugoslav

Party is illegal. In such an organisation, disagreements can arise a thousand times more readily than in parties that can function legally. And such disagreements are a thousand times more difficult to resolve. It would be a crime for the Presidium not to do everything possible in this situation in order to keep the comrades together. I would also like to note that the two comrades even obtained a large number of votes. The Party did not utilise the number of mandates that was at its disposal. In addition, formally speaking, the decision of the Presidium does nothing more than take into account the conditions prevailing in the Yugoslav Party.

Chair: We have received a declaration of the French delegation. I ask that it be read.

Humbert-Droz: The French delegation asks that it be permitted to make changes in the allocation of mandates, pending the arrival of the comrades who are still on their journey to Moscow.

Chair: Given that the Yugoslav delegation is challenging the decisions of the Mandates Commission and Presidium, I will first take a vote on that point. Then, given that we have heard no further challenges, I will hold the vote on the report of the Mandates Commission as a whole.

Comrades, we will now hold the vote. Those opposed to the Presidium decision in the matter of the Yugoslav mandates, please raise their hands.

There are none opposed. I note that no votes have been cast against the Presidium decision.

We now come to the vote on the Mandates Commission report. Those against the report of the Mandates Commission, please raise their hands.

The report of the Mandates Commission is therefore unanimously adopted.

Comrades, we can now continue with the discussion on the offensive of capitalism. We continue with the speakers' list. Comrades, the Presidium proposes to close the speakers' list. Still on the list are Ravesteyn (Netherlands), Stern (Austria), Webb (Britain), Hoernle (Germany), Katayama (Japan), Rosmer (France), and Welti (Switzerland).

The Presidium has been notified that the Yugoslav delegation accepts the decision of the Presidium. (*Cries of 'Bravo'*)

So, those in favour of closing the speakers' list, please raise their hands.

The speakers' list is closed. Comrade Ravesteyn has the floor.

Ravesteyn (Netherlands): Comrades, it is hardly possible to take the floor after Comrade Trotsky's report without falling under suspicion of disagreeing with the important and splendid presentation by one of the Russian Revolution's leading spirits. Nonetheless, comrades, his comments provide

the occasion for some remarks, relating not to his main thesis but to what he said about the perspectives for world-revolution, and especially about the likely political evolution in Western Europe.

Comrade Trotsky said approximately the following. He referred to the danger of reformist and pacifist illusions in the Western Parties. There will, of course, be no disagreement on that, given what we have experienced in recent years. Nonetheless, he substantiated his warning with reference to the political conditions that, in his view, create in the near future an extremely favourable breeding ground for these illusions. Political evolution in the Western countries, he says, could well lead to an alliance and, subsequently, a government of petty-bourgeois and pacifist layers, a so-called *Bloc des gauches* [Left Bloc], posing the question whether workers' parties should support such an alliance. There would be a significant danger that Communists would support such an alliance, or, at least, the danger that such an alliance would arouse strong inclinations in the Communist ranks toward supporting it. Comrade Trotsky cited Britain and France as examples of such an evolution. He said, for example, that, in Britain, a victory of the National Liberals and Unionists in the coming elections was likely. But it was probable, in his view, that this coalition would not last long and that it could soon be the turn of the Labour Party.⁸

Following Comrade Trotsky, Comrade Radek spoke in detail of these matters. The impression this made on me, and I think on many others as well, was that, on this question, Comrade Radek was not completely in agreement with Comrade Trotsky. Let me stress that the part of Comrade Radek's report that pleased me most – without detracting in the slightest from the value of his report as a whole – was when he described in detail the danger of an extreme reactionary wave across all Central Europe, a wave of monarchist or, if you will, fascist reaction. There are obvious historical parallels for this in what we saw, for example, in the peasant movements during the French Revolution – the Vendée and the Chouans – as well as with the royalist counter-revolution in Spain during the rule of the Cortés, and with the Bonapartism of the 'Man of December'.⁹

8. The National Liberals were the wing of the Liberal Party in 1922–3 that supported Lloyd George in his governmental coalition with the Conservatives. Unionist was a name used for the Conservative and Unionist Party (the modern Conservatives) which originated in the merger of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists in 1912.

9. The 'rule of the Cortés' refers to the Spanish resistance against occupation by France, 1808–14. The 'Man of December' was Louis Bonaparte, who gained prominence thanks to peasant support, carried out a coup d'état in December 1851, and subsequently ruled as Napoleon III.

Comrade Radek referred to this acute and, we may say, extremist and conspiratorial counter-revolutionary danger across all Central Europe – you could say from Sicily to the Elbe. And I thought it very important that he did this, because, in his opinion, it is beyond any doubt that the full magnitude of this danger is not always fully understood in the German workers' movement and Communist Party. When I listened yesterday to the comrade of the German opposition, if I may use that word, who polemicised against Comrade Radek, I wondered if this comrade is aware that a single man, Prince Rupprecht, has it in his power to introduce monarchy and white terror tomorrow in Bavaria and thus in Tyrol, Austria, Hungary, and who knows where else – not only against Communists but against the Social Democrats and the workers' movement in general.¹⁰

Comrades, if the German comrade had come to grips with these facts, he might have expressed his views in a somewhat different tone.

A second aspect of Comrade Radek's presentation that specially appealed to me was his clear and explicit recognition that, even in Western Europe, the political situation is evolving distinctly to the right, affecting all bourgeois layers and consequently all the bourgeois parties. France and Britain are, of course, the outstanding examples. These are the classic countries of bourgeois civilisation and tradition, which, by contrast, never fully flourished in Central Europe.

What is taking place in Britain today is symptomatic. Comrade Radek said that political developments there seem, at first sight, to be nothing less than insane. The Unionists went into the elections virtually without a programme, without promising anything. You need a magnifying glass to discover what exactly is the difference between Lloyd George and Bonar Law. This is quite correct. But Bonar Law is a typical representative of reaction among the broad masses of Britain's mid-level bourgeoisie, the middle class. He is a classic spokesperson for their bigotry. These classes have only one slogan: easing and lifting the heavy weight of taxes resulting from the imperialist war, which leave them groaning.

Secondly, they want as much as possible to return to prewar conditions, when the state displayed abstinence and, one might say, sobriety with regard to economic life as a whole and social policy in particular.

That sometimes takes forms that are frankly shocking and nonsensical. We see that very clearly in an old bourgeois country like the Netherlands, which

10. The 'comrade of the German opposition' is Urbahns; see pp. 431–4. Prince Rupprecht, from 1919 the Wittelsbach pretender to the throne of Bavaria, worked actively for his restoration. Bavaria was the stronghold of German far-right movements.

reflects all intellectual currents of the bourgeois world, and whose bourgeoisie is fully informed about everything happening in the entire bourgeois world. And let us not forget that the Netherlands is also an imperialist empire of great importance. Among the bourgeois extremists, there is a reversion to the old liberal ideology in its purest form, even that of the full Manchester school of Cobden.

Thus we have fanatics and politicians of this school who seek the complete dismantling of all social legislation. Throw out protective labour legislation. And this current wins a strong response, although not in this extreme form, among all bourgeois parties and even among a part of the working class that is influenced by these parties. At present, this is the overriding reality of all the old bourgeois countries like Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. We must bear in mind that, especially in these countries, whose currencies are still relatively unshaken, their imperialist interests absolutely demand such policies. Without a significant reduction of taxes and social expenditures, it is simply impossible for Britain and the Netherlands to summon up the necessary funds for purely imperialist purposes.

This evolution shoves aside the workers' parties, indeed all the still somewhat reformist and pacifist bourgeois groups and drives them to the wall. This is what happened in the last elections in the Netherlands, a model bourgeois country even if a small one. It provides an example of a purely imperialist state whose very large capitalists, like Colijn, leader of the enormous Royal Dutch Shell petroleum trust, have total power, despite universal suffrage and democratic state institutions.

In my opinion, that is where Britain's development is headed. The British Labour Party is being shoved into a corner and driven up against the wall. Do you think it will be possible for Henderson and Clynes to succeed where their much more diligent and erudite comrades like Troelstra in the Netherlands have failed? He was unable to achieve power even with the help of the petty-bourgeois Centre, the strongest party, which, in our country, unites hundreds of thousands of workers under its banner. That is absolutely excluded, now and in the future, as long as the imperialist state and its interests persist.

Developments in France are following a similar path. There, too, in my opinion, the time for a left bloc is indisputably over. Even before the war, the Radical Socialist Party had lost its influence. All the outspoken reactionary parties and ideologies emerged strengthened from the War. In France, for example, this applies to the aristocratic party that exists there, the Action Française party, the Catholic parties, along with all the parties on the Right. The way France is evolving is very well portrayed in an instructive little book by the well-known former French prime minister and politician Caillaux, *Où*

va l'Europe, où va la France? [*Where Is Europe Going; Where Is France Going?*] It is unfortunately impossible to speak more fully about these things in the short time at my disposal. But I firmly believe that *there are no indications in the Western countries pointing to a revival of bourgeois reformism, radicalism, and pacifism.*

What can we conclude from all this? Looking at the situation in this way, the need for a united front, for a dynamic coming together of all proletarian forces under Communist leadership, is even clearer. However, I would like to point out that, at least in the countries I have named – in what we may call the purely bourgeois countries, with historically pure bourgeois ideologies of political life – the idea and slogan of the workers' government seems to be suspended totally in thin air. Indeed one could call it utopian. These imperialist countries with their vast overseas possessions – Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands – together constitute a model in which one can much more readily imagine a powerful influence from developments *in the East*. Indeed, in my opinion, there is no doubt this is happening. We must not for a minute forget that capitalism in these countries is tied to its overseas possessions somewhat like the Siamese twins, that is until death. This linkage became much tighter everywhere after the war. In our country, for example, we note that the tie between the Netherlands and Indonesia has actually become much firmer after the War. Every trouble in the overseas possessions has, of necessity, a strong echo in the imperialist ruling countries.

In closing, I find it simply inconceivable that Henderson and Clynes in Britain and Longuet and Blum in France, drawing support from bourgeois reformist forces, will still be in a position to form a government. The Hendersons and Clynes, Longuets and Vanderveldes, Troelstras and Vliegens, will, at the very best, succeed only in becoming ministers in an imperialist united front. But such an imperialist united front can hardly be covered by the definition of a workers' government.

I will close by saying that the proletarian united front is a broad tactical line of march for all the capitalist states in which the proletariat has not yet triumphed, whatever their history, culture, and constitution. The workers' government, by contrast, can at the most apply to the special conditions of Central Europe and perhaps for a few other countries. It is very valuable in these countries. But the Communist International will struggle and win around the world under the banner of the united front of the entire proletariat.

Stern (Austria): Comrades, sisters and brothers: In considering the capitalist offensive, I believe there are two questions of special and principled importance. The first of these is what this offensive of capitalism signifies. Does it perhaps mean we face a period – short or long – in which world reaction will have the upper hand in its great struggle with the world proletariat?

The second important question is, in this struggle for partial demands that has been forced on us, how we can avoid becoming reformists or being taken for reformists?

Regarding the first question – the meaning of the capitalist offensive – anyone who thinks it means that the enemies of world communism now have the upper hand should look at Austria. Its development provides a classic example, serving as a model for countries that do not yet suspect that they face a similar fate. In Austria, we can see with full clarity that capitalism's offensive is simply its last desperate attempt to save itself with unviable methods. The bourgeoisie in Austria has done all possible to avoid its downfall. It has driven the real wages of the working class down to the lowest levels. It undertook this offensive with the most sophisticated methods in order to avoid collapse, and it succeeded only in speeding up this decline and bringing its downfall closer. Things in Austria have gone so far that even the most intelligent bourgeois representatives faced situations where they had to openly admit the bankruptcy of bourgeois policies and the impossibility of undertaking anything in Austria.

The Geneva Treaty means simply that the world bourgeoisie, realising that the Austrian bourgeoisie's situation is untenable, is coming to its aid.¹¹ The world bourgeoisie understands very well that Austria is far more important than is indicated by its size of the country. That is why the world bourgeoisie is coming to Austria's aid. It wants to try, through a heightened dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, to go further in the offensive against the working class and to squeeze out of it what the bourgeoisie needs in order to get a breathing spell.

This context lends international significance to the Austrian question. Strategically, this is true because Austria provides the link between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, between Fascist Italy and Germany, and between Hungary and Bavaria. But, beyond that, we see clearly in Austria how the bourgeoisie fears that under the most arduous conditions of collapse the proletariat is going over to a counterattack, and how the bourgeoisie is locked in a great struggle to maintain its power.

Comrades, in this framework, I believe it is clear that our International faces new tasks in the coming period. In a situation such as that facing Austria, we need to launch an international campaign in the spirit of the united front. But there is no one to undertake this campaign. The Austrian proletariat by itself is too weak to fend off the assault of its bourgeoisie, in alliance with that of other states. The proletarians of other countries must come to its aid. And I

11. Regarding the Geneva Treaty, see p. 385, n. 9.

say that the task of the International is not only to organise itself as a party but now also to lead, intervening as a party and as an active force.

In a case such as Austria, the International must turn to workers of the affected countries and to their Communist parties, explain to them the international importance of this issue, and see to it that the Communist parties undertake campaigns on behalf of the proletariat of Austria and the world. Of course, I do not mean a putsch or a campaign of which the proletariat of the country in question is not capable, but, rather, a campaign in the spirit of the united front. The parties in each affected country must call on the proletariat as a whole to launch a well-organised struggle on behalf of the Austrian proletariat.

Just as the French have been told in this discussion not to hold off activity in the spirit of united front until their party is complete and ideal, so the International must say in this case that you must not wait until we have a fully consolidated world party. Rather, we will only become an international world party if we do not limit ourselves in specific situations to saying how the parties should conduct themselves, but, rather, in such situations, go over to issuing instructions for international campaigns that genuinely intervene in the overall struggle between world capitalism and the world proletariat. We see that the struggle is broadening internationally, that specific battles between capitalism and labour in each specific country broaden to struggles of groups of bourgeoisies of different countries against the proletariat of these countries. The International must follow this development and intervene in appropriate ways.

Comrades, there is another respect as well in which Austria provides an instructive example. We in Austria have implemented the united front under particularly difficult conditions. And I believe that the Austrian experience has shown that the united-front tactic can be applied successfully even where a small party confronts a much stronger party. And that is the most difficult context for applying the united-front tactic, because the large party is in a position to give the working class false information, to distort everything, and to slander the small party. Even in conditions where we cannot address the masses through newspapers and rallies, Austria has shown that the united-front tactic can be successful. In Austria we have also seen the interrelationships between the united-front tactic applied from below and from above. We have seen that even where a large party arrogantly refuses to recognise the smaller party, it can be advantageous to approach its leadership in order to strengthen the pressure of the masses from below. We saw this on May Day, when the Social-Democratic Party wanted to thrust us aside, but were compelled by its worker supporters, against the instructions of the party leadership, to hold unified rallies and permit Communists to speak in these rallies.

This policy has been particularly successful in the struggle of the streetcar workers, who are almost all Social Democrats. Our support, offered in the spirit of the united front, led to the result that in the streetcar workers' last election of shop stewards, almost all the Social-Democratic candidates were defeated and open Communists and opponents were elected. The Social Democrats challenged the vote's results, but, the second time, they were defeated with even fewer votes.

We applied this policy successfully with regard to the Geneva Treaty. When the treaty was made known, the Social Democrats were not ashamed to indicate that they were ready to accept it. We took up the struggle, applying the united-front tactic with all our energy, and indicating what was at stake if the Social Democrats were not prepared to defend their much-vaunted democracy. We succeeded in forcing the Social Democrats to decide on at least the pretence of a campaign. And this provided a real test of the fears of many comrades that the Social Democrats could be forced into a struggle where they would look like revolutionaries. To the degree that the reformists were forced to take action, it eased our work in applying the united-front tactic.

Thus, when Social Democracy in Austria said that the Geneva Treaty must be adopted to keep us from going hungry, many workers may have believed them. But when Austrian Social Democracy steps forward to say, insincerely, that the Geneva Treaty must be abolished because it thrusts us into slavery, we respond that they should follow the logic of this and obstruct the Treaty. And, when it turns out that Social Democracy does not oppose the Treaty, this makes it must easier for us to drive the movement forward.

And I would like to say that, in general, the united-front tactic seems to me to have all the greater possibilities of success, the more we succeed in driving the reformists forward under the pressure of the masses. We do not give way to illusions that the Social Democrats and reformists will always want to struggle, but it seems to me to be far from excluded that we will sometimes succeed in forcing them to struggle against their will. Certainly, they will not struggle honestly and of their free will, and, at the decisive moment, their struggle will end in betrayal. But this process of driving them forward, in which the masses gradually come into motion, is important and significant for us.

It is in this framework that we must understand the workers' government question. I see the slogan of a workers' government as nothing other than a part of the Communist united-front tactic. We should not consider the demand for a workers' government as insistence on an ideal. The workers' government is not that; in some situations, it can involve serious dangers. We must demand the workers' government as something that the other forces must do if they are serious about struggling even for their own demands. It follows logically from the struggle for partial demands, as a slogan posed

against the coalition government through which the Social Democrats wish to evade the struggle.

In my opinion, there are two kinds of coalition governments, depending on the period in which they come to power. When there was a possibility of immediately winning power, at a time of vigorous struggle for power, the coalition government had the goal of breaking the workers' will to struggle and saving bourgeois power. Against such a coalition government we are able – where possible – to counterpose the dictatorship of the proletariat. But there is another type of coalition policy that means simply that Social Democracy is not even willing to fight for its partial demands. And we can only expose this fact by raising a slogan that shows clearly what you must do to fight for your demands. That is the demand for the workers' government.

I do not say that we should put forward this slogan because we know that the Social Democrats will not struggle. Rather, I say we must advance it even though we know they will not struggle – not out of hypocrisy, but because we say that we are not for the moment able to struggle for the dictatorship [of the proletariat], but we stand ready to fight for your demands. And we are also ready, if you are really serious about it, to take a stand of advocating the workers' government. That is not hypocrisy. It will serve to expose them precisely because we are genuinely and sincerely ready to support every honest struggle.

And so, in conclusion, I would like to say that the application of the united-front tactic today seems to me to be somewhat different in character from what it was earlier. At first, the united-front tactic was a way to cover the broad retreat of the proletariat. Now, it seems to me that the united-front tactic is a protection for gathering and deploying our forces and for preparing a new advance. It is true that reaction is moving forward on a broad front. We see that very clearly in Central Europe. But the proletariat is also gathering its forces, and the united-front tactic enables it to do this under cover, preventing individual groups from thrusting forward prematurely only to be struck down. It is actually nothing other than the beginning, the preparation of new attacks. So we can now say that the capitalist offensive is not a one-sided advance of reaction but is also counterposed to the preparations of the world proletariat to counterattack. We see the two camps marching against each other. In this advance, in Austria for example, every single position of strength is important. The proletariat has to struggle for every single position and every single immediate demand. And, in this struggle, at the moment, no other policy can be applied but the united-front tactic.

Harry Webb (Great Britain): Comrades, I wish to speak about the capitalist offensive in terms of its development not only in Britain but also in other

countries. In Britain, the capitalist offensive in 1921 and 1922 was more intensive than in any other country in Europe. The worsening of working-class economic conditions during these two years has no parallel in the history of Britain's modern working class. In 1921, we had a major lockout of coal miners, imposed by the coal mine owners working hand in hand with the British government. As you probably know, the government had promised not to decontrol the mines until August 1921. Nonetheless, it did so in March 1921, so the organised workforce could not take precautions and would be obstructed in achieving its goals. In addition, a wedge was driven between the miners and the rest of the working class, who were unable to support the miners.

What happened during this great miners' struggle of 1921? We witnessed the breakdown of the Triple Alliance,¹² upon which the workers of Britain had placed great hopes since the armistice was signed. You know the key facts about this breakdown. There is no doubt that if the miners had enjoyed the support of the transport and railway workers in that difficult situation, we would be today in an entirely different situation, and the improvement in the conditions of the British industrial working class would not have failed to affect those of the entire European proletariat.

During those days Great Britain imported 1.5 million tons of coal.

Radek: From the United States!

Webb: The Amsterdam and Second Internationals displayed their total bankruptcy through their inability to mobilise industrial and political forces to support the miners. Frank Hodges of the miners' union told the most recent trade-union congress, in a discussion of affiliation to the Red International of Labour Unions, that he personally had made efforts to achieve a united campaign against the import of coal into Britain. Hodges was forced to admit that the Amsterdam International was completely unable to get the situation under control.

At the same time, we too, as members of the Communist International, must admit frankly that something was amiss in the apparatus of our own International, for, at the very moment when the Amsterdam International was not capable of responding to the demands of the situation, the Communist International was unable through its influence in the Red International of Labour Unions to mobilise the workers. It is true that the labour International had just

12. The Triple Alliance was an agreement between three major British unions, the mine, railway, and transport workers. The alliance broke down in 1921 when the rail and transport union leaderships rejected strike action in support of the miners' struggle against wage reductions.

been formed, but that does not alter the fact that the collaboration that was then possible between the existing Communist parties and the revolutionary workers did not take place.

Radek: We were not in a position to act.

Webb: The capitalist offensive found expression in 1922 in the great lockout of machinists, just as in 1921 with that of the miners. These are the outstanding examples of massive offensives by capitalism against the British proletariat. At the very moment that machinists in Britain stood in struggle against the capitalist offensive, metalworkers in seven countries of Europe were engaged in struggle with different sectors of the international capitalist class. But this year, twelve months after the miners' lockout, after substantial progress in building Communist parties, we find the same lack of collaboration among Communist parties in areas where sectors of the proletariat are in battle against the capitalist offensive.

Today, the British capitalist class, after bringing down its fist on the miners and breaking the resistance of the machinists, is turning its attention to the transport workers. The most effectively centralised organisation and the most powerful section of the British transport workers' movement is the National Union of Railwaymen.

In the final days of 1919, there was a national strike of railwaymen that lasted fourteen days. In this short span of time, the railwaymen showed the British ruling class that they could mobilise their forces rapidly and were capable of thwarting the employers' attempts to worsen their economic position. In this space of fourteen days, the railwaymen had almost achieved a victory over the employers and the government, when they were betrayed by J.H. Thomas and other people of his sort who belong to the leadership of the railwaymen.

Now we see that those who speak for the capitalist class – their economic experts – are saying brutally and openly that the conditions of the railwaymen must be reduced to the level of the miners and machinists. The capitalist class is publicising with remarkable frankness examples of wages paid to mineworkers in Lanarkshire and South Wales. They are telling the railwaymen quite frankly that, despite the contract provisions for a flexible wage scale, and despite the supposedly miraculous leadership of J.H. Thomas, they cannot expect to receive any more for their labour than what the competitive struggle provides to them.

But this capitalist offensive is also expressed in Britain in another way. In this year, 1922, we endured not only the brutal, naked, and shameless capitalist offensive, but also the leadership of Amsterdam and the Labour Party

chieftains, who are among the main representatives of the Second International. They delude the working class, saying that present economic conditions are what they should expect. Henderson has proposed the notion of an industrial truce based on an economic situation that is much worse than before the War. They are making frantic efforts to assist the bourgeoisie in driving the working class into worse conditions of slavery.

Comrade Zinoviev and others have also described how the capitalist offensive also encompasses political forces like the Fascists. Britain and the United States are always proclaiming that the system of representative democracy puts even the working class in a position to achieve its goals without having to take the path of revolution, of the type that occurred in Russia. But now we find that the law book has been enhanced by an emergency law, adopted before the lockout of miners in 1921. Given what happened during the lockout, it is obvious that the ruling class saw what was coming and therefore rushed the law through parliament. This law was not opposed by the Labour Party in any way. The law gives the ruling-class government the power in any severe crisis to declare a state of emergency, call in the army and naval reserves, organise special defence detachments, mobilise middle-class forces, and take all precautions to be armed for civil war. The use of the Black and Tans in Ireland clearly shows that when British capitalism is threatened to the same degree as was the case with capitalism in other countries, it will take even more severe measures than those that are used in other countries.¹³

When the Independent Labour Party [ILP] in Britain left the Second International and posed a number of questions to the Communist International, the latter's answer stated that we must prepare to achieve the victory of the proletariat in Britain through a massive civil war. According to the responsible comrades of the Communist International, we face not just civil war but massive civil war.

When the Black and Tans in Ireland were waging war, they forced Irish railway workers to transport munitions and troops for British imperialism. A delegation asked Lloyd George whether or not the government had countermanded this ordinance. Lloyd George replied: 'It is not true that the ordinance was countermanded. On the contrary, you must understand that the law prescribes the use of unlimited force.'

And still Comrade Zinoviev says that Lloyd George has stood on the pacifist side of the capitalist world. But it was Lloyd George who had the following

13. The Black and Tans were a British auxiliary police force that was used in Ireland 1920–2 to repress the Irish independence struggle and was notorious for brutality and violence against the Irish population.

to say with regard to the subjugation of the Irish people. In 1919, at the time of the railway workers' strike, he spoke to the *Manchester Guardian* about the conduct of the middle class toward the working class, saying that an agreement had been reached to destroy trade unionism once and for all, and that this was politically an alarming symptom. 'The organisation of civic guards', the *Manchester Guardian* commented, 'is equivalent to the organisation of the White Guards in Russia, and White Guards mean Red Guards'.

Everything in Great Britain points toward a bitter struggle.

I will now turn to the requirements laid on the European Communist parties and the International. Especially in Western Europe, the International should insist that the central committees send representatives to each other, so that the Communist parties of Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries work together and analyse their problems jointly. In this way, they can establish a real united front that can enable the working class to mount a proper defensive struggle against capitalism.

Furthermore, the Communist International needs to do more to coordinate the Communist groups of countries in which there is a revolutionary-national movement. It must quickly achieve the collaboration of Communist groups of Egypt, Mesopotamia [Iraq], Palestine, Persia [Iran], and all similar countries.

It is also important that the Communist International devote increased attention to the British Communist Party. True, we are numerically weak. But the International must bear in mind that Britain is the focus of an empire that poses the greatest stumbling block on the road of world-revolution. The International must not underestimate the Communist Party of Britain. Germany is very important for the next step on the road to revolution. But as soon as we have built a strong Communist Party in Britain, we will proceed to the task of coordinating the movements in the parts of the British Empire where national-revolutionary movements are developing. With the Communist International's help, we can establish contact that will convert the united front in these parts of the world from a simple slogan to a living reality.

A further reason why the Communist International must come to grips with the movements of the Near and Far East is that Social Democracy has not yet sunk roots there. The Communist International agrees that Social Democracy, in its opportunism and betrayal, is the main obstacle to the development of world-revolution.

I would urge the Communist International to insist that elements in the Communist Party that still adhere to reformist parliamentarism should be expelled. On behalf of the Communist Party of Great Britain, I declare that we stand unreservedly on the basis of the Twenty-One Points. We will decisively oppose any tendency to give up even one of these Twenty-One Points. And

we therefore call on the International to insist that there be no weakening of the Twenty-One Points that distinguish the Communist International from the reformist International of the past.

Hoernle (Germany): Comrades, brothers and sisters: in response to Comrade Urbahns, I would like to clarify that the majority of the German delegation fully agrees with the presentation by Comrade Radek, including both his analysis of the situation and the resulting practical demands for the Party and the Communist International.

A brief word on what Comrade Urbahns said. I do not believe it is our task to strain our ears listening for a resonance, a tone, or an undertone, in the remarks of Comrade Trotsky or Radek or any other comrade, that someone somewhere could possibly misinterpret or distort in an opportunist direction. We have more important things to do. But it is typical of the opposition in the German Party, and for a current that is perhaps not restricted to the German Party alone, to always have reservations, on every occasion and in every application of our policies. The slogan of the united front? They have reservations. The slogan of the workers' government? They have reservations. An open letter to the leadership bodies? They have reservations. The meeting of the three executive committees? They have reservations. The New Economic Policy in Russia? They have reservations. The decisions of the Third Congress? They have reservations.

Everywhere, again and again, they have reservations. (*Interjection from the Germans: 'Reservations without cogitation'.*)¹⁴ Always reservations! They carry out our policies, but with reluctance. We must frankly state the obvious fact: of course the united-front tactic harbours major dangers and, of course, there may be deviations to the right. I would like to compare the united front with a narrow mountain ridge. I tell you that it is slippery and the way is narrow. But when we stay put, merely philosophising as to whether we have reservations or run risks, we do not advance. In order to learn anything at all about applying the united-front tactic, we must take steps. That's what is most important. And that is why I must say frankly and plainly that the opposition's style and method – this policy of raising a thousand fears and bellyaching – has the objective effect of crippling the Party and rendering it passive. (*'Very true!' from the Germans*)

I would also like to comment briefly on how Comrade Urbahns assesses the situation, particularly in Germany. He believes it is evident that the proletariat has moved into a counteroffensive, and he bases this, among other things,

14. The German text reads: 'Bedenken, ohne zu denken!'

on the German factory-council movement. Comrade Urbahns, we would all be very happy if there were signs in Germany today of a revolutionary awakening of the broad masses, but it must, unfortunately, be said that the factory-council movement in Germany has not yet touched the broad masses, as we hope and need it to do. (*Very true!* from the Germans) The factory-council movement in Germany does not yet extend far beyond the party membership, although a layer of sympathisers is involved. It is true that some of the uncommitted workers are with us. But this is only a beginning, and we can certainly not yet speak of a genuine shift by the proletariat away from its unwillingness to advance. I would rather say that the proletarian resistance is stiffening and beginning to strengthen. But our task is not to philosophise over whether we are already in a period of offensive or still on the defensive. Our task is to set aside all this philosophising about offensive and defensive and do practical work among the masses in order to stiffen their opposition. (*Very true!* from the Germans)

I would like to demonstrate this fact briefly using the example of conditions in Germany. Significantly, the capitalist offensive in Germany began early in 1920, just as the initial fake upswing came to an end, and the employers for the first time reduced their operations and closed factories. It began after the first attempt to take the working class by surprise – when the Kapp Putsch had collapsed but the working class had not made use of its victory.¹⁵

In the summer of 1920, the employers' federation proclaimed that there were to be no more wage increases. That was when the counter-revolution, for the first time, organised the illegal and armed Orgesch bands. That is when we had the first wave of inflation. And we did not then have any theory of united front, comrades. But our party organisation, that of the old Spartacus League, instinctively applied this policy when there was a demonstration against inflation and a strike against a ten per cent deduction from wages. I recall the tax strike in Württemberg.

15. For the Kapp Putsch, see p. 239, n. 13. After coup collapsed on 17 March, armed workers' resistance continued, now demanding decisive action against right-wing violence and subversion. Carl Legien, head of the ADGB, responded by proposing a workers' government, composed of representatives of all workers' parties and the unions. The KPD leadership stated that it would not join such a government, but would tolerate it, functioning as a 'loyal opposition'. This position was much criticised in the International, including by Radek, on the grounds that such a SPD-USPD-ADGB government would be no different from the counter-revolutionary SPD-USPD provisional régime of 1918–19, which the Communists had unanimously opposed. However, Lenin stressed the importance of 'a concrete analysis of the concrete situation', concluding that the 'loyal opposition' tactic was 'quite correct both in its basic premise and in its practical conclusions'. Lenin 1960–71, 31, pp. 109, 166; Broué 2004, 349–90.

Comrades, I cannot go into the details here. But, already in the summer of 1920, it was clear that the economic offensive of the employers was tied in with a political offensive of the state. The government was unleashing the police and security forces against the workers. In rural areas, it was declaring enterprises to be essential and restricting the workers' right to strike. The compulsory arbitration decree turned up – an attempt to cancel the workers' right to strike.

I also recall the winter of 1920–1, when the Stuttgart metalworkers spontaneously raised four or five demands, which then gave rise to the famous 'Open Letter' of January 1920. This was the united-front tactic in becoming, and it was broken off sharply by the March Action. The Third Congress therefore did not establish any new policy. It merely systematised this policy. Its achievement was to establish a guiding principle for actions that had been unmethodical and locally initiated and therefore fraught with serious errors. That made systematic application of the united-front tactic possible.

It would be very instructive to demonstrate, based on conditions in Germany, that the united-front tactic cannot be learned as a finished prescription but must take new forms in every given situation, sometimes by turning to the leadership organisations; sometimes by turning to the broad masses. We have seen the German Party develop more and more confidence in applying the united-front tactic, while also learning to link parliamentary action with mass action – an art that is certainly challenging.

In the process, we have seen that the capitalist offensive is more and more drawing into activity new layers that had not previously been found in the proletariat's battle lines. I recall the first movement of postal workers at the end of 1920, the railway workers' strike this year, and the first sizeable apprentice strikes, through which broad layers of young workers were drawn into the struggle.

So we see, on the one hand, capitalism becoming more strongly organised – economically, politically, and militarily – as the capitalists learn and discover new and more sophisticated methods to dominate the proletariat. But, on the other hand, the need to fend off this offensive is enlarging and educating the army of the fighting proletariat. I agree with the previous speaker: now more than ever it is our task to ensure that Communist parties of different countries come into close contact with each other. What the French and German Parties have achieved must be systematically expanded, so that capitalism's united front will be countered not only by a proletarian united front on a national level, but by a genuine international united front.

Comrades, another of our experiences in Germany deserves mention. I said earlier that the opposition in the German Party always has reservations. It always fears that opportunism could slip in, demanding that measures be

taken and guarantees given against opportunists. The German experiences have showed us that the more decisively and consistently the united-front tactic is applied, the better things go for the cleansing of the Party. (*'Very true!'*)

In the autumn of 1921, the Party took its first steps after the Third Congress, declaring support for the ten demands of the German General Trade-Union Federation. Social Democracy tried to counter this through its slander campaign. It tried to brand the Communists as criminals, still living off the results of the March Action. That was when the Party freed itself from a considerable number of opportunist elements in the KAG [Communist Working Group].¹⁶ We have seen something similar this year. At a time when the Party is growing stronger and the trade unions are going over to a counteroffensive, the USPD and SPD are merging; at this moment we once again see the departure of wavering elements from the Party.¹⁷ They are simply driven out of the Party by the consistent application of our policy and by consistent, steady construction of the factory-council movement.

Comrades, let me add a few words on Fascism. I believe that the question of Fascism must be seriously addressed and analysed by the Comintern, not only because – as Comrade Radek was right to point out – there are similar developments in other countries, but because these similar developments are all linked together. To some degree, they have a plan for their offensive, and organisational threads already run this way and that.

I'd like to point out that two types of fascist movement can be distinguished in Germany. There is a South German form, which I would like to briefly characterise with the word 'Bavaria', and the North German form. In the south, fascism is based on broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie and the middle peasants. It links extreme monarchical counter-revolution with these broad layers, which are in essence democratic. The North German form of fascism, which finds expression above all east of the Elbe River, is based on quite different social layers. The agrarian employers' organisation has succeeded there in uniting a considerable portion of the rural workers in company unions. In addition, there are the consolidated illegal contingents of front-line soldiers, like the Rossbach organisation,¹⁸ which has a pronounced fascist character. This entire movement is led, as in Italy, by declassed intellectuals.

16. For March Action, see p. 78, n. 17. The Communist Working Group, led by Paul Levi, included some CP members sympathetic to Levi's positions.

17. Hoernle is referring to the right opposition led by then KPD General Secretary Ernst Friesland, which moved toward the positions of Paul Levi and the Communist Working Group and was expelled in January 1922.

18. The Rossbach organisation, an independent right-wing military unit led by Gerhard Rossbach (1893–1967), engaged in brutal suppression of workers' and peasants' struggles.

In Germany, as elsewhere, we have addressed the question what the German Party must do against fascism, whose attacks on the working class already find expression in bomb explosions, armed demonstrations, and the like. The German Party must undertake intensive propaganda to undermine the army, the counter-revolutionary leagues of rural workers, and so on. It must address the need for proletarian self-defence at the moment when the danger becomes clear to the broad masses. We must not speculate prematurely or seek prematurely to establish artificial self-defence units. Rather, when the danger is evident and tangible for the masses, the demand for proletarian self-defence must be placed in the foreground.

In closing, I'd like to note that, precisely because the Communist parties have the task at present of applying the united front, linking up with the daily demands and urgent needs of the broad masses, we must shape the Communist International to be unified and centralised, firmly disciplined, and showing its face prominently, so that it will not merely observe the movement, not merely participate in it, but lead it in going over from defence to offence. (*Loud applause*)

Chair: There are still three speakers on the list, and also Comrade Rosmer has asked for the floor in order to read a protest. In addition, Comrade Radek must give his summary. We have at the most one hour for all this. What shall we do?

Among the speakers on the list are some from countries that have not yet spoken and have asked to have the floor. Unless these comrades decline, the time of each speaker must be shortened. I propose a limit of ten minutes.

Clara Zetkin: Comrades, sisters and brothers: we propose that the debate be closed. (*'Quite correct'*) In our opinion, the most important points of view relating to analysing the situation and drawing conclusions from it have already been expressed. We therefore propose that the remaining speakers decline and that Comrade Radek have his summary. As reporter, he will say what needs to be said.

Welti (Switzerland): Comrades, sisters and brothers: I propose that we reject this motion. It is not appropriate that, after having listened for hours to reports with much repetition, we simply strangle the debate. We of the Swiss delegation wish to make a motion on this question and we strongly demand the floor.

Radek: Comrades, sisters and brothers: provided that it does not involve introducing fundamentally new questions, it is always in order to ask for the floor to motivate a special motion. I have not previously spoken, and, as reporter, I have also not placed the motion to close the debate. But, in my

opinion, the debate has taken on the following character: the counterposed viewpoints have been expressed, and comrades are now explaining the state of the capitalist offensive in their country, relaying facts with which we are quite familiar. There is no reason to continue reports from each country on this point, through which we would simply lose the day tomorrow.

Chair: We will vote on the motion of Comrade Clara Zetkin to close the debate. Is anyone opposed? The motion is adopted. The debate on this question is closed.

Before I give the floor to Comrade Radek, Comrade Rosmer has the floor to read a statement of protest.

Protest against Arrests of Polish Deputies

Rosmer: Comrades, reports from Warsaw tell us that the police have arrested Comrade Stefan Rybacki, who was elected to parliament by thirty-two thousand votes of miners in the Dombrowa basin. His arrest was based on tsarist laws that are still in force in Poland.

Comrade Stefan Królikowski, elected in Warsaw with twenty-seven thousand votes, is also in jail. This violent infringement of the will of tens of thousands of worker voters is a new link in the chain of base persecution of the Communist movement in this 'democratic' republic of 'liberated' Poland.

Following on its judicial crime against Comrade Dombal, who has bravely declared for communism, the national government is now seeking to gag the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat, elected to parliament despite the unleashing of white terror.

The Congress of the Communist International expresses to workers of the world its abhorrence of the barbaric actions of a government of lackeys of international capitalism and its admiration for the Polish proletariat, which is defending, with unbending courage and under exceptionally difficult conditions, the cause of freedom and humanity.

Chair: We will now vote on this protest statement. (*Unanimously adopted*)

Summary

Radek: Comrades, the debate on the capitalist offensive expanded to some extent into a renewed debate on the Executive's report and our policies. That could not be avoided, given that my report stated that our response to the capitalist offensive is the most important campaign and policy issue before the Communist International at this time. That is why comrades in

the debate have been repetitive, and I must be so also. In responding in my summary to what comrades have said here, I must touch on questions that were actually exhaustively dealt with in Comrade Zinoviev's report.

Regarding the character, form, and outlook for the capitalist offensive, the interesting presentation of Comrade Bordiga on Fascism deserves thorough discussion, which I cannot undertake because my time has been very much restricted. However, some comment is needed on the remark of Comrade van Ravesteyn, who says he has perceived a certain contradiction between my remarks and those of Comrade Trotsky. That is a misunderstanding. When I spoke of a *pull to the right* in the bourgeois camp, I was thinking of their offensive. Comrade Trotsky spoke of a *new wave of pacifism* and social-reformist treachery. The difference lies in the fact that I am dealing with *today and tomorrow*, while Comrade Trotsky was speaking of *the day after tomorrow*, that is, the stance of the bourgeoisie when its offensive is exhausted.

However, let us return to the policy questions that were the main object of discussion. The capitalist offensive has required us to adopt the united-front tactic, and we saw that it holds dangers on both right and left flanks. In the debate on the Executive report, we said that *the dangers on the right are greater than those on the left*. I stand by this opinion. At this time, the danger threatening our struggle and our tactic from the right does not consist only in the fact that a part of the Communist International is losing too much of its Communist face in the period between two waves of revolution. On the contrary, the main expression of this danger is the fact that, under pressure of the capitalist offensive, large sectors of the proletariat have grown passive. Not only do they not attack the enemy, but they do not even defend themselves. From the point of view of the working class as a whole, this decrease in the will to struggle among broad proletarian masses is the greatest danger. The tactical question before us consists of how to strengthen the will to struggle, and what we must avoid in order not to diminish this will to struggle.

In my opinion, *the Communist International's overall line is directed against the passivity of the working masses and their inability to defend themselves – in other words, against the Social Democracy, the Two-and-a-Half International, and the elements in the Communist parties who do not adjust to the situation but rather capitulate to it. In this framework, the left errors bring grist to the mill of the centrists ('Very true!')* and here I give back to Comrade Urbahns the phrase with which he honoured me, but with the difference that I will seek to prove my point.

Comrade Urbahns makes an error in his speech that is more important than everything he says against our tactic: his assessment of conditions is wrong. In his speech, he said that my report was bringing grist to the mill of the centrists

*because I exaggerate the strength of the capitalist offensive and do not see that the proletarian response, its counteroffensive, has begun.*¹⁹ As proof of this he cites the struggle for the eight-hour day in France and the factory-council movement in Germany. The most important point here is that, if you want to overcome a danger, you must first perceive it. If what Comrade Urbahns says is true, and the counteroffensive against capitalism is already getting under way, then the right danger would not be so great. To cry out that the Communist International is in great danger of bogging down, and, in the same breath, to say that the working class is already rising up – that blocks the path to real insight into the situation.

I do not know if we have already passed the highest point of the capitalist offensive. As for Comrade Urbahns's reference to the struggle in France, I must ask what it represents. It represents the first defensive steps of the French proletariat. And as for Comrade Urbahns's references to the factory-council movement in Germany, I will only respond that I agree here completely with Comrade Hoernle. We must not overestimate this movement. Certainly, it has great importance for us, because we are seeking local starting points to organise unified struggle. The factory-council movement does not yet embrace large, broad masses of non-Communist workers, but even if it did, would that in itself signify a proletarian offensive? It would be a defence against the worsening of working-class conditions. We can only speak of an offensive if the masses have scored successes through the factory-council movement and achieved control in at least one sector of industry. In fact, they are just beginning to organise the defensive struggle, and already you are crying out that the counteroffensive has begun.

To assess reality in this fashion exposes us to the danger of being again thrown back – ten more times. *The retreat of the proletariat has not yet come to a halt.* Only here and there do we see the workers maintaining their positions, and already you are crying out that the counteroffensive has begun. You do not see the danger of working-class passivity. You need only examine the German movement in order to assess the fact that the miners were talked into the overtime agreement. What does that tell us? It means that the workers are prepared to work longer and have virtually given up the eight-hour day. Not only the trade-union leaders, but the workers themselves have surrendered the eight-hour day by working longer.

And, given that reality, we must say that, in order to really fight back against the capitalist offensive, we must see it in its full dimensions and perceive the dangers as they are. There are dangers enough without us adding on illusory ones.

19. See Urbahns's remarks on p. 432.

Comrades, we have acknowledged the capitalist offensive in its full scope. It was not easy for us to go over from a policy of uninterrupted assault on Social Democracy to the united-front tactic, which brings with it inevitable dangers. Comrade Zinoviev's first thesis pays close attention to the dangers of the united front, because we say that *the workers must be united for the defensive struggle, but this must not lead Communists to forget that we are fighting for more than a crust of bread*. And we are still the weaker part of the workers' movement. Our press is still weak, compared to that of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, whose press is strong. There is a danger in the united front that Communists who are not rock hard will lean too much on the Social Democrats, that we will surrender our birthright, that we will not succeed in both fighting together with the Social-Democratic workers against capitalism and at the same time showing them clearly the revolutionary perspectives of the struggle, and thus taking them further than the Social Democrats want to permit. We perceived this danger, and that is why we took up in the Expanded Executive the question of our tactic in the struggle for the united front against the capitalist offensive. And we are taking it up today.

Comrade Urbahns made a number of allegations here against this tactic of struggle against the offensive. First of all, he criticised us for utilising the tactic in the session of the three executives.²⁰ He did not say what our error was. He said that the tactic was carried out on an empty stomach. In my view, that is an allegation from an empty head. For Urbahns must either say no negotiations with the leaders, or he would have to say what was the nature of our errors in the negotiations with the Social Democrats and the Two-and-a-Half International.

Urbahns: The criticism concerned a lack of preparation for this action.

Radek: Then please permit me to turn this allegation against you. The Executive issues theses that provide theoretical preparation for our actions. The parties know this. All of them send representatives, who know very well what is at stake. We want to force the Social Democrats to struggle together with us for the eight-hour day, against the danger of a new war, against wage reductions, and to resist the capitalist offensive against Soviet Russia. Therefore, we must exert the greatest pressure, in every city and every country, on the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.

How can this pressure be exerted? By the Executive in Moscow or the delegates in its sessions? No, the parties must do this. And, here, I must stress what happened when we came to Berlin. The first thing that happened after

20. Radek is referring to the Conference of the Three Internationals held in Berlin, 2–5 April 1921.

we came to Berlin was an appeal to the organisations to mobilise the masses, hold rallies, and bring delegations from the factories to the Reichstag. What was the result? Two tobacco workers and three other comrades came to the Reichstag and wandered around. I am convinced that our Berlin organisation is one of the best. But this failure must be put to the account of the Berlin organisation. And so, dear Comrade Urbahns, please address the Berlin, Hamburg, and other organisations that failed in this situation to mobilise the broad masses. The conference with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals was not an organisational question but an initial attempt to drive the Social Democrats to the wall and put them under the pressure of the working masses to join with us in unified struggle. Yet our organisations did very little. And, on this point, Comrade Urbahns is powerless. And this brings me to his second allegation.

He says that it would be the greatest of illusions to think that the Social Democrats could struggle – the illusion that the Social-Democratic leaders, whom we have treated since 1914 as agents of the bourgeoisie, will suddenly be obliged to lead a struggle. And Comrade Urbahns, who has been hearing since that time that they are agents of the bourgeoisie, quite naturally asks, 'How can agents of the bourgeoisie struggle?' Now, dear comrades, if politics were so easy that, after I have once said they are agents of the bourgeoisie, they are damned and condemned for ever, well then politics would be a simple matter.

As far as the bulk of the Social-Democratic leadership is concerned, there is no doubt that they are consciously opposed to the revolution. But this leadership lives in Germany, in France, or in Britain, which are not empty spaces, and they do not exist merely in polemics with Comrade Urbahns and me. This leadership in Germany is based on a party of millions, with millions more following behind it. And this leadership can either stand openly and clearly on the side of the bourgeoisie, or seek to jump off the bourgeoisie's wagon.

Let us recall one very important fact. On 5 November 1918, Scheidemann and Ebert were negotiating with the high command about the emperor's possible abdication in order to save the crown prince and the throne. And, on 9 November, Scheidemann jumps up on the Reichstag portico and cries, 'Long Live the Republic!'²¹ It could be objected that he did this in order to betray us. ('*Very true!*') But, in between, there occurred a trifle that Comrade Urbahns has not reckoned with: the collapse of the Hohenzollerns and the revolution

21. 'Portico' translates the German word *Rampe*, which suggests an entranceway. Two photographs exist that are claimed to represent this event; one shows Scheidemann speaking from a window; the other, from a second-floor balcony. For Scheidemann's speech, see Riddell (ed.) 1986, pp. 41–2.

and counter-revolution. The Scheidemanns betrayed us. But they also helped topple Wilhelm from the throne. That can be denied only by those who do not want to see and understand unpleasant facts. Zinoviev used a particularly happy turn of phrase in his speech on tactics to the Expanded Executive session: the Social Democrats are betrayers of the proletariat. *But it depends. When it is necessary for their salvation, they can also betray the bourgeoisie.*

So the second question is, should this fact be assigned any significance? Comrades, if our excommunications could destroy entire parties, we would simply ask Comrade Zinoviev to sign an ukase that would make Scheidemann and his comrades disappear. Since that is not possible, we must struggle against them. The question here is in what period we will destroy them. It is possible that these people will ally themselves so tightly with the bourgeoisie that they cannot jump off, and then through unflagging struggle and the rebellion of the masses, they and the bourgeoisie will be thrown together down to perdition. *But it is also possible that we will enter a period where their coalition with the bourgeoisie becomes impossible and they are obliged to form a coalition with us. In this coalition, they will once again try to betray us, and we may only be able to defeat them when, in the course of this coalition, their policies have revealed their bankruptcy and the masses have come over to us.*

Anyone who does not see such a possibility is just counting on their fingers: Loves me, loves me not. Will he betray me fully or only partially? Should I be afraid or not be afraid? This reminds me of the maiden of whom Heine wrote, 'You have nothing but your virtue'. No, Comrade Urbahns. You have lost even your virtue, because you did not oppose the workers' government on principle, and such damaged virtue counts for very little in matters of principle.

But what does the workers' government demand mean? Comrade Urbahns has suggested that there are major disagreements on this issue between Trotsky, Zinoviev, and myself. We have read many times in the bourgeois press that Bukharin's cavalry is fighting against Zinoviev's infantry, that, on one occasion, Trotsky arrested Lenin and on another Lenin arrested Trotsky. But there is no need to try to play such games with secrets here. We are not donkeys. There are nuances in our thinking. One of us approaches the question from a different angle than another. One views it from the angle of their own country, and another from that of a different country, and from this results nuances of opinion. But here is the question: *'Does the Executive hold that we should lead the masses in a campaign for a workers' government, or not?'* In Germany, at present, this means that *we should tell the Social Democrats that we want to struggle together with them against the bourgeois coalition and, if it seems useful, support a workers' government or even participate in it.* Does the Executive hold

this position or not? I assure you that it holds this position, and that is the most important political question.

Comrade Urbahns says that his stand on the workers' government question is that it is *impossible*. So, if the present bourgeois coalition were to fall apart, Comrade Urbahns will conduct agitation as follows. He will go to the dockworkers in Hamburg and tell them: 'You are seven times as strong as us. We propose the demand for a united workers' government, and we want to struggle for it, but it is impossible.' That is of course nonsense, and here I must say a few words to Comrade Šmeral.

He makes a serious mistake because in the past his politics were opportunist and now, whenever he speaks, he believes he must cross himself and say, 'Do not think this is an opportunist point of view, and if you think that, I will give it up.' I am completely in agreement with Comrade Šmeral that the struggle in Czechoslovakia to form a workers' government could flare up in the coming period, even in the coming months. But stealing a glance to his left, Comrade Šmeral says: 'I do not believe in the workers' government, but others do, and that's why we have to act as if we believed in it.'²²

If you conduct a campaign in this spirit, nothing will come of it. To speak to the masses in this spirit is an absurdity, with the dollar worth ten thousand marks, wages being reduced, and the coalition blown apart because Stinnes is against stabilising the mark. Perhaps they will reach a compromise. But, in this crisis, where the bourgeoisie is unable to stabilise anything, in this whirlwind, the Communist party is the point of stability. It must show the masses a way out. We tell them: 'You fear the dictatorship [of the proletariat]; we are for it. You think there is some peaceful way to get out of this. Try it. You can obtain the majority in Germany; you can win the proletarian majority. You will have to advance to a dictatorship, and we will fight for this with you shoulder to shoulder.' In such a situation, our comrades who have the closest ties with the masses will tell them: 'Down with the bourgeois coalition; we are for a workers' government.' And the others will say, 'I don't believe in it, but you do.' (*Laughter*) Smile, comrades, we are manoeuvring with you!

How can such a campaign be conducted? We must tell the masses what we want, and that we are opposed to the capitalist onslaught. We must tell them that we propose as a practical goal the unification of the now divided working class. And if the working class comes to power before it is capable, in its great majority, to decide in favour of a dictatorship, we will go through every stage of struggle with in the firm conviction that the struggle will bring them to our point of view.

22. Radek's remarks appear to be based on a comment by Šmeral on pp. 426–7.

If all this is opportunism –

Urbahns: Interpretation of dreams!

Radek: There's no need for me to engage in interpretation of dreams, because I am merely interpreting what I consider to be your thoughts. And if you have no thoughts, there is nothing I can do about that.²³

I will now say a few more words on the opposition group in Germany. Comrades, all jesting aside, Comrade Ruth Fischer spoke here on the question of our tactic. She criticised specific points in the tactic as applied by her party's centre, and we respond to her that this is quite in order. Such criticism is consistent with the tactic and policy of the Communist International. Comrade Urbahns, on the other hand, rejects the tactic of the Communist International in principle. But he denies he is opposed in principle. Comrade Bordiga wants to reject the united front, but also says, 'I accept it as a whole, but I disagree on specific points.' But we are not in a bourgeois parliament, thank God, where shadow-boxing is the rule.

You should either accept the theses on tactics or work out your platform clearly and present it to the Congress. But this dancing around, this no-yes; I'd like to but no; can't be done; would do; should do: of course you can manoeuvre like this in a party district in order to achieve a majority for this or that current, but that is not proletarian politics.

Comrades, all this bobbing and weaving should not be taken seriously. Today, I read an article by a comrade of the Berlin organisation, Comrade Geschke. I am told he is a good revolutionary worker. He writes the following concerning Thalheimer's draft programme:²⁴

Even Marx writes in his *Manifesto* of a certain type of intellectual who produces theories that cause confusion in the working class, causing a distraction that consciously or unconsciously helps capitalism to get through crises.

He thus graciously concedes that, through his draft programme, Thalheimer may unknowingly be helping the capitalists. But then he raises his hand to heaven, saying:

What most deserves criticism here is the treatment of the workers' government. *It concedes that it is possible even in a capitalist state for the working class to take positions of power and utilise them for proletarian goals. This entirely*

23. The exchange between Urbahns and Radek is found only in the Russian text. The reference to 'interpretation of dreams' recalls comments by Radek on p. 162 and an interjection on p. 240.

24. For Thalheimer's comments on the German CP's draft programme, see *Kommunistische Internationale*, 23 (1922), pp. 118–21.

conceals the clear position we have until now maintained and gives the reform socialists a weapon, without their having to pay any great intellectual price.

What is said here is that if we win any kind of position of strength in the capitalist state, that is reformism. The trade unions, the Communist Party, and the factory councils are positions of strength in the capitalist state, provided that we know how to utilise them. Another position of strength is for us to have capable comrades in parliament who know how to use it in the interests of the working class. But to win positions of strength within capitalism is reformism. It would seem that revolutionary politics consists of remaining impotent until the capitalists do us the favour of collapsing.

The comrade continues, and this is also quite interesting:

Recently, *Rote Fahne* printed an excerpt from a speech of Comrade Trotsky, made to functionaries in Moscow, in which he said that, after taking power, the working class would not only take over the bourgeois state but also, for a time, continue to operate it along the lines of the old system of production, with cost accounting, stock exchanges, banks, and so on. This is a justification for the [Communist] Working Group and for a policy of coalition that is better than anything the Amsterdammers could wish for.

When Trotsky says that after the conquest of power it's necessary to account for costs and not just to thrust about wildly in the fog, this is seen as the best argument for the Social Democrats, who are for not just calculation but also speculation, while maintaining capitalist rule.

This is printed in *Taktik und Organisation*, without any reply by the editors in this issue. If this is a good comrade, and I'm told he is a good, revolutionary worker, this shows a lack of clarity in the minds of some of the best revolutionary workers. *And you, as leaders of these workers, instead of establishing clarity and a clear line, remain in the half-light of your reservations.* Why are these reservations dangerous? Because they prevent us from uniting against the capitalist offensive around a clear line, without which there can be no struggle. And when you say that the proletarian counteroffensive has already begun, I respond that we cannot yet even organise the defence of the proletariat. We have not yet succeeded in placing our own parties, the parties of the Communist International, in the centre of the struggle against this offensive. The united-front tactic has not been implemented in Italy, and not in France either, while, in Germany, we see some weak beginnings. You approach these beginnings with many reservations, instead of overcoming the dangers in action by leading the masses in struggle and imbuing them with a Communist spirit.

Comrades, I have been told that, in my report, I used the expression that the working masses as a whole today are not fighting consciously for power,

that this question is no longer immediately posed.²⁵ And I was told that this is a dangerous statement. Now, comrades—

Urbahns: The formulation was quite different.

Radek: Well then, say what it was.

Urbahns: The working masses have lost faith in the conquest of power.

Radek: I accept this formulation. If the working masses in their great majority had faith today that they can conquer power and establish their dictatorship, why, Comrade Urbahns, did you agree that the Party should adopt the slogan of the workers' government?

In my opinion, there is nothing more disastrous for the Communist International than a failure to grasp that the new, second stage means that the broad masses are not today on the assault. Only when they are attacking do the broad masses have faith in their goal. The Communists, as the vanguard of the working class, believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat. The non-Communist working masses struggle only when conditions force them to. *It is obvious that the majority of the working class is not now thinking of the conquest of political power. Anyone who denies that is blind and will not be capable of overcoming the masses' present attitude in the course of future events.* Rather, he will only trail behind the party, grumbling because he does not understand that the party must act in this way.

Comrades, the errors that we must now avoid have been encountered before in history. After the defeat of the Russian Revolution in 1906, the Russian proletariat was in a most difficult situation, and the Mensheviks said the revolution was over, that capitalism and tsarism were stabilised, and Russia had entered the road of peaceful, Prussian development. The Bolsheviks countered that the bourgeoisie and tsarism are not capable of resolving a single fundamental question. And the revolution is therefore not over. A wave of revolution has ebbed and the second wave has not yet come. But disagreements arose among the Bolsheviks about what to do in the period between these two waves. The Berlin comrades are very unhappy because the word *otzovism* has been used, and they consider it a term of abuse. They talk of Menshevism, and we, who have a better knowledge of Russian, throw another word at them: *otzovism*.²⁶ *But that's not what it's about.*

25. See pp. 392, 432.

26. The *otzovists* ['recallists'] were a left-wing current within Bolshevism during the post-1907 ebb of the workers' movement who favoured non-participation in official representative bodies.

Otzovism consists of saying that the revolution must come and will come. Like the comrade whose article I have quoted, it says roughly that the revolution *inevitably* will come. Now, the Bolshevik leaders were not mystics, and they knew that history is made by classes on the basis of economic development. And, if the front ranks of a class that is objectively revolutionary do not become its vanguard fighters, the revolution may inevitably be delayed, although development is leading in its direction. The question is whether there is a revolutionary class, *led by a conscious vanguard*. When the *otzovists* said that, because the revolution is coming, we will not go into parliament, the trade unions, the cooperatives, the Bolsheviks struggled against that. There were also shadings of *otzovists*. Just as there were and are half-Mensheviks and half-centrists, so too there are half and one-quarter *otzovists*, who have to be pulled along by the nose to a better understanding. That is why Lenin, Kamenev, and Zinoviev combated the half- and quarter-*otzovists*, saying: 'Yes, the tomorrow there will be revolution, but today we must first unite the masses for struggle.' And the danger of *otzovist* moods exists, comrades; it is the reverse side of the coin of the masses' passivity.

The *otzovists*, like the KAPD today, wait until the masses come into action. And you want to fill out this time by doing things that are an expression of fear. When children are afraid, they cry out and yowl. We say that this policy is dangerous, and you have to get over it – not only when formulated openly, but in relics of the KAPD approach. When the party is in action, you should not always grab it by the elbow and hinder its actions. My first speech, as reproduced in *Bolshevik*, had me saying that you had hindered the Party. I did not say that. I said that your fearfulness would hinder it, for the Party considers that you have the support of a portion of its ranks. (*Interjection from the Germans: 'When did we ever do that?'*) I will enumerate some instances for you right away.

One was when the question of *material assets* came up, of adopting a tax programme to tax the bourgeoisie and ease the burden on the working class.²⁷ Do you recall all the speeches about the danger of state capitalism? Another case was when the question was raised of a *workers' government*. Do you recall your speeches when the *united front* was raised? On every occasion, the story was that the comrades, if they did not actually betray, would at least make fools of themselves. During the sessions of the Commission of Nine, your entire politics was based on the fear that Bukharin and Radek would be shown up

27. Regarding taxation of material assets, see p. 398, n. 23.

to be betrayers or idiots.²⁸ Such politics, if you do not call a halt, will ruin the Party.

When we hear Comrade Ruth Fischer's speech, and then that of Comrade Urbahns, who represents a large German party organisation, we respond: 'Dear comrades, bring these matters into the light of day.' Otherwise you will damage the Party – contrary to your intentions – because I must say frankly that you represent a large part of the proletariat, on which we must rely, and because the danger of passivity requires us to unite all living revolutionary forces of the proletariat.

Comrades, I wish to say a few words about the danger from the Right. The British Comrade Webb spoke here, calling on the Executive not to retreat from the Twenty-One Conditions. I have only today learned that the good Comrade Webb could not sleep at night for fear that it could be reduced to only twenty conditions. Let me reassure him. Comrade Zinoviev said that, when we next negotiate with groups coming from the Right, we will have forty-two conditions. I hope that satisfies Comrade Webb. But the party that he represents is not as radical as he is. We must express some criticism of a significant error that this party committed in its activity. I have here the election appeal of the Communist Party of Britain.

How does the Communist Party of Britain apply its united-front tactic? It says: 'We are a part of the working class, namely its left wing. But we want to go together with the other workers' parties.' Wherever Naomi is, there too am I, Ruth. I am not referring to Comrade Ruth Fischer. (*Laughter*) I mean the good-natured Ruth of the Bible. And then the election appeal says: 'What is the Labour Party? The workers are excellent and wish to struggle, but the leaders are not so good.' And then it says: 'These leaders have betrayed in the past and do so even today. Such a betrayal may take place.' Nonetheless, it says, 'unity against the capitalists'. Damn it all, if that is the united-front tactic, we had better be done with it. The appeal of the [Comintern] Executive showed the workers specifically that the Labour Party's entire politics are a betrayal of the workers' interests.²⁹ But then it went on to say: 'If the Labour Party wins and forms the government, it will definitively betray you and show the workers that it wants capitalism and nothing more, and the workers will abandon it. Either that, or, under pressure of the workers, it will be forced to struggle, and, in this case, we will support it.' Our slogan is quite precise: 'Vote for it and prepare the struggle against it.' When Comrade Webb comes

28. The Commission of Nine was a continuing body established by the Conference of the Three Internationals, made up of three representatives of each International. It held only one session, on 23 May 1922. See p. 137, n. 17.

29. See *Inprekorr*, 2, 211 (4 November 1922), pp. 1455–7.

here and warns us against opportunism, we must tell him: 'Comrade Webb, jump right on a train and travel to Britain and struggle against opportunism there. You will have our full support.'

The questions of the united front and the offensive are the most important issues of the next year or the next several years. It is very possible that the Social-Democratic leaders will be tightly linked to with the bourgeoisie for a lengthy period. But we hope to succeed, through the pressure of the masses, in pushing them into struggle, at least for a time. Perhaps the poverty of the masses will have to grow before they come into struggle. It is possible that we will then go over to a frontal attack. But we will do that only when we are strong.

The policies of the Communist International embrace a perspective for an entire epoch, but must still be cut to the shape of the next immediate period. Our perspective is not merely what it was in the past. Rather, the longer the period of capitalist offensive lasts, the more the bourgeoisie shows itself incapable of securing its power. And we say that it has no way out – not just as part of an agitational tirade, but as our deep theoretical conviction.

But what represents the porch and what is the famous chimney?³⁰ That cannot be decided theoretically. I will be pleased to make prophecies about several hundred years from now, but I take care not to make prophecies about the coming year. The facts are so complex that prophecies can be made only by those who know very little about theory and do not hesitate to make fools of themselves. It's a matter of uniting the workers for struggle. And, for that, it is necessary to negotiate with the Social Democrats. So we must utilise this instrument, and we do so in the scientific knowledge that class antagonisms are sharpening. And, if this struggle sharpens, we will be the decisive force.

In the time between two great periods of struggle, nothing would be more dangerous than this kind of fearfulness, this obstinate insistence on pure principle. We must go with the masses into the practical struggles and not handle communism as if it were breakable china. We are still weak, and it would be disastrous for us not to recognise that. But we can only be strong if we say that we will do what is demanded by the present situation. And the situation before us demands the unification of the masses in struggle for the next immediate goals, which will lead to struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Loud applause*)

30. See comments by Radek, p. 400, and by Urbahns and Radek, p. 433.

Zinoviev: Comrades, I have just received a telegram from Comrade Walton Newbold in Glasgow, who informs us that our party has won the elections in Motherwell in Scotland.³¹ (*Applause*)

An independent candidate of the British party was elected there. Certainly we do not exaggerate the importance of parliament or of winning a seat in this beautiful House. But this victory has real importance. It appears that, in this decisive capitalist country, our star is beginning to rise. I believe that, given current conditions in Britain, this is an unchallengeable victory for the Communist International. (*Applause*)

Chair: Before we take the translation of Comrade Radek's talk, we must deal with some small questions. Comrade Welti wishes to make a proposal. I give him the floor to read and motivate his proposal.

Welti (Switzerland): I would like to make some preliminary remarks about the motion that I am proposing here on behalf of the Swiss delegation. The delegation has not been entirely satisfied by what we have heard in the reports on our tactics and the capitalist offensive, and considering what we have heard today, the same holds true for a number of speakers in the discussion. Comrades, it is noteworthy that efforts are being made in the Congress to do justice to the need to achieve a united front first of all within each Communist party itself. It was very interesting that Comrade Zinoviev sought to achieve a united front in the Hungarian Party by stating that there is no longer a factional struggle.

The question of the united-front tactic in each country has played no small role in the discussion. Comrade Radek emphasised this strongly in his summary. I could also have said something in this regard. But the Congress has not provided us with the floor, and we from Switzerland accept this. Long before the Executive provided the slogan of the united-front tactic, we had utilised this policy, in many cases to good effect. But we can discuss that on another occasion. Perhaps we can still utilise the time to convey this information to the comrades who are not yet in Moscow and who may well be interested.

Well, comrades, these reports were certainly interesting, and, by and large, we are in agreement with hearing portrayals of the situation and forecasts for the future. But we of the Swiss delegation say that we are not a federation of

31. In the 25 November British elections, Newbold won Motherwell Riding with 33% of the vote; Labour did not contest the riding. Another Communist, Shapurji Saklatvala, won Battersea North as an official Labour candidate. Four other CP members and one CP sympathiser contested the election, two of them as official Labour candidates and two running with local but not national Labour support. Klugmann 1968, pp. 234–5.

various Communist parties. For this reason, the question posed here concerns more than just the nature of the united-front tactic of each Communist party and how it should be applied in each separate country. Rather, what concerns us more is how the International itself should carry out the united front on an international level.

Comrades, so far we have heard very little about this, and, in this congress, we have heard virtually nothing. It seems to me that there should be some expression of this need in the Congress, which should then be carried through not just by a congress vote but through our activity in every form. What is needed is this: the individual instances of reaction in a country should be viewed as a matter of concern not only to the Communist party and proletariat of that country. Rather, they must be viewed as matters concerning the International. And, if this is not being done, it should be made a matter for the International.

Rather than limiting itself to mere portrayals and forecasts, the Fourth Congress must respond to this period of heightened offensive by providing a forceful political direction and a line of march. This is urgently required by the Fascist victory in Italy and the developments in Germany and Czechoslovakia. I cannot imagine that the Fourth Congress will fail to respond to this situation. At the very least, it must demand of the parties of West and Central Europe that they undertake a coordinated effort on the basis of a proletarian united front, utilising both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary methods, in order to erect a wall against fascism, and bring all possible help of every kind to the Italian proletariat and in particular to the struggle of the Communist Party of Italy.

Comrades, as regards this last point, we are convinced that, either now or in the near future, we need to pose a number of extremely practical questions to the Swiss Party, which seems to have been passed over so lightly here, and perhaps also the Austrian Party. Given the small size of these parties, and perhaps for other reasons as well, they will not find it easy to respond to this challenge – indeed they may find it impossible.

I am not in a position to say more on this topic at this time. However, on behalf of the Swiss delegation, I present the following motion:

Resolved to immediately establish a commission that will without delay examine all the urgent questions posed by the victory of Fascism and by conditions in Germany and Czechoslovakia, and present a report and proposals to the Executive Committee.

I leave it to the leading bodies or the Congress to decide whether this commission should be public or confidential.

Comrades, in closing, I'd like to note that the expression was used here that Fascism is a farce.³² I know there was no intention to be frivolous, but I think it would be better, more accurate, and more respectful to Fascism's victims to view it – and its likely consequences for the Italian and world proletariat and for the Communist International – in a different light. If we do this, I believe, we will not be merely considering analyses and resolutions, we will be earnestly examining what campaigns should be carried out along the lines that I have described. (*Applause*)

Chair: We must address the draft resolutions on the questions examined by this congress.

- 1.) Resolution on the report, 'Five Years of the Russian Revolution and Perspectives for World-Revolution'.
- 2.) Resolution on the report, 'The Capitalist Offensive'.
- 3.) Resolution on theses on tactics and the 'Open Letter'.³³

The Presidium asks you to entrust the editing of the draft resolutions on these questions to the same commission that drafted the resolution on the report of the Executive Committee.

Delegations, of course, have always the right to make changes in the composition of this commission.

Are there any objections to this proposal? (*The proposal is adopted*)

As for the proposal by Comrade Welti, I must say that the Executive has taken up this question. It was decided that the incoming Executive would hold joint conferences with the representatives of the concerned parties.

The Commission on the East proposes that the Congress establish a special commission to look into the situation in Egypt. It proposes as members of this commission the following comrades:

Béron (France), Gramsci (Italy), Katayama (Japan), Orhan (Turkey), Ravesteyn (Holland), and Webb (Britain).

Are there any objections? No. The Commission is therefore established with this composition.

Adjournment: 4:45 p.m.

32. See Zinoviev's ECCI report, p. 106.

33. For the final text of these resolutions, see pp. 1102–4 (Russian revolution); 1149–63 (Theses on Tactics); and 1174–9 ('Open Letter').

Session 14 – Saturday, 18 November 1922

Programme

The Programme of the International and the Communist Parties.

Speakers: Bukharin, Thalheimer

Convened: 11:45 a.m.

Chairperson: Kolarov.

Chair: The next agenda point is ‘The Programme of the International and the Communist parties’. I give the floor to the first speaker, Comrade Bukharin.

Bukharin: As you all know, we will not adopt any definitive programme at this congress, because many parties have not yet taken a position on this question. Even the Russian Party has not yet discussed the draft that I am to present to you. For that reason, most of the delegations believe it to be more expedient not to adopt a definitive programme at this congress, but rather to only discuss the programme and then adopt it at the next congress.¹ But the fact that we are daring to place a question as weighty as that of the programme on the agenda for discussion at a world congress is a sign of our rapid growth. The very fact that we are taking up this question today enables us to say confidently and with a clear

1. At the Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924 Bukharin presented a new draft programme, which was accepted as a basis for further discussion. A programme was ultimately adopted at the Sixth Congress, held in 1928, at a time when the Comintern leadership was profoundly divided. For the 1928 programme, see: <www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/index.htm>. For a critique by Leon Trotsky, reflecting the viewpoint of the Left Opposition, see Trotsky 1936.

conscience that the Communist International will resolve this problem. Meanwhile, in the camp of our opponents, the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, complete theoretical impotence reigns.

Clara Zetkin: Very true!

Bukharin: The first of the many questions that I will address concerns the basic theoretical questions regarding programme in the prewar Second International. I will present the thesis that the collapse of the Second International during the War has very deep theoretical roots in its prewar programmatic foundations. Generally speaking, we can identify three main phases in Marxism, its ideology, and its ideological structure. The first was the Marxism of Marx and Engels themselves. Then came the second phase, the Marxism of the Second International, of the epigones.

And, now, we have Marxism's third phase, Bolshevik or Communist Marxism, which, to a significant extent, goes back to the original Marxism of Marx and Engels.

This original Marxism was itself the child of the 1848 revolution, and this gave it a highly revolutionary spirit, resulting from its birth at a time when all Europe was shaking and the proletariat stepped on the stage of world history.

Then we entered a new period, in which there was an ideological turn. This entire historical evolution shows us again something that we find in the history of almost all ideologies. An ideology born under certain conditions takes on a new face and a new form when these conditions change. So it was with Marxism. After the revolutionary epoch in Europe in the middle of the last century, we had an entirely different period in the capitalist system's development, marked by the enormous expansion of capitalist territories. Growth was based essentially on the bourgeoisie's colonial policy, and the flowering of industry on the European continent was rooted mainly in the exploitation of colonial peoples.

This flowering, this prosperity of continental industry led to various social shifts among the European peoples. The economic position of the working class was strengthened. But, during the same period, capitalist development created a broad community of interests between the bourgeoisie and the continental working class. This fact, this community of interests between the bourgeoisie and proletariat in the continent of Europe provided the basis for a highly significant psychological and ideological shift inside the working class and, of course, among the socialist parties.

Then came the second phase in the development of Marxism, namely that of Social-Democratic Marxism, often called the Marxism of the Marxist epigones.

The battle between the so-called orthodox current and the reformist current, the famous quarrel between what was termed orthodox and revisionist Social Democracy, personified by Kautsky on one side and Eduard Bernstein on the other, was said to be an apparent victory of orthodox Marxism. But, when we examine this whole story in retrospect, what we see is the total capitulation of 'orthodox' before revisionist Marxism.

I would say that in this controversy, this quarrel, which arose long before the World War, the so-called orthodox Marxism, that of Karl Kautsky, capitulated to revisionism in the most important theoretical questions. Earlier, we did not see this. But now we see it very clearly, and we also understand very well why it is so.²

Let us take, for example, the theory of immiseration. As you all know, Kautsky's Marxism gave a milder expression to this concept than it received from Marx himself. It was claimed that, in the epoch of capitalist development, the position of the working class worsened relatively. The inherent law of capitalist development is said to consist of the fact that working-class conditions improve, but that they worsen relative to those of the bourgeoisie. That is how Kautsky justified this supposed thesis of Marxism in face of Bernstein's attack.

I believe Kautsky's assertion is incorrect, and that his theoretical position was based on the actual empirical conditions of the European and American working class. In Marxist theory, however, Marx analysed capitalist society in the abstract and held that the inherent law of capitalist development leads to a worsening position of the working class. And what did Kautsky's Marxism do? It understood 'working class' to refer exclusively to the continental working class. The position of these layers of the proletariat grew better and better, but Kautsky's Marxism overlooked the fact that this improvement was achieved at a cost of the destruction and pillage of the colonial peoples. Marx considered capitalist society as a whole. If we wish to be more specific than

2. Bukharin's remarks on Kautsky differ in tone and substance from those made by Lenin during that period. For example, Lenin devoted almost half of his remarks at his fiftieth birthday-celebration on 23 April 1920 to a quotation from an article written by Kautsky, introduced as follows: 'This writer is Karl Kautsky, from whom at the present time we have had to break away and fight in exceptionally sharp form, but who earlier was one of the *vozhd*i [leaders] of the proletarian party in the fight against German opportunism, and with whom we once collaborated. There were no Bolsheviks then, but all future Bolsheviks, collaborating with him, valued him highly'. Thanks to Lars Lih for pointing me to this passage and for the translation; compare Lenin 1958-65, 40, pp. 325-6; Lenin 1960-71, 30, p. 526. Lenin wrote in a similar vein in 'Left-Wing' Communism; see Lenin 1960-71, 31, pp. 22-3. For a fuller evaluation of Kautsky's pre-1914 writings from 1917, see Lenin 1960-71, 25, pp. 481-95. On this theme see also Lih 2006.

Marx, we should consider not only the American-European realm but the world economy as a whole. Then we would get an entirely different theoretical picture from that of Kautsky and his friends. Kautsky's thesis was therefore theoretically false. It was a capitulation to the attack of revisionism.

Take another question, that of the *theory of collapse* and the uprising of the proletariat. The theory of catastrophe, of collapse, was also greatly weakened by Kautsky in his controversy with the revisionists. As for the revolution, which results from collapse, in most of the revolutionary writings of Kautsky such as his *Weg zur Macht* [*Road to Power*], we find, even in these writings, many quite laughable passages – opportunism driven to the point of absurdity. Take for example various statements in *Soziale Revolution* regarding the general strike, where Kautsky holds that, if we are capable of making the revolution, we will need no general strike, and if not – we still do not need one. What does that mean? It means utter opportunism, of which we had previously not taken sufficient note, but which we now see quite clearly.

Take the third theoretical question, the *theory of the state*. I must speak on this at greater length. At the beginning of the War, we too held that Kautskyism had suddenly abandoned its own theory. That's what we thought and that's what we wrote. But it is not true. Today, we can quite confidently say that our statements were wrong. Quite the contrary: the so-called betrayal of the Social Democrats and Kautskyists was based on the theory that they had advanced even before the War. What did they say regarding the state and the conquest of political power by the proletariat? They presented things as if it was a matter of some object that could be handed over by one class to another. That was Kautsky's conception.

Let us take the example of the imperialist war. If we view the state as a unified instrument, which is held by one agent and then, in a different epoch, by another agent – that is, as something almost neutral – than it is entirely understandable that, when war breaks out, the proletariat, which has the perspective of taking over this state, must protect it. During the World War, defence of the state was brought to the forefront. This was consistently thought through, and for Kautsky to propose and approve national defence was merely a logical deduction from this theory.

The same is true regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat. Even in his debate with the revisionists, Kautsky never developed this concept. He devoted hardly a word during the controversy to this most important of problems. He said roughly: this question will be worked out by future generations. That is how he presented the matter.

Comrades, let us survey all these logical trains of thought and try to discover their sociological equivalent. We can only conclude that the supposed Marxist ideology we have here is rooted in the aristocratic position of the lay-

ers of the workers on the continent whose improved conditions were bought through the plunder of workers in the colonies. This thesis regarding the social roots of Kautskyism has in reality been admitted by the theorists of the Second International. These people have become so insolent that they now believe they can discard their masks. In his book on the programme,³ Kautsky directly addresses this diagnosis and sees no reason to fault it:

The proletariat is not inherently homogenous. We have already noted that it is divided into two layers. One layer, favoured by special economic conditions or legislation, builds strong organisations and is thus able to safeguard its interests effectively. This is the ascending sector of the proletariat, its 'aristocracy', which is able to resist successfully capitalism's tendency to press it down. This goes so far that its struggle against capitalism is directed not against poverty but rather toward achieving power.

So the struggle against poverty is counterposed to the struggle for power. That certainly is a prize 'Marxist' formulation! And he continues:

Next to these well-disciplined, educated, and battle-ready detachments (he means, ready to lick the generals' boots) there is a large army of those who are subjected to unfavourable conditions (you see, he cannot deny their existence) who are not yet able to organise and counteract capitalism's tendency to drive them downwards. They remain in poverty, often sinking deeper and deeper into the mire.

Kautsky then tries to identify the tactical differences between him and us – the Communist International, which is based not on the workers' aristocracy but on the most oppressed layers. He comes up with the following analysis of the tactical courses:

Thanks to its ignorance and inexperience, this layer readily becomes the prey all demagogues (that is, the Communists!). Intentionally or thoughtlessly (that's his 'sociological analysis') they induce this layer to swallow glittering promises. They lead them in struggle against the educated and long-organised forces, who are accustomed to follow a sure path and undertake at each moment only the tasks for which their abilities and strength are sufficient.

And so on.

There is a novel by Jack London called *The Iron Heel*. London may not have been a very good Marxist, but he did grasp very well the problem of the modern workers' movement. He understood very well that the bourgeoisie

3. See Kautsky 1922.

has not only attempted but indeed succeeded in dividing the working class into two sectors. It corrupts one of these sectors, the educated, skilled workers, and then makes use of this worker aristocracy to crush any working-class uprising. But what Jack London portrays very well from the point of view of the workers, the Second International's theoreticians do not understand. They utilise this tragedy of the working class, its inner division, to support bourgeois society. That is the function of Social Democracy. Now, after many years of war and revolution, we see how brazen these people are in themselves portraying this filth and giving it theoretical justification. The sociological foundations of Kautsky's Marxism could not be clearer. If we now examine the questions of which I have spoken in the manner in which they find expression in the theories of the Second International, we receive an even clearer picture.

Reviewing Kautsky's recent writings, particularly his most recent book, we find not a single word about the theory of immiseration. This is incredible. At a time when this tendency of capitalism stands there before our eyes in all its nakedness, when everything is so intensified, when all the masks have been torn off, Kautsky has not a word to say on this most important question. But, if we review not just Kautsky's book but a few other works, we will discover the key to understanding this silence.

There is a book in Germany written for young people by a certain Abraham. This book is very widely distributed among young people, and I understand it has been translated into various languages. This Mr. Abraham insolently and cynically proposes the thesis, 'revisionism has rescued Marxism'. We do not need any Marxist theory, because Bernstein's revisionism has rescued for the working class 'the valid elements of Marxism'. That is his main thesis.

Turning his attention to an analysis of the working class, this gentleman attempts to say something about our Communist tenets, putting forward two assertions. First, he says that, earlier, the situation was different, and conditions continually improved. (He pays no attention to the colonial people and the coolies.) Second, and this is the most striking, he says that the present situation, with the currencies in chaos, does indeed impoverish some layers, but it cannot be analysed as the result of any inherent laws of motion. So we are not in a position to analyse this at all.

If we take this for a serious assertion, we can only say they are giving us a mystical explanation, full of magic and manure.⁴ (*Laughter*) The tactical point here is that these people want to put off the working class with this stupid

4. Bukharin's German pun is 'von Mystik und Mist zugleich', that is, both mysticism and manure.

assertion that the situation is totally inexplicable and so complicated that we cannot make anything of it. The reason they cannot understand it is that we are in a period where the theory of capitalist collapse is becoming reality before our eyes.

They are not able to analyse the *revolution* and draw practical and revolutionary conclusions from it. They evade the question, saying that, in this period, nothing conforms to laws of motion.

Take, for example, the *theory of crises*. What Kautsky has to say about this is that in examining the development of the capitalist system we must frankly recognise that the theory of crises must assume 'a more modest dimension'. What does this mean? It means that the capitalist world, in Kautsky's view, has recently become more *harmonious*. This assertion is, of course, the very incarnation of stupidity. The opposite is true. We can now say that the theory of crises has been proven to be completely correct. We can now even say that the War itself was an economic crisis in a very specific form, which we must now analyse theoretically. And these people now pass judgement on the revolution, the proletarian revolution in flesh and blood, saying this is not a true revolution and so they intend to wait until the 'real' one comes along.

There are bourgeois scholars who deny the existence of leaps in nature and science, although this is an empirical fact. Thus Kautsky says that the revolution that has taken place in Russia is not a proletarian, genuine, or true revolution. A collapse has taken place and is all about us, the greatest crisis of world history, but Kautsky does not see the crisis and says that our theoretical analysis of the crisis theory should be more modest in scope. This is pure idiocy from opportunists gone insane, who have fully lost their feel for reality. They sit in their offices, and their rear ends are overdeveloped (*Laughter*) but their brains are completely atrophied.

One of these gentlemen even claims that capitalism has emerged strengthened from the War. So you see they have a sense for 'theoretical proportion'. The general run of liberals, pacifists, preachers, and bourgeois economists almost all recognise to varying extents the economic weakness of the capitalist world. Not a single one denies it. And, then, a Social Democrat comes along, a supposed 'Marxist', and says that capitalism became stronger after the War. That almost sounds like a call for a new war. If capitalism is always stronger after a war, then why not try having another one? This ludicrous point of view is now advanced in all seriousness by the theorists of the Second International.

Consider the *theory of the state*. Every theorist of the Second International now converts this into an outright justification of the bourgeois republic. Nothing more, no attempt to understand, no thought at all – just an outright

justification for the bourgeois republic. You can talk to these people a thousand times, but they are deaf and dumb. They know only one thing – their justification for the bourgeois republic. There is absolutely no distinction here between bourgeois scholars, liberals, and Social Democrats. Let us take, for example, the theoretical writings of Cunow. We will find that some of the bourgeois professors, like Franz Oppenheimer, for example, or others of this current, or scholars of the Gumpłowicz school, are much closer to Marxism than Cunow. In his book,⁵ Cunow claims that the state has become, so to speak, a general social-welfare agency, a good father who cares for all his children, regardless of whether they are part of the working class or bourgeoisie. That's his story. I must say that is a theory that was advanced long ago by the Babylonian king Hammurabi. That's the theoretical level of the representatives and scholars of the Second International.

But there are theoretical betrayals that are more striking and shameless. Consider Kautsky's view on the *proletarian revolution* and the *coalition government*. To write such a thing truly means to abandon the last atom of any theoretical conscience. Take for example Kautsky's theory of the revolution. Do you know what his latest discovery is? He says the following: first, the bourgeois revolution made use of force. Second, the proletarian revolution, precisely because it is proletarian, must necessarily avoid the use of force. Or, as others of these gentlemen say, the use of force is always reactionary.

We know what Engels wrote about revolution in his Italian article, 'Dell'autorità' ('On Authority').⁶ He wrote that the revolution is the most authoritarian thing in the world. Revolution is a historical event in which one part of the population imposes its will on another part of the population using bayonets, cannon, and rifles. That was revolutionary Marxism's view. And then comes poor Kautsky to tell us that bayonets, cannon and other instruments of violence are purely bourgeois means. The proletariat did not think them up, but the bourgeoisie. The barricades are purely bourgeois institutions. (*Laughter*) With this method you can prove anything. Suppose Kautsky were to tell us that before the bourgeois revolution, the bourgeoisie utilised thoughts, and thinking is a purely bourgeois method. So we would have to conclude, by analogy, that we must not engage in thinking. (*Laughter*) It would be absolutely absurd to take such a method seriously.

Then we come to the question of the *coalition*. This is the summit of all Kautsky's theoretical discoveries. Kautsky claims to speak for orthodox Marxism. Marx held that the heart of his doctrine concerned the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is a passage by Marx where he states, 'Others before

5. Bukharin is probably referring to Cunow 1920–1.

6. See Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 23, pp. 422–5.

me understood something about the class struggle, but my teaching consists of the fact that capitalist development necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁷ That's how Marx himself understood his doctrine. That is the distinctive feature that is specific to Marxist doctrine. And then Kautsky comes up with the following:

In his celebrated article criticising the Social-Democratic programme, Marx writes, 'Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.⁸

That is what Marx says. And Kautsky? I quote his exact words:

This sentence can now be modified in the light of experiences (note how gracefully he expresses himself) of the last few years with respect to the question of government. We can say:

Between the period of democratic states with purely bourgeois and those with purely proletarian governments lies a period of transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this there is also a period of political transition, where the government will normally take the form of a coalition government. (*Laughter*)

What we have here is in fact no longer a transitional stage from Marxism to revisionism; it is worse than pure revisionism. There are different betrayals here, because, in Marx, there was also a transitional period to communism, and communism totally vanishes here. Where is it in Kautsky? There is no communism here. We have a transitional period from a pure capitalist government to a pure proletarian-democratic government. Where does communism fit in? Nowhere. As for the meaning of this substitution of the coalition for the dictatorship [of the proletariat], you can judge that for yourselves. That is why it is not surprising that some bourgeois theorists quite reasonably conclude that there is no longer a trace of Marxism left among the theorists of the Second International. For example, a professor in Germany who is very intelligent but also very cynical and insolent, Hans Delbrück, after reading various writings of the Second International, wrote the following in an issue of *Preussischen Jahrbücher*, and I quote:

The distinction between us, who are socially aware bourgeois, and them (he means Kautsky and company) is only one of degree. A few steps further

7. Compare Marx's letter to Joseph Weydemeyer of 5 March 1852, Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 39, pp. 62–3.

8. 'Critique of the Gotha Program', in Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 24, p. 95.

along the path you have chosen, my friends, and the communist fog will disappear.

That is a very good quotation. A bourgeois professor from imperial times tells a theorist of so-called Marxism and so-called 'internationalist' and 'revolutionary' Social Democracy that there is no difference between us, the socially aware bourgeois imperial professors, and Kautsky and his comrades. This quotation is effective in throwing light on the whole situation.

As we see, tactics and strategy exist in theory as well, and they stand in complete accord to the real tactics and strategy of politics. Various shifts have taken place on the chessboard among classes, parties, groupings, and sub-groupings. The biggest shift was the split in the proletariat as a result of political betrayal by the Social-Democratic parties and trade-union leaders, and the alliance that these layers of the worker organisations formed with the bourgeoisie. And, alongside this process, there is another: the formation of a theoretical alliance of former so-called Marxists with bourgeois learning. Such a situation has now arisen in the Second International's theory. Just as, politically, only the Communist International now defends a genuinely revolutionary point of view, so too, under present conditions, only the Communist International defends Marxism on a theoretical plane.

Let me pass on to another question. After dealing with the theorists of the Second International, I wish to say a few words about the new analysis of the present period. I will deal only with a few points that have by and large not been given sufficient attention. First of all, let me ask: what is the most appropriate point of view from which to examine capitalist development as a whole? In examining capitalist development as a whole, there must be some kind of theoretical axis. What is the proper axis for us to choose?

Of course, there are various axes to choose from. We can focus on the axis of the working class as the decisive factor, or the concentration of capital, or we can shape our programme around the forging of elements for the new society, or consider as decisive any of various other features of capitalist development. But, in my opinion, capitalist development as a whole must be examined in terms of *the expanded reproduction of capitalist contradictions*. It is from this angle that we must assess all aspects of capitalist development.

We are now in a period of development where capitalism is already falling apart. To some degree, we already look back retrospectively at capitalist development. But that does not prevent us from examining all developments in the capitalist epoch, even the predictions that we must also attempt to make, from the viewpoint of this continual and permanent reproduction of capitalist contradictions.

The War is an expression of contradictions inherent in capitalist competition. We need view the War simply as the expanded reproduction of the

anarchic structure of capitalist society. Given that this reproduction of contradictions has made capitalist society unworkable, we can take this as the basis for examining everything else – the sectors within the working class, the social structure of society, the conditions of the working class, the social structure.

The second question, in my view, is that of imperialism. I am not going to get into a full analysis of the imperialist epoch, because, among us, the theoretical treatment of this question is well understood. I will emphasise only one point that I consider important, which is this: How can we explain the specific forms of finance capitalism's policy of violence? What is the ultimate basis for this violence? It has been explained in many ways – as resulting from the monopolistic character of capitalism and from other factors. That is very true, but, in my opinion, in answering this question, we must give considerable weight to the following factor. In the past, when political economy, including that of Marxism, spoke of competition, they were actually examining only one form of competition, the specific form it takes in the epoch of so-called industrial capitalism.

That was an epoch of struggle between individual industrialists, competing with each other by lowering their prices. When Marx writes of competition, it is almost always of this type. But, in the epoch of imperialist capitalism, this is not the only form of competition that has come to the fore. We also see forms of competitive struggle in which price competition is quite irrelevant. For example, if a coal trust is fighting against an iron trust for surplus-value, obviously these trusts cannot contend through price competition. That would be absurd. Such formations can only wage their struggle through one or another expression of force, such as boycott, exclusion, and so on. The main groupings within the bourgeoisie now resemble trusts that are encompassed in the framework of the state. And these formations are, in reality, nothing other than combined enterprises.

It is obviously quite understandable that an enterprise of this type, a combination of competing groups, locates the centre of gravity of its methods of struggle in the use of force. The international division of labour, the existence of agrarian and industrialised countries, the diverse combinations of branches of production within these states, all dictate the fact that these states are quite unable to carry out any other kind of policy. Price competition is almost impossible. New forms of competition arise, which leads to military interventions by these states.

I will move on to the third point that deserves special mention in the programme, namely, *emphasising the role of the state* in general and in particular its role at the present time. We must say frankly that the question of the state was not dealt with very adequately in Marxist theory, or even by the orthodox

Marxists. We all know that the epigones raised this question and then resolved it in traitorous fashion. But who, we must ask, of the revolutionary Marxists examined this question successfully? What does that tell us? It means that Marxist theory arose in a period that was strongly influenced by Manchester thinking.⁹ Free competition ruled supreme. This fact is rooted in the particular and specific characteristics of this epoch. But we cannot be satisfied with that. The role of the state is now very important, whether considered from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie or that of the proletariat. It's a matter, first, of destroying an organisation, and, second, of building something new and using our state power as the lever to alter economic relationships. All these considerations force us to give the question of the state much more emphasis in our programme than was the case formerly.

Further, I think that the programme should also touch on the *monopoly of education* exercised by the ruling class. Earlier, this was almost never done in discussion of programmatic questions. But now, when the proletariat is striving to gain power and reorganise society, such questions as that of the training of our staffers and administrators, and the knowledge of our leadership before and after the conquest of power plays a crucial role. All these questions are immensely important, more so than they were in the past, because then they did not always have immediate practical significance. But, now, they have become immensely practical issues, and we must therefore allocate more space in our programme than was the case previously.

I also believe that we should take up *the specific features in capitalist society that indicate its ripeness for socialism*. There is a well-known passage in Marx's teachings where he says that the new society is already present in the womb of the old.¹⁰ But so much mischief has been done in the Second International with this theory that we must be more specific on this question than we were previously. I cannot cover this subject here in full detail, but I would like to say this: we are all aware that the proletarian revolution makes many demands on us, and that it is tied during a certain period to the rise and decline of productive forces. That is an immanent law of proletarian revolution. Our opponents, however, seek to show that these tasks are so massive that capitalism, as a whole, is not yet ripe for socialism. Theoretically, that is their main thesis. They are mixing this up with the ripening of capitalism within feudal society.

9. The Manchester school of economic thought in nineteenth-century Britain upheld free trade, free competition, and laissez-faire policies.

10. See 'Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*', Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 29, pp. 263–4. The 1975 edition renders the German word *Schoss* as 'framework', avoiding the literal and better-known translation as 'womb', as in Marx and Engels 1969, 1, p. 504.

But we should emphasise the difference between these two developments. At least, we must state the conditions for a socialist society in the programme.

The difference between the two ways in which new formations mature lies in the fact that capitalism matured fully under feudal rule. Not only did the working class appear, but the ruling layers, indeed the entire social structure, from workers to the bourgeois in command, all ripened within the womb of feudal society. Socialism can *never* ripen in this manner, even under the most favourable conditions, even if we could portray with mathematical precision the limit of capitalist maturity. It is impossible for the working class to take production in hand within the womb of capitalist society. That is nonsense, a *contradictio in adjecto* [contradiction in terms]. And, therefore, the nature of the special features that indicate a ripening of socialism within bourgeois society is quite different from that of the features that show a ripening of capitalism within feudal society.

Capitalism already possessed its administrative and ruling layers under feudal rule. However, the proletariat is oppressed not only economically but politically and culturally. It does not have its own engineers, technologists, and so on. It can learn all that only when it has already achieved the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. Only then can it break down the doors of the colleges and universities and force its way in. Culturally, we must grant that the proletariat is underdeveloped, uneducated and backward in comparison to the bourgeoisie. That means that the proletariat cannot ripen as organiser of society within capitalism. It ripens as an organisational force, as leader of society as a whole, as the genuine creator of this society in a positive sense only after its dictatorship is in place. There is no alternative. We must stress this fundamental distinction between the way that capitalism and socialism ripen. Our opponents advance the nonsensical idea that we can ripen within capitalist society in the same way that the capitalists did in the feudal times. Unfortunately, that is not so, and we must understand the specific discrepancies that exist here.

I must touch on another point that has received insufficient analysis, including in our writings, namely that of the *transition to socialism*. This was much discussed by the revisionists, whose viewpoint was that capitalism grows over into socialism. It is quite true that we cannot carry out our tasks simply through decrees and with pure acts of force. Rather, it is a very extended, organic process, relatively speaking, one of a genuine growing over into socialism. But we and the revisionists differ as to the point in time when this transition begins. The revisionists, who do not want a revolution, claim that this transitional process begins already within the womb of capitalism. We hold that it begins with establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat must destroy the old bourgeois state, take power in its hands,

and use this lever to change the economic relationships. Then, we have a lengthy process of evolution, during which socialist forms of production and distribution become more and more predominant, until, gradually, all the relics of the capitalist economy are superseded, until a complete transformation of capitalism into a socialist society has taken place.

Now another point that relates to what I have just discussed: the question of the '*national varieties*' of socialism, referring, of course, to the productive relations. Before the revolution, we all, without exception, thought in terms of a planned economy, a collective economy, without going into the matter more specifically. But, now, especially given the experiences of the Russian Revolution, we see that we will experience a lengthy period marked by different national types of socialist forms of production.

Let us take the case of capitalism, and compare its French with its American variants. French capitalism has its own peculiar characteristics, as does American. Compare the character of usury capitalism in France with that of pure financial capitalism in the United States, or the nature of syndicates and trusts in Germany and Britain. We see varying paths, varying characteristics. Over time, of course, the growth of the world economy evens out these differences.

But socialism can grow only on the basis of what is already in place, and we can therefore assert that different forms of socialism will, in a certain sense, be prolongations of the earlier capitalist forms in a new guise. In other words, the specific characteristics of capitalism in each country will find expression in specific forms of socialist productive economy. Later on, all this will even out with the growth of proletarian world supremacy and socialist world production. The first stage of development, even after the proletariat has conquered political power in every country, will feature varying forms of socialist production.

We can say frankly that Russian socialism will appear Asiatic, when compared to the others. The proportions between what we can and cannot nationalise, between industry and the peasantry, and so on – all these backward features in our economic development will find expression in the backward forms of our socialism. If we take all this into account, if we understand this, we can go on to talk of other things, such as the *New Economic Policy*.

That is the eighth point in my outline. I would like to say a few brief words.

The New Economic Policy can be considered from two quite different points of view, that of tactics, or, better, of revolutionary tactics and strategy, and also from that of *economic rationality*. These two points of view are not always identical. A number of comrades have discussed it from the standpoint of strategy and tactics, including Comrades Lenin and Trotsky. But I would like to approach it not from that angle but from that of economic rationality.

In my opinion, the most important economic and organisational challenge facing the proletariat of every country in which it stands at the helm of political power is that of the relationship between the forms of production that it can rationally organise, plan, and manage, and those that it is not able to manage in a planned and rational way in the initial stages of its development. That is the greatest economic challenge the proletariat would face. If the proletariat does not estimate this relationship correctly, and if it takes on too much, it will then face a situation where the productive forces are not developed but restricted. The proletariat is not able to organise everything. It cannot forcibly impose its plans on the small producers, the small peasants, who operate individually. And, in place of this layer, which genuinely provides society with something useful, the proletariat receives absolutely nothing. The process of circulation comes to a halt. That causes a further decline of productive forces and of economic life as a whole.

Under such circumstances, the proletariat acquires something additional. When the proletariat tries to take on too much, it needs an immense administrative apparatus. It needs too many officials and too large a staff to replace all the economic functions of these small producers and small peasants. And this attempt to replace all these small producers with government officials – call them what you want; in reality, they are government officials – produces a bureaucratic apparatus that is so colossal that its costs are much larger than the wastage caused by anarchic conditions inside the sphere of small-scale production.

This produces a pattern in which the entire form of administration, the entire economic apparatus of the proletarian state does not promote but shackles development of the productive forces. It signifies exactly the opposite of what it should, and must, with iron necessity, break down. This may take place through a counter-revolution, or through action by the petty bourgeoisie, or through initiatives by the party to restrict and reorganise this apparatus, as was the case with us. That changes nothing. If the proletariat does not take this action itself, it will be done by other forces. All comrades must understand this clearly.

I therefore hold that the New Economic Policy is not only a specifically Russian development but also something of general applicability. (*‘Very true!’*) It represents not only a strategic retreat but is also the solution of a broad organisational and social problem, namely the relationship between the various branches of production that we should rationalise and those we are not in a position to rationalise. Comrades, frankly, we tried to organise everything, even the peasants and the millions of small producers. That is why we had such an enormously large bureaucratic apparatus and such huge administrative costs. That is also why we encountered a political crisis. That is why we

were forced, in order to save the cause of the proletariat as a whole, as Comrade Lenin has explained so frankly, to introduce the New Economic Policy. It is not some kind of secret illness that must be hidden. It is not merely a concession to the enemy that is fighting against us with all its strength. It is also the correct solution of an organisational and social problem.

Under the old economic policy, we had conditions where our red police in Moscow would drive away old women selling bread and things like that. To be frank, in terms of economic rationality, that is sheer insanity. And, when you perceive that rightly, you must then turn away from this insanity toward something better. Some comrades tell us that, in terms of orthodox Marxism, that was a sin. But it was not a sin. It was the necessary correction by our party of what we, in our inexperience and ignorance, had carried out in the first proletarian revolution. That is our assessment.

In my opinion, the problems of the New Economic Policy are international in character. The specifically Russian aspect resides, of course, in the precise coefficients of the relationship between what we can and cannot rationalise.

We have very many peasants and petty bourgeois. But consider the most advanced industrial countries, such as Germany or even the United States. Do you think these problems will not immediately arise? They will, and immediately! For example, can we, from the very outset, organise American farmers? By no means! Such layers must continue to enjoy unrestricted economic freedom. The same is true in Germany, for example. Do you think that the victorious proletariat can immediately organise all the peasant holdings, especially those in Bavaria, along communist lines? When you ask the peasant for deliveries of bread, do you know what they will demand? The right to act freely and to sell their products. So you will always face this problem in Germany. You will always be forced to work out very carefully to what degree you wish to establish a controlled socialist economy and to what degree you must retain a free economy.

So much for the problem of the New Economic Policy. But it is linked to an entirely different problem. In a revolution, the principle of economic rationality stands in contradiction to another principle essential to the proletariat, namely that of *pure political expediency in the struggle*. I have already provided several examples of this. If you build barricades, for example, and, for that purpose, saw down the telephone poles, well, I think it's obvious that this does not increase the productive forces. (*Laughter*)

So it is in revolution. When the capitalist bourgeoisie, for example, attacks you with all its forces, utilising its agents in petty-bourgeois milieux who act directly on orders of the big bourgeoisie, what must the proletariat do? The proletariat must, at all costs, destroy these petty-bourgeois agents of the big bourgeoisie. As the struggle grows in scope, it is also forced to remove the

economic basis of this petty bourgeoisie. This is where irrationality enters the picture. What is inexpedient from a purely economic point of view can be quite expedient in terms of the political struggle and of the need to win the civil war. These two points of view – economic rationality and expediency in the political struggle – are not identical and are often in contradiction. But primacy goes to expediency in the political struggle, because socialism cannot be built without first having a proletarian state. But we must always be vigilant to avoid doing what is not essential, doing what is inexpedient for the political struggle and also economically irrational.

I cannot develop this line of thought further, of course, but you understand that we can examine this question from the standpoint of various classes, layers, and groupings. We must consider our relationship to the middle class, the so-called intelligentsia or new middle class, and also our relationship to the peasantry and to various layers of the peasantry. All this must enter the framework of our programme. And, of course, we want to make use of the experiences of the Russian Revolution, for it would be stupid indeed not to understand and utilise the experiences of the greatest revolution that has taken place to this date.

I now pass on to my fourth section, which I term that of *new general tactical challenges*. So far, I have examined various questions that are purely theoretical in nature. Now, I will take up some issues that have a general tactical character and can therefore also, in a certain sense, be termed programmatic.

First, I will briefly touch on the question of *colonies*. This question must receive far more weight in our programme than was previously the case. ('*Very true!*') We are now attempting to write an international programme. We must expunge with fire and sword the aristocratic aftertaste found in the books of Kautsky and his colleagues. We must understand that our reserves for the process of world-revolution, which are immensely important, are located in the colonial countries. That is why we must deal with this question more exhaustively than was the case in the past.

The second tactical challenge is that of *national defence*. For us, as Communists, when the War began, this question of national defence was absolutely clear: we simply rejected it almost without qualification. Now, the question appears in a somewhat modified and more complicated form. That is because we now have a proletarian dictatorship in one country, and its existence changes the entire situation. In general, as Marxists and dialecticians, we must be prepared for such large-scale shifts. I will provide only one example.

As a revolutionary party in opposition, we could, of course, not think for a single moment that we would accept money from any bourgeois state for our revolutionary activity. That would have been absolutely stupid. The moment we accepted money from any hostile force, we would have been totally

discredited. The international bourgeoisie was therefore dealing with this problem quite correctly, from its point of view, in trying to show that we were agents of German imperialism or that Karl Liebknecht was an agent of the French bourgeoisie. We rightly recognised that we would never do anything of that sort, and we were always against such efforts. But now a proletarian state exists and is in a position to obtain a loan from some bourgeois state. It would be equally stupid to reject that in principle. That is a small example of the type of shift that occurs on principled issues when we possess a proletarian state.

The question of *national defence* is similar. We know precisely what a proletarian country is – it is the proletarian state. For, in all these questions, the word ‘country’ is a synonym of the word ‘state’, with or without its class characterisation. When the bourgeoisie talks of national defence, it is referring to defence of the bourgeois state apparatus, and when we speak of national defence, we mean defence of the proletarian state. We therefore want to establish clearly in the programme that the proletarian state should and must be defended by the proletariat not only of this country but of all countries. That is new, compared to the situation when the War began.

Here is a second question. If it is expedient from the strategic viewpoint of the proletariat as a whole, should the proletarian state conclude military alliances with bourgeois states? There is no principled distinction here between a loan and a military alliance. And I maintain that we are already sufficiently developed that we might conclude a military alliance with the bourgeoisie of one country in order to strike down the bourgeoisie of another country.¹¹ It is easy to foresee what might later happen given one or another relationship of forces. It is purely a question of strategic and tactical *expediency*. That is how it must be presented in the programme.

If national defence takes the form of a military alliance with bourgeois states, it is the duty of comrades of such a country to contribute to the victory of such an alliance. If, in another phase of development, the bourgeoisie of such a country is itself defeated, other problems arise (*Laughter*) that I am not obliged to describe here, but that you will readily comprehend.

We should mention another tactical point: the right to *red intervention*. In my opinion, that is the acid test for all Communist parties. There is a great outcry

11. Bukharin’s comments may have been suggested by Soviet Russia’s relations at that time with Germany. The Treaty of Rapallo between the two governments, concluded on 16 April 1922, was not a military alliance. However, secret agreements concluded between Russia and the German military in 1922 enabled Germany to carry out military training and production in Soviet territory in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. These agreements did not lead to any modification of policy by the German CP. The Soviet alliances with Nazi Germany in 1939 and with the Allied powers in 1941, by contrast, resulted in abrupt policy reversals by all Comintern parties.

over red militarism.¹² We should establish in our programme that every proletarian state has the right to red intervention.

Radek: You just say that because you are commander of a regiment! *(Laughter)*

Bukharin: The *Communist Manifesto* states that the proletariat must conquer the entire world. Well, that cannot be done with the flick of a finger; *(Laughter)* you need bayonets and rifles. And the extension of the system on which every red army is based is therefore an extension of socialism, of proletarian power, of revolution. That is the justification for the right to red intervention, under particular circumstances that make this possible from a technical point of view.

That wraps up the specific issues, and I now pass on – and here I can be very brief – to the overall conception of the programme, particularly as regards its architecture. In my opinion, the programme of national parties must consist of two parts:

- 1.) A general section valid for all parties. This general section should be in the membership book of every member in every country.
- 2.) A national section containing the specific demands of the workers' movement of the country in question.

And then, perhaps, 3.) Although this is not, strictly speaking, part of the programme, an action programme, which takes up purely tactical questions and can be changed as often as necessary – perhaps every two weeks. *(Laughter)* Some comrades believe that tactical issues like the seizure of material assets in Germany, the united-front tactic, or the workers' government question should also be taken up in the programme. Comrade Varga says it is intellectual cowardice to protest against this.

Radek: Very true!

Bukharin: But, in my opinion, the urge to settle these questions is nothing but an expression of the comrades' opportunist attitude. *(Laughter)* Questions and slogans like the united front or the workers' government or the seizure of material assets are slogans founded on a very fluid basis, one of a certain decline in the workers' movement. And these comrades want to set down in the programme this defensive stance in which the proletariat finds itself,

12. On 16 February 1921, Red Army contingents entered Georgia in support of a local insurrection by pro-Soviet forces, and, by mid-March, had completed their occupation of the country. Georgia became an independent Soviet Republic linked by treaty with Russia. For a defence of Soviet conduct, see Trotsky 1975.

thereby ruling out an offensive. I will fight against that in every possible way. We will never permit such concepts to be built into the programme.

Radek: 'We'? Who is 'we'?¹³

Bukharin: 'We' refers to the best elements in the Communist International. (*Laughter, applause*)

In my opinion, comrades, this theoretical segment must include the following parts: first, a general analysis of capitalism, of particular importance for colonial peoples. Then, we need an analysis of imperialism and the decay of capitalism, and also an analysis of the epoch of socialist revolution.

The second part of the programme should consist of a short sketch of communist society. I believe that we need to portray communist society in the programme and say what communism really means, and what is the distinction between the different transitional phases.

Part three should deal with the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the proletarian struggle for power.

Part four should not take up questions like the relationship to Social Democracy and the trade unions but, rather, general strategic questions, which are not fluid. Such strategic-tactical questions can be taken up in the programme.

As far the national segment is concerned, it is not my task to take that up. A special analysis is needed for each country.

Comrades, I would like to add a few critical remarks about the statements, including those in writing, and articles of a number of comrades.

The discussion on this question has produced the following documents and statements:

- 1.) The report of the first discussion of the commission on the programme, which has gone out to all parties.
- 2.) The reply of the Italian Central Committee to this report.
- 3.) Some articles by Comrade Varga.
- 4.) An article by Comrade Rudas.
- 5.) An article by Comrade Rappoport.
- 6.) An article by Comrade Šmeral.
- 7.) A draft by the German Party.
- 8.) A draft by the Bulgarian Party.
- 9.) My draft.¹⁴

13. For Radek's written presentation of his position on transitional demands, see Radek 1923.

14. A somewhat different set of programme discussion materials is found in *Kommunistische Internationale*, 23 (November 1922), pp. 114–55. Included are articles by Varga and Thalheimer, the German CP draft, the ECCI's criticisms of the Italian

In the initial discussion in the Commission on the Programme, two points of view were expressed. The differences related to the question of whether or not tactical issues like the workers' government should be encompassed in the programme. I motivated one of these viewpoints.

The Italian Central Committee responded to the programme-commission discussion with a letter expressing my point of view but with its own particular motivation. It stated that these matters could not be included in the programme because we must not impose a 'credo' on the national parties. The Italian Central Committee supported my viewpoint not because it is opportunist and impossible to include such matters in the programme – this would require us to change the programme every two weeks – but, rather, because it does not want the International to impose a credo on the national parties.

I give hearty thanks to the Italian comrades for agreeing with my point of view, but I give them no thanks at all, not even a bit, for this curious motivation.

Now we pass to the articles of Comrade Varga. Comrade Varga is a man of stout courage, and he therefore thinks that everyone who does not agree with his viewpoint on this question is cowardly. As I have said previously, his courage is an opportunist courage, and our cowardice consists of the fear of being opportunist. That's the nature of our cowardice. We are afraid of turning into opportunists and Comrade Varga is not so cowardly as to fear this. And that is the difference between him and us.

Varga also demands that we provide a classification of all the countries during the period of capitalist decay. Instead of a programme, he wants an encyclopaedia of all branches of social science with many appendices. In my opinion, to classify countries and build that into the programme is very risky. Shifts can take place very quickly in different countries. For example, if there is a victorious revolution in Germany, the entire world situation will be immediately transformed. That is why I say it is inadvisable to provide a specific classification of countries, in terms of the possible rapid changes, and because our programme would grow to be so long that not a single worker would be able to read it through to the end.

As for Comrade Šmeral's article, the wishes expressed there divide into two categories. First, his article demands that we utilise the lessons of the Russian Revolution fully, and quite rightly asks about the different branches, regions, forms of production, and the different social layers, and our relationship to them. He is quite right to pose these questions, but he is not right

CP draft, and theses by Kostrzewa on the agrarian question. For another collection, prepared for the Fifth Congress in 1924, see Comintern 1924a.

when, together with Varga and Radek, he asks that such issues, like that of the workers' government and the 'Open Letter', be built into the programme.

I am by and large in agreement with the article by Comrade Rudas.

As for the article by Comrade Rappoport, despite my best efforts, I have not been able to make any sense of it whatsoever.

As for the programme submitted by our German sister party, I would like to make a few general comments. In my opinion, the programme has the following weaknesses:

- 1.) It is written too academically.
- 2.) It is too specific and descriptive.

For example, there is a long passage about various specific developments, such as the consequences of the Versailles peace, which, in my view, do not belong in a programme. The descriptive and specifically historical character of the German draft also makes it very long. This is not a programme but a very lengthy universal manifesto. That is my impression of the draft. Many portions are stylistically brilliant and theoretically very strong.

- 3.) The draft is too European in conception – the German comrades themselves concede this – and also, in my opinion, a bit too German, written too much from a Central European standpoint.
- 4.) The final error of the German programme, which encompasses all the others, is its length. It does not include the general analysis of capitalism that is required, or the general description of communism, which is also required, and still it is very, very long.

As for the *Bulgarian* programme, I have the following comments.

Some of its passages are similarly too specific and descriptive and do not fit the requirements of a programme. They could serve as a commentary. Also, the programme's structure does not succeed entirely, because there is a certain blending together of Balkan and general considerations. I have significant comments in particular on one passage, where the Bulgarian comrades discuss the role of the party. At the end of this passage, they go so far as to discuss the armed uprising. They say that we pass through mass actions combined with strikes to the armed uprising, and that has a very revolutionary ring. But, where the role of the party is discussed at all, the programme, in my opinion, gives unnecessary emphasis to participation in parliament.

Indeed, the relationship between extraparlimentary and parliamentary action is not dealt with entirely successfully – not when we take into account the length of this document. I think it would be better to make a small correction here.

Finally, a short comment. The demands of the party are presented very fully in the Bulgarian programme. If they are intended for all the parties that belong to the International, this is too much. If it is intended only for the Balkan countries, then it is lacking the demands necessary from the standpoint of the International. Here, too, I believe we need a small correction.

Of course I am not going to extol my own 'merchandise'. (*Laughter*) That goes without saying. But I do ask that comrades give these questions some discussion and, particularly after the Congress, work more intensively on many components of the programme.

I close my lengthy report with the hope that we will all go forth from the Fifth Congress with a outstanding, truly revolutionary, and truly orthodox Marxist programme. (*Loud applause*)

Thalheimer (Germany): Comrades, you have before you four different draft programmes: Comrade Bukharin's, a Bulgarian programme, a German programme, and finally the action programme of the Italian Party. I do not believe it is my task to choose from among the different drafts and perhaps praise the German draft in all its specific details as the one that must absolutely defeat all its competitors. It is a first draft that needs to be improved and expanded, with regard to both form and content. But I believe that is true of all the drafts before us; the German draft is not an exception. In their present form, the drafts provide a basis for a final text and an international discussion. I believe the final text can only be achieved through collective work. I agree completely with Comrade Bukharin that only the next congress can decide on the final programme. All we can do today is to introduce and prepare the definitive formulation. To this end, it is necessary to define the points of difference, to the extent that they exist, briefly but quite precisely, and that will be the main subject of my presentation. I will not repeat the outstanding presentation of Comrade Bukharin in demonstrating the theoretical and programmatic bankruptcy of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. But I will, at least, touch on this topic by expanding on it slightly.

First of all, I would like to point out that Kautsky goes so far in his text on programme as to abandon the basis of Marx's conception of the capitalist economy. Marx's view centres on the concept that the purpose and regulative principle of capitalism is the production of surplus-value. Kautsky has now suddenly come upon the thought that capitalism is directed by consumer needs. I believe that there can be no more complete and fundamental capitulation to bourgeois economics than this.

I will also touch briefly on the reform-socialist proposals that Kautsky proposes as the path to a socialist economy. Comrade Bukharin has quite rightly mentioned that we are not divided from Kautsky by a disagreement on the

speed of transition from capitalism to socialism. Rather, the key point is that we are convinced that this transition can begin only after the conquest of political power, while he says that this can take place before and without the conquest of power.

Now, Kautsky's revisions in all these points take him right back to Bernstein. All these reform proposals, these paths that Bernstein took, are now taken by Kautsky with the claim that they now represent true Marxism. I will seek to examine these points in practical rather than theoretical terms. What is the character of these proposals? They concern, first, the well-trodden path of municipal socialism, and, second, the path of guild socialism, a new and imported commodity.¹⁵ And, here, in order to demonstrate his newest old-Bernstein theses, Kautsky, who always poses as a particularly sensible theorist, lapses into total nonsense. Take guild socialism, for example. Guild socialism proposes that the trade unions can introduce socialism step by step, without the conquest of political power, and, so to speak, behind the back of capitalist society. Now, we need only look at the condition of the trade unions, their financial status in a collapsing capitalist economy, to recognise that this is total fantasy. Given that the trade unions are now experiencing the greatest difficulties in maintaining their strike funds, we can hardly expect them to introduce socialism behind the back of capitalism.

A second beloved hobby horse of reformism is municipal socialism, or municipalisation. Anyone who has a feel for conditions in the West knows that the outstanding feature is the bankruptcy not only of countries but also of municipal finances. The challenge facing the municipalities today is not to carry out a transition to socialism on their own, but, rather, to fend off the attacks of the capitalists, who want to privatise the municipal enterprises.

Now a third point. In order to make the transition as gentle as possible, they have proposed the taking over of capitalist property with compensation. As you all know, Marx once spoke of the fact that the British landowners could possibly be bought out with compensation.¹⁶ But he did not mean that this could be done before the conquest of political power. He saw this road

15. Guild socialism, advanced primarily in Britain in the early twentieth century, advocated worker self-government of industry through national worker-controlled guilds.

16. Thalheimer is probably referring to the following passage in Engels's 'The Peasant Question in France and Germany': 'As soon as our party is in possession of political power it has simply to expropriate the big landed proprietors just like the manufacturers in industry.... We by no means consider compensation as impermissible in any event; Marx told me (and how many times!) that in his opinion we would get off cheapest if we could buy out the whole lot of them'. Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 27, p. 500.

as open only after power had been won. Where do things stand in Europe today? Let us assume that power has been taken, and it is proposed to buy out the capitalists. Everyone knows that one of the first preconditions for socialist construction is to eliminate the enormous dead weight of debt that burdens the economy. These gentle methods of buying up capitalists are today just as much a utopia as Kautsky's concepts of guild socialism or municipal socialism.

I would also like to point out another of Kautsky's great feats, which has special interest for us here and now. This is the question of Kautsky's conception of, first, the state bureaucracy, and, second, state capitalism or state socialism. In Kautsky's view, there are only two states left where bureaucracy plays a major role. One of them is France, this 'republic without republicans'. The second such state, Kautsky tells us, is Soviet Russia. It seems that, to the extent that democracy has been introduced in Germany, the state bureaucracy has disappeared. The actual result of this view is that, in Germany and other bourgeois-democratic states, the Social Democrats do not touch the bureaucracy—they leave it intact. In practice, the Social Democrats' entire policy boils down to appointing Social-Democratic officials to serve beside the bourgeois ones.

Now comes the opposite view. In discussing state socialism and state capitalism, Kautsky suddenly discovers that this state bureaucracy is still there and is quite incapable of taking command of the capitalist enterprises. It is rigidly conservative and inert. Only the capitalist bureaucracy can take charge of these enterprises.

And what does that mean in practice today, in Germany and generally? It simply means alliance with Stinnes and his people, working hand in hand with them, and recommending the Stinnes bureaucrats as the professional layer that is to carry out socialisation. Kautsky already gave his theoretical blessing and justification for this, before the fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, of the USPD and SPD. If a Stinnes government is formed today in Germany, with Social-Democratic participation, and if this government seeks to hand over the still state-owned enterprises to private capital, Kautsky has already given this his theoretical blessing.

I wanted only to touch on these points, which seem particularly relevant in showing up the garish capitulation of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals in their theoretical dimension.

I will also expand somewhat on what Comrade Bukharin said about Marx's epigones and their degeneration. In this regard, please note that the historical record shows the beginning of debates with these epigones of Marx in Germany and elsewhere in the Second International right after the outbreak of

the first Russian Revolution [1905]. The starting point was then the debate on the mass strike, and the battlefield broadened out from that. The main arena of struggle was the theoretical debate on the roots of imperialism and, linked to that, the political question of disarmament.¹⁷ This is where the first theoretical clashes took place, laying the groundwork for what was to develop, on one hand, into the Marxist Centre, leading to the USPD and now the united SPD, and, on the other, what was to become the Communist Party of Germany.

Now, an additional comment to underline what Bukharin said regarding the theoretical capitulation that found expression in the programme of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, above all in the Görlitz Programme.¹⁸

Everything that Bukharin has referred to and stressed – banishing the theory of immiseration and of crises, and so on – all this is expressed with great clarity and precision in the commentaries written on the Görlitz Programme. Kampffmeier, Bernstein, Stampfer. They all emphatically confirm this liquidation.

As to the points under debate, I will deal principally with the following questions:

- 1.) The section on fundamentals that explains imperialism theoretically in relationship with the theory of accumulation.
- 2.) The question of transitional measures, demands for stages, or however one may term them, prior to the conquest of power. I regard this as the central issue in successfully working out the programme both on a general level and in terms of the individual parties.¹⁹
- 3.) Short remarks on the economic transitional measures following the conquest of power, such as war communism and the New Economic Policy.
- 4.) The structure and form of the programme.

Let me pass directly to the first point, which concerns the theoretical foundations of imperialism. Of course, we will not enter into a profound theoretical

17. See, for example, Rosa Luxemburg's 'The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions' (1906) and 'Peace Utopias' (1911) in Luxemburg 1970, and *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913), Luxemburg 1964.

18. The Görlitz Programme, adopted by the SPD in September 1921, was an openly revisionist document, committed to Germany's capitalist Weimar state as 'the state form irrevocably established by history'.

19. The concept of 'transitional demands' was explained by the Third Congress 'Theses on Tactics' in these terms: 'In place of the minimum programme of the centrists and reformists, the Communist International offers a struggle for the specific demands of the proletariat, as part of a system of demands that, in their totality, undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, organise the proletariat, and mark out the different stages of the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. Each of these demands gives expression to the needs of the broad masses, even when they do not yet consciously take a stand for proletarian dictatorship.' Comintern 1921c, p. 47. See also Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 286.

debate here. My concern is only that the question be clarified and that we start up the theoretical discussion that seems to me to be essential. Clearly, a decision can only be taken in such questions following a thorough theoretical discussion in writing and in other forms of debate. My goal is to define the question precisely and to emphasise its practical, theoretical, and programmatic importance. As I already mentioned, the programmatic, theoretical, and tactical disagreements in old Social Democracy began precisely on the theoretical question of imperialism. Two questions are involved here. The main issue is whether imperialism is a necessary phase of capitalist development that is required, from a capitalist point of view. The second issue is explaining the theoretical basis for this necessity. In Germany, this was the acid test that divided the Marxist Left from the Marxist Centre. The overriding point on which this question turns is clearly that imperialism, in economic terms, is a problem of accumulation, of capital's growth, of expanded reproduction. This expanded reproduction, growth of capital, and extension of capital into non-capitalist territories is a historical fact, which dates not just from the imperialist epoch but, as we know, from the very emergence of capitalism. From that moment on, the world is filled with colonial wars, colonial conquests, wars over trade, and so on.

So, when we explain imperialism, it is not merely the fact of the projection of capitalist expansion into colonial regions, but of the particular form that this expansion takes today under imperialist conditions. This special form of expansion, these special conditions that mark capitalist expansion in the imperialist age were formulated by Comrade Luxemburg as follows:

The imperialist epoch consists of a struggle for what is left of the non-capitalist territories, for their redivision, and finally, related to that, the expansion of capitalist and political power.

These facts have long been known and are not in question. The task is to explain them, in particular with reference to judging whether this imperialist epoch with its catastrophes and crises is a historical accident or is inevitable. And, linked to that is a political decision on whether it is possible to go back from this imperialist epoch, to turn the wheel back to the Manchester epoch, that of liberal capitalism, free trade, peace, pacifism. Or is there only a road forward, surmounting this imperialist epoch through revolution? Is there only the road forward to socialism? How we answer this question will also determine political tactics.

Let us assume that imperialism expresses the interests of only one sector of the bourgeoisie, while the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole are quite compatible with Manchester methods. What does that tell us regarding tactics? It tells us that it is tactically possible to ally with one wing of the

bourgeoisie against the other. Here, we see the theoretical and programmatic foundation of the coalition policy. And an opposite assumption, of course, leads to an opposite conclusion.

On a purely theoretical plane, the question posed is whether the unrestricted expansion of capital and its accumulation is possible within the limits of capitalism, or whether this accumulation meets its limits within capitalism itself. To express it in the simplest way, is it possible for capitalism to grow and to extend itself without limit, or are there definite theoretical limits to this extension and growth? The theory of accumulation has been met with the objection that it is a kind of fatalism, focused on the point where capitalism automatically breaks down. This point where capitalism no longer has any space left for expansion and must automatically break down is a conceptual boundary, what the mathematicians would call a limit. But what's at stake here is something rather different. Capitalism, in its imperialist phase, is compelled to sharpen class antagonisms and necessarily passes through the most extreme political and social disasters. It follows that what is decisive for the end of capitalism is not the theoretical endpoint but the period of severe crises brought about by imperialism.

In order to demonstrate this, I need to quote the passages on this point by Comrade Luxemburg. This is taken from her article replying to the critics of her book on accumulation:

Accumulation is impossible in a strictly capitalist environment. That is what causes, from the very inception of capitalist development, the drive for expansion into non-capitalist layers and countries, the ruining of crafts and the peasantry; the proletarianisation of the middle strata; colonialism; efforts to open new markets; and the export of capital. From the outset, only continual expansion into new spheres of production and new countries enables capitalism to exist and develop. But worldwide expansion leads to a clash between capitalism and the pre-capitalist forms of society. That means violence, war, revolution: in a word, disaster – the vital element of capitalism from its beginning to its end.²⁰

At this point, Comrade Luxemburg asks whether capitalism's objective limit will be reached. She asks whether it will really arrive. Here is how she responds:

Certainly that is only a theoretical fiction, precisely because the accumulation of capital is not merely an economic but also a political process.

Imperialism is as much a historical method of prolonging the existence of capitalism as it is the surest means of setting an objective limit to its existence

20. See Luxemburg 1972, pp. 145–6.

by the shortest possible route. That does not mean that this end point will necessarily be reached. The mere tendency toward this final point of capitalist development finds expression in ways that give the final phase of capitalism the form of a period of disasters. (*Akkumulation des Kapitals*, page 425)

This is then explained in more detail:

The more ruthlessly capitalism uses military power internationally and at home to destroy the non-capitalist layers and to drive down the conditions of existence of all layers of workers, the more the daily history of world capital accumulation is transformed into a continual chain of political and social disasters and convulsions, along with periodic economic catastrophes, all of which make the continuation of accumulation impossible, while driving the international working class to rebellion against capitalist rule, well before capitalism comes up against the limits that it has created for itself. (p. 445)

And, now, comrades, let us hear a few words from the other side of the coin, those who fiercely resisted this theory from the start. Hilferding, whose *Finanzkapital* repeats this Marxist theory very concisely, says that capitalism can expand without limit. And so that the Austrian head of this school will not be left out, Bauer has developed a quite curious theory that capitalist growth is regulated by the growth of the population, and the working population in particular. This turns upside down Marx's population theory, which says the exact opposite.²¹

Now, I would like to indicate a few examples of the political results of this point of view. And I stress that there are many who reject the theory of accumulation but do not draw these political conclusions. That tells us nothing regarding their arguments, but does indicate a lack of consistency. I will cite those who have taken this theoretical starting point to its logical conclusion.

Let us start with Kautsky. We have an ongoing series of statements, from 1912 to 1922. On 26 April 1912, Kautsky wrote in *Die Neue Zeit*:

The armaments race has economic causes, but it does not reflect any economic necessity.

That certainly shows expert scholastic finesse.

In no way is it economically impossible to end it.

Here, you have the theoretical key to the stand taken by the USPD and Kautsky during the War.

21. Thalheimer is referring here to Luxemburg's discussion of Bauer's population theory in Chapter 4 of her *Anti-Critique*, a defence of *The Accumulation of Capital*. See Luxemburg 1972.

Bernstein spoke in the same vein at the Chemnitz party convention in 1912. It is significant that these two adversaries had already in 1912 encountered each other at the same spot. Bernstein said at Chemnitz:

I could say much to refute the notion that the disarmament we are demanding today is a reactionary utopia. It is no utopia... World history has often travelled on false paths.

That reminds me of the little story about an officer who sees a dove flying and cries out, 'Look, the dove is flying all wrong.'

We want to intervene consciously in the process around the slogan, 'Peace on earth, good will toward men'.

In 1912, Kautsky and Bernstein had already united in this spirit of good will.

Now, Hilferding during the War. I have here a short excerpt from an article that Hilferding published in November–December 1916 under the title 'The Theory of Collapse: Reciprocity and Force as Tools of Trade Policy'. Here are a few short quotations from it.

Although capitalism would remain viable even if the entire world was marked by almost the same degree of capitalist development, imperialism presupposes the existence of great economic disparity.

Further on:

The working class can support only a trade policy based on reciprocity.

And finally:

Free trade is counterposed to imperialist trade policy and thus to imperialism itself, and is thus an inevitable demand of proletarian struggle.

Further on:

In this framework, colonial policy loses its importance. It does not matter to whom the colonies belong politically. From a purely economic point of view, the development of the British colonial empire has benefited all other economies, and they are spared the costs of acquisition and development.

What is at the bottom of this? The very thought that we mentioned before, namely that imperialism can be overcome through a backward development to free trade, and the resulting theoretical consequences. The working class should not struggle forward toward socialism but backward. It must ally with the appropriate layers of the bourgeoisie.

And the most perfect flowering of this theory, comrades, is an article by Hilferding written early in 1922, in which he demonstrates that the time of imperialist contradictions is over, and that we are at the dawn of an era of

broad imperialist harmony. This is entirely consistent with his starting point of 1912. Hilferding says:

The capitalist economy possesses two means of increasing profits: competition and agreements. The more developed capitalism is, the more competition is replaced by agreements. The same holds true for the international politics of capitalist states.... The recent war left two predominant centres of power. It also demonstrated how pernicious the War was. Successes can only be achieved if there is a change of method, putting agreement in the place of struggle.

Agreement: that is the advice that Hilferding offers the capitalists in 1922, based on his analysis of the world situation.

Comrades, this question of how to explain imperialism theoretically plays a role not only in Germany but also on Russian soil. I suggest that the Russian comrades in particular take note of this. It was the legal Marxists – Tugan-Baranovsky, Struve, and Bulgakov – who put forward the theory that capitalism possessed an unlimited capacity for accumulation. I would like to briefly discuss the origins of this theory. For Marxism in Russia, then in its formative stage, it was a matter of showing that capitalist development in Russia, contrary to the views of the Narodniks, was possible and necessary. These Marxists proved their point, but they somewhat overdid it.

Interjection: Lenin as well?

Thalheimer: Yes, Lenin as well. They demonstrated that capitalism was limitless and eternal. And, in the process, they provided theoretical proof that socialism is impossible. And, here, comrades, is the analogy to the situation in Germany. Tugan-Baranovsky, Struve, and Bulgakov all landed in the camp of the bourgeoisie. There are other cases as well, but, in my view, they are based on theoretical inconsistency.

The reason I am raising this question in such detail and precision is that I believe this is far from a secondary question. It is a central theoretical issue. The criticisms raised against this theory in Germany and by the Austro-Marxists in Austria must, in my opinion, be refuted. Comrades who reject this theory – and that includes a number of Russian comrades – have the responsibility to discuss the matter theoretically. Not here and now, but they must do it.

I now come to the question that is decisive for the drafting of the overall programme as well as that of the individual parties, and this is where I have a sharp disagreement with Comrade Bukharin. This is the question of transitional demands, demands for stages, and the minimum programme. Comrade Bukharin's position is we must separate off these specific transitional and temporary demands from the programme as such. He puts them in

a *chambre séparée* [separate room], which he calls the action programme. Here, sinful behaviour is permitted.

Bukharin: But admission is free!

Thalheimer: Admission is free. Good, we will throw open the doors and see whether what is done there is programmatically permissible.

Interjection: What do you consider permissible?

Thalheimer: That's exactly the point. In Germany, too, we have had objections against including in the programme transitional demands, which apply to the period before the conquest of power. Just like Comrade Bukharin, these comrades sniffed out a certain danger of opportunism. We must therefore check very carefully whether it is possible to separate tactical principles from the other principles and goals. We must make a distinction here. I am not talking here about specific day-to-day demands but tactical principles. And, in my opinion, to seek a safeguard by separating tactics from principles and goals is a serious error which in fact opens us up to the very dangers that we are trying to eliminate. (*'Very true' from the Germans*)

We need only consider the history of the Second International and its collapse in order to recognise that it is precisely this separation of tactical principles from goals that opened the door to their descent into opportunism. How did this begin in Germany? With the Bernstein-Kautsky debates on tactics. The final goal was not challenged. Further, the difference between us Communists and the reform-socialists can be summed up today in terms of the final goal: we want socialism and communism, and they do not. How do we show that this is true? We do so by saying that the tactics, the road that these people are following, is a different road. That is the decisive evidence.

What I am saying is that the specific disagreement between us and the reform-socialists is not the fact that we put demands for reforms, demands for a stage, or whatever you want to call them in a *chambre séparée* and keep them outside of our programme. Rather, the difference is that we link transitional demands and slogans very tightly with our principles and goals. This linkage is, of course, no guarantee in itself, any more than having a good map guarantees that I will not lose my way. As if I do not need to know how to read the map! Comrade Lenin recently said, regarding Russia, that it has to focus above all on the essentials of how to read and write. This is true of the Communist parties of the West in a different sense: we have to learn to read reality.

Radek: And also learn to struggle!

Thalheimer: That is just the point. In my opinion, therefore, the opportunist danger is located on precisely the opposite side from where Comrade Bukharin sees it. The danger lies in the roads that lead from a given starting point to socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

If we leave large parts of this road without illumination, there is a danger that, in the dark patches (*Interjections: 'Bukharin'*),²² many errors will be made. I was particularly interested in what Bukharin said regarding the text from the Italian Communist Party. They said they were against the transitional demands because they should not be elevated into a credo.

There is quite a number of such transitional demands and measures that should become a credo for the individual parties.

Comrades, the question of transitional demands and a minimum programme is not new. It was fought out even here, in Russia, and I believe it is worthwhile to read the documents that relate to this. It was in the autumn of 1917 that the Russian Party took up the question of its programme. At that time, the Russian Party was close to the conquest of power, and this fact was then rather clear. The question arose whether the Party should maintain only its maximum programme and throw out the minimum programme. I believe it is important to quote what Comrade Lenin said about this. Please forgive me that this quotation is somewhat lengthy. Comrade Lenin said:

In fact our entire programme would be a worthless scrap of paper if it did not provide for every eventuality in every stage of the struggle, giving assistance through applying rather than not applying the programme. Given that our programme formulates society's historical development from capitalism to socialism, it must also sketch out all the transitional stages of this development, that is, it must always indicate to the proletariat the course of action appropriate to the goal of approaching socialism. That means there should be no situation when the proletariat must abandon its programme, or when the programme abandons the proletariat.

From this flows the practical conclusion that there must not be a time in which the proletariat, placed in power by the course of events, would not be capable and obliged to take specific measures to realise its programme, specific transitional measures of a socialist character. The assertion that the socialist programme could fail us at some moment under the political rule of the proletariat conceals within it another, unconscious contention: that the socialist programme as a whole can never be realised...²³

22. This interjection is found in the Russian but not the German text.

23. Neither of the preceding two paragraphs appears in either the Russian or English editions of Lenin's works.

From the general or theoretical part of the programme we shall now turn to the minimum programme.

Here, we at once encounter the ostensibly 'very radical' but really very groundless proposal of Comrades N. Bukharin and V. Smirnov *to discard* the minimum programme *in toto*. The division into maximum and minimum programmes is out of date, they claim. Since we speak of a transition to socialism, there is no need for it. No minimum programme; simply a programme of measures for the transition to socialism.

Such is the proposal of these two comrades. For some reason, they have not ventured to offer their own draft (although, since the revision of the party programme was on the agenda of the next congress of the Party, they were really under an obligation to work out a draft). It is possible that the authors of the ostensibly 'radical' proposal have themselves halted in indecision.... Be that as it may, their opinion should be examined.

War and economic ruin have forced all countries to advance from monopoly capitalism to state-monopoly capitalism. This is the objective state of affairs. In a revolutionary situation, during a revolution, however, state-monopoly capitalism is *directly* transformed into socialism. During a revolution, it is impossible to move forward without moving towards socialism – this is the objective state of affairs created by war and revolution. It was taken cognisance of by our April Conference, which put forward the slogans, 'a soviet republic' (the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat), and the nationalisation of banks and syndicates (a basic measure in the transition towards socialism). Up to this point, all the Bolsheviks unanimously agree. But Comrades Smirnov and Bukharin want to go farther, they want to discard the minimum programme *in toto*. This is contrary to the wise counsel of the wise proverb, '*Do not boast when riding to battle; boast when you return from it.*'

Brandler: Hear, hear! (*Laughter*)

Thalheimer: (Still quoting from Lenin)

We are riding to battle, that is, we are fighting for the conquest of political power by our party. This power would be the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants. In taking power, we are not at all afraid of stepping beyond the bounds of the bourgeois system; on the contrary, we declare clearly, directly, definitely, and openly that we shall step beyond those bounds, that we shall fearlessly march towards socialism, that our road shall be through a soviet republic, through nationalisation of banks and syndicates, through workers' control, through universal labour conscription, through nationalisation of the land, confiscation of the landowners' livestock

and implements, etc. In this sense, we drafted our programme of measures for transition to socialism.

But we must not boast when riding to battle, we must not discard the minimum programme, for this would be an empty boast. (*'Hear, hear!'*) We do not wish to 'demand anything from the bourgeoisie', we wish to realise everything ourselves, we do not wish to work on petty details within the framework of bourgeois society.

This would be an empty boast, because first of all we must win power, which has not yet been done. We must first carry out the measures of transition to socialism, we must continue our revolution until the world socialist revolution is victorious, and only then, *'returning from battle'*, may we discard the minimum programme as of *no further use*.

Is it possible to guarantee now that the minimum programme will not be needed any more? Of course not, for the simple reason that we have not yet won power, that socialism has not yet been realised, and that we have not achieved even the beginning of the world socialist revolution....

We must firmly, courageously, and without hesitation *advance* towards our goal, but it is ludicrous to declare that we have reached it when we definitely have not. Discarding the minimum programme would be equivalent to declaring, to announcing (to bragging, in simple language) that we have already won.

No, dear comrades, we have not yet won.

We now come to some further remarks that clarify this and, I believe, provide us with a basis for our continuing debate on the programme. Comrade Lenin continues:

We do not know whether our victory will come tomorrow or a little later. (I personally am inclined to think that it will be tomorrow – I am writing this on 6 October 1917 – and that there may be a delay in our seizure of power; still, tomorrow is tomorrow and not today.) We do not know how soon after our victory revolution will sweep the West. We do not know whether or not our victory will be followed by temporary periods of reaction and the victory of the counter-revolution – there is nothing impossible in that – and therefore, after our victory, we shall build a 'triple line of trenches' against such a contingency.

We do not know and *cannot know* anything of this. *No one* is in a position to know. It is therefore ridiculous to discard the minimum programme, which is *indispensable* while we still live within the framework of bourgeois society, while we have not yet destroyed that framework, not yet realised the basic prerequisites for a transition to socialism, not yet smashed the enemy (the bourgeoisie), and even if we have smashed them we have not

yet annihilated them. All this will come, and perhaps much sooner than many people think (I personally think that it *will begin tomorrow*), *but it has not yet come*.

Take the minimum programme in the political sphere. This programme is limited to the bourgeois republic. We add that we do not confine ourselves to its limits, we start immediately upon a struggle for a higher type of republic, a *soviet republic*. This we must do. With unshakable courage and determination, we must advance towards the new republic *and, in this way, we shall reach our goal, of that I am sure*. But the minimum programme should, under no circumstances, be discarded, for, first of all, there is *as yet* no soviet republic; secondly, 'attempts at restoration' are not out of the question, and they will first have to be experienced and vanquished; thirdly, during the transition from the old to the new there may be temporary 'combined types' (as *Rabochy Put* correctly pointed out a day or two ago) – for instance, a soviet republic together with a Constituent Assembly. Let us first *get over* all that – then it will be time to discard the minimum programme.

And in conclusion, it reads:

The same in the economic sphere. We all agree that the *fear* of marching towards socialism is the most contemptible *treason* to the cause of the proletariat. We all agree that the most important of the first steps to be taken must be such measures as the nationalisation of banks and syndicates. Let us first realise this and other similar measures, and *then we shall see*. Then we shall be able to see *better*, for practical experience, which is worth a million times more than the best of programmes, will considerably widen our horizon. It is possible, and even probable, nay, indubitable, that, without transitional 'combined types', the change will not take place. We shall not, for instance, be able to nationalise petty enterprises with one or two hired labourers at short notice or subject them to real workers' control. Their role may be insignificant, they may be bound hand and foot by the nationalisation of banks and trusts, but, so long as there are even odds and ends of bourgeois relations, why abandon the minimum programme? As Marxists, advancing boldly to the world's greatest revolution, but at the same time taking a sober view of the facts, we have no right to abandon the minimum programme.

By abandoning it we should prove that we have lost our heads before we have won. And we must not lose our heads either before our victory, at the time of victory, or after it; for, if we lose our heads, we lose everything.²⁴

24. Text taken from Lenin 1960–71, 26, pp. 170–3.

Comrades, Lenin wrote this on 6 October 1917, in a situation of which he said, 'We are on the eve of the proletarian dictatorship, our victory, but we are not yet there. We are still in today.' And in a world framework, comrades, we are justified in saying that the victory of world-revolution is certainly not for today. It is perhaps not for tomorrow, not tomorrow in the way the word was used in 1917. On a world scale, it must be said that the period from today's conditions to the achievement of world proletarian dictatorship is certainly measured in years, perhaps in decades, and certainly in decades if we consider not only the territories of developed capitalism but also the surrounding colonial and half-agrarian regions. For such a long stretch, lying before us, we must have clear signposts. What should be the nature of these signposts, these basic rules?

The main objection by Comrade Bukharin is that we cannot include specific daily demands in the overall programme, because these specific demands are only short-term. They can change from week to week, from month to month. And, secondly, these specific daily demands also differ greatly from one country to another. They therefore cannot be brought together in a single framework. To this, I reply that we do not need to bring the specific daily demands, in all their detail, into the general programme or into the national programmes either. But we do have to lay down tactical guidelines, tactical principles – methods, if I may put it that way – out of which all these specific individual demands can be safely and unambiguously derived.

And, comrades, it is not only such problems of the transition that differ from country to country and from week to week and month to month. There is a whole variety of such transitional issues, major issues that are general in character, that must absolutely be dealt with in a Communist programme. And, in my opinion, a general programme of the Communist International that remains blank for this considerable stretch of the long road has very little value for the parties of the West. (*'Very true' from the Germans*) During the coming period, the main emphasis will be on staking out this transitional period. Let me mention a few such transitional issues that in my opinion definitely belong in such a communist programme. I include here the question of control of production, of state capitalism, of guidelines for each party's tax and financial policy. (*'Very true'*) The parties face these questions every day, although the specific form varies.

Bukharin: Aha!

Thalheimer: True, but guidelines must be there from which practical conduct can be deduced. For example, take the Erfurt Programme. It includes guidelines for tax policy, which today, of course, are outdated. You will not

deny, Comrade Bukharin, that tax and financial conditions of the different countries, including Germany, varied over the years, and yet such a guideline is important, useful, and necessary.

A second important point in the transition, comrades, is our relationship to bourgeois democracy. Comrade Bukharin's draft programme contains an outstanding critical evaluation of bourgeois democracy. But, considering the Communist International as a whole, the array of its parties from India to Soviet Russia, is this enough?

Bukharin: No.

Thalheimer: Far from it! You must have a guideline, first from the Communists' stand on democracy in conditions where bourgeois democracy does not yet exist, that is, conditions where we must fight against absolutist and feudal forms of rule. Second, we must have a guideline for Communists' conduct in a situation like that in Germany, where it is a question of defending the republic against monarchist attacks. And, third, we need a guideline for Communists' conduct in a situation like that of November 1918 in Germany, where it was a question of smashing democracy and going over to the dictatorship [of the proletariat]. In my view, all these transitional phases must be indicated, in their broad lines rather than in detail. The fact that this is feasible is shown in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. Have a look at the last section, which takes up the communists' relations to other parties – to bourgeois democracy, to the petty bourgeoisie, and so on. A few brief sentences indicate the basic stance, and our programme must do this as well. A programme – and here I will recall a statement of Comrade Luxemburg, which seems to me to be very timely – must guide us with respect to all significant transitional phases. A programme that leaves us in the lurch in such phases, or one that can be used in some situations but not in others, is of little political value.

I also believe that Comrade Bukharin has not been consistent. His rejection of transitional demands would lead him logically to protest vehemently against the Bulgarian programme, and also against our German one. He will certainly have to make that good.

It has quite correctly been said here that both war communism and also the NEP were forced on us by imperious circumstances. They were not the product of finished plans drawn up in advance but were actions taken out of necessity. And these necessities reflected in both war communism and the NEP result from conditions that are not specifically Russian but general in character. So I now ask, how do these factors apply to Western Europe?

Trotsky has correctly developed the thought – as has Comrade Bukharin also, in exemplary fashion – that there is a contradiction between the require-

ments of civil war and economic necessities. War communism is above all a result of civil war. If we foresee – and we do indeed foresee – that we in the West will also have to pass through a period of civil war after the conquest of power, we also believe that this period will probably be shorter, and we may then assume that such a war communism will perhaps be less significant in the West than in Russia. Of course, we cannot make detailed predictions, but we should establish that, during a period of civil war, all economic requirements have to be subordinated to the necessities of war.

Then as to the NEP in the West. The needs of small peasants exist in the West as well, although not to the same extent. But I'd like to point out that we are accustomed to the view that Russia is carrying out a specific economic policy, and Germany, on the other hand, will have a specific economic policy. We forget that, at the time that Germany faces this question, it will not stand alone, but, rather, will likely be part of a German-Russian economic bloc. What does that mean? It means that, for the German economic realm, these petty-bourgeois masses of Russia come into the picture, and, for Russia, the industrial side is strengthened.

As far as we can see, this policy leads Russia forwards, but, for the West, it will probably be a retreat from what could actually be achieved there.

Comrades, the main importance of this economic policy for the parties of the West is that it establishes in the programme our relationship to the middle layers – the small peasants, small traders, and small craftsmen. In my view, we should not set things down in the programme unless there is an economic requirement. But we should include in the programme the concept that concern to protect these layers may in some circumstances have to be subordinated to the requirements of civil war.

Now a remark concerning the Bulgarian programme.

In both our programme and the Bulgarian one, the demand is advanced for unification of poor craftsmen and tradesmen into cooperatives after the seizure of power. I would like to add one point here: these cooperatives will play a somewhat different role in industry – with poor craftsmen – then they do in agriculture. Let us consider a country like Germany, with somewhat developed industry. Historically speaking, the moment will soon come to integrate these small industrial layers into large-scale industry. The situation with poor and middle peasants is different. With them, the concept of cooperatives will extend over a much longer period, and these cooperatives will be somewhat different in character from industrial cooperatives.

To conclude, let me speak briefly of the programme's structure. I would like merely to note that, by and large, I agree with the proposal made by Comrade Bukharin. In our programme, we did not take up the analysis of the capitalist

epoch. We began by analysing imperialism. We have come to the conclusion that such an analysis of the capitalist epoch is necessary and must be added.

I would like to add that it seems to me essential to take into consideration Comrade Varga's proposal to preface the programme with an analysis of pre-capitalist methods of exploitation. If we really want a world programme of communism, this must also be looked into.

Finally, on structure. Comrade Bukharin issued a reprimand regarding the length of the programme. Comrades, we too are dissatisfied with its length. But what happened to us was like the French bishop who wrote his friend, 'I am sending you a long letter, because I do not have enough time to write you a short one.'²⁵ We did not have time to draft a short programme. It is absolutely necessary to keep it short, perhaps even shorter than that of Bukharin. I base myself here on a statement by Engels on the question of programme. He said that a programme should be as brief as possible and must leave much to be explained orally. In addition, it should be simple and as understandable as possible. Here, too, we concede that the German programme needs much improvement.

Comrades, to conclude, I would like to say that we should protect our Communist programme with strong armour, as regards principles and goals. But we should not believe that we achieve that by leaving a large part of the road that we must travel without illumination or – differently stated – by omitting a large part of the road from our roadmap.

Comrade Bukharin and many other comrades fear that, if this part of the road is included, we may not succeed at the crucial moment in leaping over it. Well, comrades, I would like to point out that our Russian comrades, when they retained their minimum programme on 6 October 1917, succeeded in making this leap very quickly. I am convinced that providing us with a programme that can lead us to victory is really not dependent on omitting this signpost. (*Loud applause*)

Adjournment: 4:00 p.m.

25. The quotation is commonly attributed to the French philosopher Blaise Pascal in his *Lettres Provinciales* (1656).

Session 15 – Saturday, 18 November 1922

Programme (Continued)

The Programme of the International and the Communist Parties.

Speaker: Kabakchiev

Convened: 7:30 p.m.

Chairperson: Kolarov

Kabakchiev (Bulgaria): Comrades, the Communist International faces the important task of working out a programme for itself and its most important sections. What are the factors that have placed this task before the International?

The need for a Communist programme

The Second International is bankrupt. The epoch of peaceful development and growing prosperity that capitalism enjoyed from 1871 until the beginning of the twentieth century created and sharpened opportunist tendencies within the Second International and placed its stamp on the programme of the Social-Democratic parties. The characteristic feature of the Social-Democratic parties is that they lead the working class to accommodate itself to capitalism, to reconcile itself to capitalism, and accept the postponement of socialism into the indefinite future.

That is why the Social-Democratic parties place such heavy emphasis on the minimum programme – that is, demands that can be achieved inside the limits and on the basis of capitalist society. They

obscure the final goal – the conquest of political power through the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The new revolutionary epoch

Now, however, the peaceful epoch of capitalism has been brought to an end and we have entered a new epoch, rich in wars and revolutions. This was brought about, firstly, by the onset of imperialism and imperialist wars, which broke out initially on the periphery of the capitalist world and finally hurled the great capitalist states into the imperialist world war of 1914. In addition, we saw the Russian Revolution of 1905, followed by revolutions in Turkey, China, Iran, and elsewhere. This epoch threw the entire capitalist world into a generalised and profound economic and political crisis. This epoch gave a new impetus to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. Imperialism, war, and crisis sharpened class contradictions and endowed the class struggle with a new and powerful impulse.

The class-conscious and revolutionary forces of the proletariat broke loose from the Social-Democratic parties and were able to restore international solidarity of the revolutionary proletariat through a relentless struggle against opportunism and a break with the national bourgeoisie.

That created the preconditions for the launching of the Communist International, whose foundation was laid in 1919 in Moscow.

The revolutionary Communist working-class movement is distinguished by new methods of struggle, namely a struggle to conquer political power through mass action, general strike, and armed uprising. The centrepiece of proletarian activity is no longer the minimum programme but the revolutionary struggle to establish proletarian dictatorship.

The lessons of the Russian Revolution

Obviously, the Communist parties could not and do not utilise the old programme of the Social-Democratic parties. Recall that it was the Paris Commune, the proletariat's first attempt to take political power, that enabled Marx to clearly specify the goal and instrument of proletarian revolution, namely the dictatorship of the proletariat. Of even greater historical importance is the great Russian Revolution, which brought the proletariat to power in the world's largest country, and which already has existed for five years. It has shown the world proletariat the forms and instruments of proletarian dictatorship. The example of the Russian Revolution must serve the Communist International and its sections as the most important source assisting it in specifying the goals and forms of proletarian dictatorship, as well as the

means of taking power. The elaboration of the programme of the Communist International and its sections must therefore draw above all on the experiences of the Russian Revolution.

The Communist International established its principles at the First Congress. The Second Congress laid the foundations of its organisation. The Third Congress determined the general guidelines for the Communist International's policies in the present period. The time has now come to work out the programme of the Communist International and its sections. If the Fourth Congress cannot carry out this task in definitive fashion, at least it must establish the basis on which the sections of the Communist International can work during the coming year, in order to finalise a programme at the next congress.

The programme of the Communist Party of Bulgaria

The draft programme of the Communist Party of Bulgaria, which has been distributed to the Congress, has the following structure.

The programme consists of two parts. The first part is a general discussion of principles and the theoretical foundations of the programme. Part 2 presents an enumeration of specific goals and demands that the Party is fighting to realise – in a word, the programme as such.

The theoretical part contains four points.

- 1.) A brief presentation of the revolutionary crisis brought about by the imperialist war and the circumstances in which the Communist Party was founded.
- 2.) An analysis of capitalist production and the development of capitalist society, the emergence of the working class, and the creation inside capitalist society itself of the preconditions for social revolution.
- 3.) An analysis of the imperialist epoch of capitalism, the imperialist war, its results, the sharpening of class antagonisms, the civil war, and the Russian Revolution as the opening of proletarian world-revolution.
- 4.) The influence of imperialism and the imperialist war on the development of the Balkans. The new conditions of struggle for the Party in Bulgaria and its goals in the present period.

Part 2 of the programme – the programme as such – begins with establishing the Party's final goal and then takes up demands that the Party struggles to realise during the epoch of social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is termed the epoch of transition from capitalism to communism.

Our programme gives special emphasis to general conditions in the Balkans, where the Balkan Communist parties are marshalling their forces for

struggle and preparing for revolution. We believe that our programme stands as a model that other Communist parties in the Balkans can utilise. And our programme also points to the tasks of the Balkan Communist Federation, as an organisation with a necessary role in the preparation of revolution in the Balkans and in its final victory.

The maximum programme of the Communist party

The next question is whether the Communist party should have a maximum and a minimum programme or only a general programme for the transitional period.¹

The Communist party cannot accept a minimum programme similar to that of the Social-Democratic parties before the War. That is because the Communist party considers capitalism to be in a profound crisis, which will quickly and inevitably lead to its deep decay and collapse. The task of the proletariat today does not consist in adaptation, as the old minimum programme proposed, but in hastening the collapse of capitalism and the victory of revolution.

On the other hand, the political demands of the minimum programme – for democracy – cannot be realised while the bourgeoisie remains in power. Even in the democratic states, its class-rule is maintained with the help of dictatorship. And the economic demands of the minimum programme cannot be achieved because of the economic crisis, inflation, and capitalist decay.

The Communist party maintains that capitalist society has entered the period of revolutionary crisis, and that we are at the beginning of proletarian world-revolution.

The main task of the proletariat and the Communist party is therefore the conquest of political power and the achievement of the maximum programme.

Can the Communist party have a minimum programme?

The question is now posed whether the Communist party can do without demands posed within the framework of bourgeois society before the conquest of power – a period that now seems to be much longer than we

1. The Erfurt Programme of the SPD, adopted in 1891, was divided into a general statement of the need for 'abolition of class rule and of classes themselves' and of 'every manner of exploitation and oppression' (the 'maximum programme') and demands considered feasible within capitalism (the 'minimum'). (For the text, see: <www.marxists.org/history/international/social-democracy/1891/erfurt-program.htm>.) This conceptual framework shaped the programmes of many parties of the Second International.

thought in 1918–19. Of course, this is excluded. But these demands do not have the same significance and importance that they had in the old minimum programme. They are merely transitional demands for which the working class can quickly rally in the present crisis, in order then to reach the major demands of the maximum programme.

These demands, today, have revolutionary significance and importance. To some degree, they signify a stage in the extension and sharpening of proletarian class struggle.

A portion of these demands have a more transitory character and are dependent on the momentary circumstances of the struggle. Such demands must be raised as slogans, as immediate demands.

The remaining demands are intended for a more extended period and are the most important ones for which the Communist party struggles, up to the conquest of power. These demands must be included in the programme. But they are also transitory in nature, and they are therefore not decisive for the maximum demands and conditions of struggle. On the other hand, the struggle to achieve these demands leads continually and necessarily to the question of conquering power and realising the maximum demands. Therefore, there is no reason to take up these demands in a separate part of the programme. They must be added to the maximum programme, following after the maximum demands.

The programme of the Communist Party of Russia

The experiences of the Russian Revolution and the programme of the Communist Party of Russia must be utilised in determining the programme's maximum demands.²

The Communist Party of Russia's programme contains what was missing in the old Social-Democratic programme, a gap that was this programme's main error. The Russian programme lays out and specifies the tasks of the proletariat during the social revolution with regard to the conquest of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the destruction of the capitalist state and the old régime, as well as the construction of the new state and socialist society.

The main goal of the Communist programme is to lay out main tasks of the revolutionary proletariat. Is it permissible to give no heed to the experiences of the Russian proletarian revolution, which is of general historical importance? The answer is clearly no.

2. For the 1919 programme of the Russian CP, see Meisel 1953, pp. 100–31.

The Communist International and its sections must utilise the major experiences of the Russian Revolution, which provide the realisable content of a proletarian programme for the entire world and have displayed in concrete form the demands and methods of struggle of world-revolution.

That does not mean, however, that the Russian programme must be copied. That means it should be utilised as guide for the careful examination of the real conditions in each country and to the determination of each party's programme, while fully taking into account its special conditions.

The tactics of the Communist party and its programme

We also face the question whether the programme should include *all* tactical questions that the party faces in the present period, such as the united front, the workers' government, and so on. The programme needs to establish the general line of our tactics, taking into consideration the Communist party's principles and the conditions of the present historical epoch. But we cannot establish the precise application of this general line in every given situation.

Should the Communist party programme be an action programme?

The question was posed whether or not the Communist party programme should be an action programme. It should indeed be an action programme, but also something more: a programme resting on principle. That implies that the Communist programme is not a platform with transitory demands for the current situation, but, rather, a presentation of our historical conceptions, in terms of theory and principle. But, at the same time, the Communist programme must indicate the main demands for which the revolutionary proletariat struggles during the transitional period leading to the conquest of power and during the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Communist Party of Bulgaria's policy on parliamentary struggle

I will now respond to criticisms that have been voiced concerning our draft programme. Comrade Bukharin said that we give too much space to parliamentarism and not enough to the methods of revolutionary struggle. This reproach is unjustified.

Immediately after the First Congress of the Communist International, when the Communist Party of Bulgaria joined the International, its May 1919 congress adopted a 'Programmatic Declaration' that encompassed the principles and tactics of the Communist International. This Programmatic Declaration utilises the experiences of the Russian Revolution. It presents as the Party's

main task the conquest of political power through the struggle of the masses of the working class and poor peasants. This struggle must develop to the point of armed insurrection and establishment of a proletarian dictatorship resting on soviets of workers and peasants.

However, the Communist Party of Bulgaria does not reject participation in elections and struggle within parliament and the municipalities. Following the victory of the soviets in Russia, some Communist parties abroad rejected participation in elections and struggle in parliament. By contrast, the Communist Party of Bulgaria pursued its participation in these struggles with heightened energy and great success. In the parliamentary elections, it succeeded in gathering more than a quarter of the electorate under its banner, and it has won control of a large number of city and village councils. These parliamentary victories were achieved through propaganda and a principled struggle for revolutionary demands. The Party's struggle in parliament and the municipalities is indissolubly linked with the struggles of the broad worker and peasant masses, with the Party's mass actions, and with the steady increase in the Party's membership and mass influence.

The Party struggles to abolish the capitalist state and all its institutions, from parliament to the policy and army, and to establish a soviet republic. Therefore, the policies of the Communist Party of Bulgaria do not stand in contradiction to those of the Communist International. The Party is fully in accord with the theses on parliamentarism adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International.³ Even more, its activity confirms the Communist International's policy on this question.

In the proposed programme, parliamentary activity receives no more weight than it deserves. It would perhaps be better to put this part of the programme in the first section, which deals with the soviet republic, and which characterises bourgeois democracy as follows:

Behind the mask of democracy, the capitalist state supports the power and privileges of a minority consisting of the possessing classes, at the cost of the great majority, the disinherited and exploited working masses. At present, the bourgeoisie maintains its weakened rule through persecution and bloody terror. Even when it establishes a democratic republic, in reality, power is still held by a dictatorship resting on the police, army, and the entire apparatus of the capitalist state.

Parliament and constitutional government are merely tools of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

3. For the theses on parliamentarism, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 470–9.

Revolutionary methods of struggle

Our draft programme enumerates the revolutionary means of struggle for the conquest of power. The programme states:

The proletariat will achieve social revolution through the conquest of power by the proletariat and the establishment of its class dictatorship.

And further:

The imperialist war opened the epoch of social revolution. During this epoch and in the context of the world proletariat's struggle as a whole, the Party's maximum programme acquires a special and immediate practical relevance. The experiences of the Russian Revolution and the revolutionary movements of other countries have highlighted the proletariat's demands and the means to achieve them. These means are the organisation of the workers and the struggle of the working masses for their immediate interests up to the point of political general strike and armed uprising.

The revolutionary classes (workers and poor peasants) will use armed force to take control of the political power of the state. They will repress the resistance of the bourgeoisie and counter-revolution and thus secure their power and the revolution's complete victory.

In this way, our draft programme indicates the most important means of revolutionary struggle.

The revolutionary demands of the Communist party

The objection has been raised that the demands in our programme are elaborated too specifically and at too great a length. However, this criticism is not justified. It is true that our programme does not content itself with vague formulas and tries to provide a precise definition of both the maximum and minimum demands of the Communist party. But it avoids unnecessary detail, which would hinder our work immediately following the conquest of power.

We repeat, day by day, that the proletariat has to prepare itself for the taking of power and the proletarian dictatorship. We cannot at present determine when the revolution will take place. However, the general economic and political crisis that reigns in the capitalist world can lead to an outbreak in Central Europe or the Balkans, for example, in the very near future. We must keep this perspective always in mind in the present period. In this framework, the Communist parties and the proletariat that stand at the head of the revolutionary movement must possess a clear and precise programme of tasks

that await them immediately after the conquest of power. On the other hand, a specific and precise maximum programme, shorn of detail, is a strong tool of Communist propaganda and education and the gathering of worker and peasant masses under the banner of the Communist party. Finally, it is correct that a dozen programmes are of no worth unless they stand on the foundation of a real revolutionary movement of the proletariat.

In addition, it is just as correct that every proletarian movement that lacks a foundation in theory and has no clear revolutionary goal is doomed to impotence and to a role as a tool of the bourgeoisie.

In the current epoch of social revolution, the role of the Communist International and the Communist parties becomes more important with every day. The social patriots, together with the worker masses under their influence, form the principal buttress of bourgeois rule. The Communist International and its sections must possess a programme firmly founded on our theory and that of Marx, a programme that presents the demands of the revolutionary proletariat in the clearest fashion.

Chair: Comrades, we have heard three reports on the Communist programme. The question is now how we shall proceed. Shall we open up a general debate, so that the Congress can adopt a draft programme? Or shall we postpone the debate and the final vote to the next congress? The German delegation has decided unanimously for postponing the debate and final vote to the next congress. However, the Russian delegation has asked the Presidium for time to consider this question.

The Presidium does not consider it possible to decide the question whether to open the debate immediately and adopt a programme or postpone the debate and vote to the next congress. It does believe, however, that the request of the Russian delegation should be approved, so it has the possibility of taking a position on this question.

Adjournment: 8:15 p.m.

Session 16 – Monday, 20 November 1922

Trade Unions

Tasks of Communists in the Trade Unions.

Speakers: Lozovsky, Clarke, Lansing

Convened: 12 noon

Chairperson: Kolarov

Lozovsky (Russia): Having taken up the task of determined and bitter struggle against reformism in all its manifestations, the Communist International could not avoid, from the first moment of its activity, running up against the strongest bulwark of reformism – the existing trade unions. That explains why the first declarations of the Communist International defined its attitude to the reformist trade unions and to the positions taken by the outstanding leaders of the international trade-union movement in the postwar period. The Second Congress of the Communist International mapped out a platform for Communists in the trade-union movement, rejecting the theory of splitting and splintering the unions that had arisen due to impatience and lack of understanding of the basic tasks of Communist politics.¹

The Third Congress renewed discussion of the trade-union question. And that is not surprising, because the trade unions have become the last refuge of the international bourgeoisie and the main

1. When the Comintern was formed in 1919 its supporters were divided regarding whether Communists should work in existing reformist-dominated trade unions, and the First Congress took no position on this question. For the Second Congress debate and resolution, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 589–634.

foundation of capitalist rule. The Third Congress took up again the most important issues facing the international trade-union movement, by elaborating detailed guidelines, in particular regarding the need to harness all our forces in struggle against the reformists, through winning the trade unions. Finally, the most recent session of the Communist International's Expanded Executive considered it necessary to discuss in detail the desire expressed in some Communist circles to dissolve the Red International of Labour Unions [RILU].² This made it clear that, although these liquidationist tendencies raised high-minded considerations, in reality they reflected a weakness and an inability to organise their own forces in struggle against reformism.

The Fourth Congress must take another step forward. The documents just mentioned established a general guideline for Communist work in the trade unions. Now we have to concretise a large number of tasks and again emphasise questions that have been thrust into the foreground by the reality of international class struggle. To examine these questions, we must, above all, consider the conditions in which the Communists' struggle to revolutionise the trade unions is now taking place.

A quick glance at the international union movement is enough to show that it is experiencing a profound crisis. This crisis results, firstly, from the powerful capitalist offensive and, secondly, from the barrenness of the theory and practice of international trade unionism's leading core. The capitalist offensive took on a definite form in the final months of 1920, assuming a systematically organised character and pursuing the goal of reducing production expenses at all costs by paying less for labour-power. The bourgeoisie wanted to remove the difficulties it faced after the War by exerting pressure on the working class. And, the more the crisis intensified, the fiercer were the aggressive policies of the bourgeoisie. What was at issue for them was achieving the absurdly high profits to which they had become accustomed during the War. The form of this assault was different in the countries with a strong currency, compared to those with a weak currency, but, overall, it aimed to do away with the eight-hour day and to lower wages systematically. A cam-

2. In June 1921, Paul Levi proposed that given the decline of the revolutionary movement in Europe, the Comintern should now consider working within traditional union structures on an international level, just as it was doing nationally. This signified dissolving the RILU. Levi was no longer a KPD member, but some trade unionists in the German Party were sympathetic to his view. The trade-union report by Lozovsky and Brandler at the February–March 1922 Expanded Executive conference reaffirmed the need to build the RILU, as did a March 1922 RILU resolution. The question is not mentioned in published records of the June ECCI conference. Comintern 1922b, pp. 117–18, 150; Tosstorff 2004, pp. 382–3, 396. See also below, pp. 559–60 and 560 n. 20.

paing began against the mere existence of trade unions – in the United States, through the struggle for the ‘open shop’.

Apart from this purely economic offensive, the bourgeoisie has created during the last two years special organisations with the task of destroying trade unions and wiping out their leaders. A classic example of this is provided by Italy, where, recently, the entire Communist movement was demolished. Italy has the dubious distinction of marching at the head of all ‘civilised’ powers on the road to destroying and annihilating the workers’ organisations. The entire Fascist movement, like analogous movements in other countries, is neither more or less than a preventive counter-revolution, in which the Italian workers have to endure all the burdens and disadvantages of the counter-revolution without having enjoyed the benefits of social revolution.

These capitalist attacks from all sides have been met by only extremely weak resistance from the leading bodies of the international trade-union movement. The Amsterdamers always seize every appropriate and inappropriate occasion to tell of their immense victories over capitalism and the great blessings bestowed upon mankind by the International Labour Office of the League of Nations.³ But, from the very start of the capitalist attacks, they assumed a wait-and-see stance. During the entire past period, never once did they take the initiative for a serious struggle. At best, they have been driven forward only under the lash of the outraged working masses. Particularly characteristic in this regard is the most recent lockout in Britain, the coal-miners’ strike in the United States, the metalworkers’ movement in France, and a number of strikes in Germany and Italy. Each time, in every location, the Amsterdam people played a passive role, seeking to put the conflict to rest as soon as possible, disorganising and causing demoralisation in the ranks of the working class, and thus acting only to thwart their struggle.

The trade unions’ inability to counter the capitalist attacks, and their leaders’ overt aversion to leading the working masses into struggle, provoked deep disappointment in broad circles of the working class. That is why we see entire groups of workers abandoning the unions. In 1921 and 1922, growth of unions was not only halted but converted into a rapid decline. Hundreds of thousands of workers left the unions. Unions crumbled away, losing strength and the capacity to counter the capitalist attacks. At the beginning of 1920, the CGT in France had more than two million members. Now its two successor

3. The International Labour Office in Geneva was the coordinating body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), created as an arm of the League of Nations by the Paris Peace Conference in April 1919. The ILO’s governing council was made up of labour, employer, and government delegates from all League member countries. The ILO’s authority was limited to submitting recommendations to the League and its members.

organisations together have only six hundred thousand members. In Italy, the number of union members has fallen from two million to seven hundred thousand. In Britain the number dropped by 1.3 million. In the United States unions have lost about 1.5 million members. We see a similar decline in membership in Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, and so on.

Only in Germany and Austria do the membership totals remain at approximately the former levels. But this results not so much from intensely revolutionary convictions of the trade-union leaders in these countries, but from the tragic conditions afflicting the Austrian and German proletariat, and the fact that the workers of these countries are organised to a greater degree.

Apart from numerical decline, the trade unions are marked by a growing uncertainty and lack of confidence in their own strength. For many years, the Amsterdamers proclaimed that great reforms would flow from the good graces of the International Labour Office; now, they have fallen silent. The flowers have wilted and the fires have burned out. They themselves have lost confidence in the great social creativity of the organisations they have created. They continue to take part in the International Labour Office of the League of Nations, but this is only because they are solidly attached to it, like a convict labourer chained to his cart. They will share the fate of this altogether remarkable institution.

They cannot dispense with class collaboration, because all their activity is based on this principle. Indeed, this collaboration becomes tighter every day, because a breakdown of class collaboration between the trade unions and the bourgeoisie would mean the end not only of the bourgeoisie but also of the Amsterdamers.

The leaders of the Amsterdam International displayed extreme modesty and passivity when it was a question of countering the capitalist offensive. By contrast, when it is a matter of struggling against revolutionary workers, they display unbridled energy and aggressiveness. The period between the Third and Fourth [Comintern] Congresses was marked by a campaign against the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement. The Amsterdam leaders decided they would never accept being in a minority: better a split than handing over union leadership to the Communists. That is the stance of the Amsterdam International, one that flows from their overall policy. Otherwise it would be difficult for them to salvage capitalist society and the capitalist system.

In France, the Amsterdam forces succeeded in splitting the trade-union movement, and we now have two labour confederations. In Czechoslovakia, when the Communists began to threaten the cosy little posts of the

Amsterdam adherents, they followed the example of their French colleagues and brought about a split of the Czechoslovak trade unions.

In Spain, the reformist General Workers' Federation carried through a split in its largest affiliate, the Federation of Miners, the moment the Communists and syndicalists won a majority in this federation. In Germany, a systematic witch-hunt against Communists has been launched in the construction, railway, and transport workers' unions. The German method is to expel a Communist who is elected to a post, and to refuse to recognise Communists who are candidates, in order to separate the revolutionary leaders from the revolutionary masses.

The Amsterdam forces in Germany are carrying out their policy unwaveringly and stubbornly, striving with might and main to drive the best fighting forces out of the labour federations.

'To be strong, we must cleanse our ranks', reads a cynical statement in *Korrespondenzblatt*, the official publication of the German General Workers' Federation [ADGB], in an article entitled 'The Enemy Is on Our Left'. The Amsterdam slogan is 'Get Out of the Unions', and they take this to its logical conclusion. The greater the Communist threat, and the more revolutionary the masses' class consciousness, the more blatant are the Amsterdamers' efforts to split the unions, for they have no use for revolutionary unions. They prefer the Catholic and yellow trade unions to those that are revolutionary. This is shown by any number of facts. For example, the reformist miners' union is happy to sign accords with the Catholic federation or the Polish nationalist federation, but under no circumstances will they come to agreement with the Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers, labelling them 'unorganised workers'. This union is a revolutionary organisation lead by Communists, and the worthy gentlemen of the German Miners' Federation prefer Catholics to Communists.

But the Amsterdamers are not content to pressure the unions at the national level. At their last congress, held in Rome, the Amsterdam International, acting in common accord with the representatives of international secretariats of different branches of industry,⁴ again passed a resolution stating that revolutionary unions would not be admitted to these international secretariats. A quite specific policy was adopted on this point, because the Amsterdamers

4. An international secretariat was an autonomous federation of trade unions in a given industry, politically aligned with the International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam International). From early 1920, the Comintern favoured taking part in congresses of the secretariats, while continuing to oppose the Amsterdam confederation. After the founding of the Red International of Labour Unions, pro-Amsterdam officials pushed through a policy of excluding from the secretariats all bodies affiliated to the RILU. Tosstorff 2004, pp. 120–9, 477–501.

are always firm when it's a matter of struggling against revolutionary trade unions. The list of bodies expelled from or refused admission to the international secretariats includes the Russian federations of metalworkers, miners, woodworkers, construction workers, textile workers, agricultural workers, clerks, post and telegraph employees, and so on. The formal grounds for their exclusion is that through the All-Russian Central Federation of Trade Unions they are affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions. But, in reality, they have been excluded only because they have carried out a revolution, are linked with the Soviet state, are imbued with Communist spirit, and constitute the foundation of the Soviet state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The international secretariats affiliated with the Amsterdam International would be pleased to admit counter-revolutionary unions. But they will not admit revolutionary unions that could disturb their peaceful life and upset their digestion.

What is the meaning of this campaign against the revolutionary trade unions? In essence, it is nothing other than a reflection of the international capitalist campaign against the working class and of the social struggles being fought out between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The Amsterdam International stands on the opposite side of the barricades and fires upon the international workers' movement with the cannon now at its disposal. The leaders of the trade-union movement today understand full well that if this movement remains united, it will slowly but surely shift to the left. And, when the Communists take control of the trade-union movement, that marks the end, not only for the bourgeoisie but for the reformists. That is why they pursue a conscious policy of split and expulsion. They want to exhaust the working class, render it incapable of taking power, disorganising and demoralising the workers to the point where they are unable to lay their hands on the means of production and exchange. The Amsterdam International seeks to rescue modern civilisation by every means and in every way possible.

The Amsterdam federation does not stand alone in its struggle against the Communists; they have allies among the anarchists. During the last two years, we have seen the anarchists' struggle against Communism sharpen considerably. Since 1920, these hostilities have grown ever more acute, and, in the recent period, they have no longer been different in character from those of the reformists. Of course, the rationale is different, and the attackers themselves carry a different banner. But the political content is the same: the anarchists marshal all their forces to restrict Communist work in the unions, to slander them and even to deny them the right to work in the unions. Attacks of this nature have been carried out in recent years by the American IWW, the Italian syndicalists, the anarcho-syndicalists in Spain, and some syndicalist groupings in France.

They utilise the slogan of the struggle against politics, counterposing the trade-union international to the Communist International and the Communist parties. As you know, the anarchists employ the concepts of politics, party, and state as a sort of Beast of the Apocalypse, paying no regard to what policy or party or state they are talking about. Their metaphysical manner of thinking lumps everything together, and they are accustomed to thinking in terms of the eternal and absolute. We find in them a plain and categorical rejection of any political struggle and of any relations between trade unions and the Communist parties. The anarchists call this otherworldly manner of thinking 'independent', and, during the last year, they carried out attacks under this banner against the Communist International and the RILU. Trade unions and parties must be completely separate from each other – that is the core of all their declarations. In a succession of decisions and appeals, the anarchists have belaboured this elementary notion, which has not grown any clearer or more revolutionary by being dressed up in purely trade-union garb.

But the anarchist elements do not limit themselves only to a struggle against the Communists on the plane of ideas. In the last year, a number of events indicated that the anarchists are not letting the Amsterdamers rest on their laurels. Some anarchist organisations have begun expelling members who are RILU supporters and who speak out for contact between the two revolutionary Internationals. Expulsions of this kind have taken place in the Italian syndicalist federation. In the Netherlands, too, the syndicalists threaten the Communists with scorpions, and anarcho-syndicalist groups in other countries are following their example.⁵ All these actions seek to achieve the separation of the trade-union movement from the political movement. They aim to tear away revolutionary unions from the RILU and construct their own little International off to one side. In this regard, the anarchist groups are carrying out the directives of their international conference, which took place in December 1921 and called for the constitution of a new, independent, self-sufficient, revolutionary-syndicalist International. An attempt in this direction was made last June, and the initiators succeeded in pulling together representatives of a few organisations.⁶ To characterise this new International, it is enough to point out that it is led by the German localists, who are typical Tolstoyans and political vegetarians.

5. Lozovsky draws here on a biblical passage (1 Kings 12:11): 'My father has disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions'.

6. A conference of anarcho-syndicalist unions in Berlin in June 1922 founded the International Workers' Association, which claimed more than a million adherents in close to twenty countries. Its strongest components were the CNT in Spain (which did not affiliate until 1923) and the USI in Italy, each with half a million or more members. Membership of French and German affiliates was about 100,000.

Why is it that the struggle of the anarchists against the Communist International and the RILU is growing more acute? In the initial period after the October Revolution, the anarchist and especially the anarcho-syndicalist organisations were actually affiliated to the Communist International. The National Workers' Confederation of Spain [CNT] joined, as did the syndicalist federation in Italy, and so forth. Why are these groups now leaving not only the Communist International but the RILU as well?

The anarchists' stand against the Communist International, the RILU, and the Russian Revolution is explained by the overall situation of the international workers' movement. The anarchist attacks are only a reflection of those carried out by international capitalism and by Amsterdam. They are a link in the same chain. Despite their revolutionary phraseology, the anarchists have always been imbued with petty-bourgeois ideas. And, when bourgeois society gathered together its forces for the struggle against Communism, and a united front took shape of all forces that saw the bourgeois state as a defence against the Communist danger, it was natural for the anarchists to take their appropriate place in this front.

They often explain their attacks upon the Communist International and the RILU by pointing to the conditions in which anarchists find themselves in Soviet Russia, and to their principled opposition to any state and any dictatorship. But what concerns us is not what the anarchists say but what they do. And here is what they do. As the Communist movement was going through its most difficult days, when the state apparatus of international capitalism assailed it with all of its brute force and severity, when the entire powerful apparatus of the old trade unions was brought to bear against Communism and the Communist movement, along came the anarchists with their anti-Communist programme and their struggle for the supposed independence of the trade-union movement.

An anarcho-reformist front was created, which fell into line with the bourgeois front. The anti-Communist alliance found its culmination in anarchist petty-bourgeois demagoguery. Anarchism stood revealed here as an ally of reformism. And that is hardly astonishing, for they are simply two sides of the same petty-bourgeois coin.

The anarchists and the revolutionary syndicalists are especially fond of stressing the trade unions' neutrality with regard to political parties. They define this as their particular contribution and as a characteristic of the revolutionary-syndicalist trade-union movement. Rather than speaking of neutrality, they use the term 'independence', which is basically the same thing.⁷

7. The resolution of the founding conference of the RILU in July 1921 that established organisational ties with the Comintern had met with strong objections from

What is neutralism? It is a current in the trade-union movement that advances the concept that all political parties should be treated in exactly the same way, that is, complete and absolute independence of the trade-union movement from politics. Of course, politics is the *bête noire* of the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, who confuse politics with parliamentarism and political activity; political struggle with parliamentary elections and the associated commerce in votes. Neutralism is the slogan of the most extreme reformists and also of the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists.

One of the most respected leaders of the American labour movement, John Mitchell, brought this neutralism into sharp relief in his book, *Organized Labor*. He advanced the notion that the modern social order is comprised of three elements: capital, labour, and society. What this worthy leader meant by 'society' is hard to guess – probably the liberal social reformers, with whom he took part in various leagues and associations whose goal is to chat about social legislation and about improving the conditions of the working class. The independence and neutrality of this gentleman can be gauged by the fact that when he died, he left an estate of no less than half a million dollars. He earned all that as a leader of the American trade-union movement. This neutralism is the worst form of bourgeois influence on the proletariat and of ideological subordination of proletarian interests to those of the ruling classes.

The theory of independence is built essentially on the same foundations. True, it sets goals to which the neutralist politicians are opposed. The independence preached by the anarcho-syndicalists and anarchists maintains that the trade-union movement is exclusive, reigning over all other expressions of the workers' movement. It denies not only the political parties' right to leadership of the unions but their very right to existence. This ideology of independence found particular expression during the past year in the polemic of the anarcho-syndicalists of all stripes against the RILU. The French, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, and American syndicalists, whose pretensions are inversely proportional to their specific weight in the workers' movement, constantly play themselves off against the Communist parties, declaring that the trade unions can carry out the revolution on their own and will harvest the fruits of this victory. To this, Communists can answer, 'Please, demonstrate the correctness of your theory through facts.' Particularly in the present time of severe struggles, we are justified in asking of leaders of the workers' movement that they not only issue declarations and make promises to carry out a

many revolutionary syndicalists, who insisted on the principle of trade-union 'independence'. The dispute was resolved at the second RILU congress in November 1922, which rescinded the 1921 resolution. See Carr 1966, 3, pp. 397–8, 455–6 and Tosstorff 2004, pp. 501–29.

revolution, but also that they translate these promises into reality. The best theory is one that has been confirmed by reality. Our Communist theory has been confirmed not only by the Russian Revolution but by others as well.

The anarchist and syndicalist theory has not been confirmed in this way. On the contrary, to the degree that anarchism was actively involved in the Russian Revolution, it was the vehicle of a petty-bourgeois anti-proletarian ideology. The Makhno movement was the highest expression of anarchism at war, and it provided proof that anarchism in practice is an anti-proletarian petty-bourgeois force that stands allied with the *kulaks* [peasant exploiters]. Thus, our attitude to the anti-Communist theory of independence is more than sceptical and suspicious. We view this theory as highly dangerous and damaging for the workers' movement of the country where it exerts influence and gains predominance.

Separating politics and economics off into two parallel and self-sufficient segments basically means cutting the unified proletarian workers' movement into two halves. The workers' movement can take different forms. Depending on the conditions, on place and time, on the political situation, and on the relationship of forces, this or that form and method of struggle may work better than others. But one thing is fully clear: the moment we separate the political and economic workers' movement from each other or, even worse, counterpose them, we are tearing apart what becomes organically linked in the process of struggle. We are weakening the proletariat and depriving it of any chance for a successful struggle against the superbly united and excellently organised class enemy.

The bourgeoisie takes no note of such theories. It does not separate politics from the economy. It is superbly capable of utilising everything created by its apparatus. State power, literature, science, art, the Church, and the employers' economic organisations – all of this forms a solid, unified alliance, always blocking the efforts of the proletariat for liberation from the capitalist yoke. The programme of the Communist Party of Russia states that politics is concentrated economics. This seems to me to be the most expressive and accurate formulation of the interrelationship between politics and economics. By politics, we Communists mean the working-class movement for liberation and working-class opposition to bourgeois society as a whole. Sharpening this antagonism, deepening the gulf between the classes, unifying the proletariat to achieve its goals, achieving a correct relationship among the masses in their millions – all this activity, taken as a whole, constitutes *politics*. Only those whose thinking is backward can confuse political struggle with parliamentarism, which is one of the numerous varieties of proletarian political activity.

The fact that these theories of neutralism and independence counterpose politics and economics expresses the desire of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists to bring the Communist Party into conflict with the trade unions and to conduct the struggle against the Communist Party with the support of non-party organisations. The essence of the theory of independence is directed not only against the party but against communism. For communism is not incorporeal. It cannot exist outside of time and place and without a specific organisation. It exists only to the extent that a vehicle for communism is present. Of course, the working class as a whole constitutes such a vehicle, but the working masses whose instincts are communist embody their communist consciousness in a specific organisation, the Communist party. That is why efforts to counterpose the trade unions to the Communist parties and to provoke a struggle between them, under the banner of independence, are directed not only against the party as such but also against communism, the working class, and the social revolution.

In the struggle against 'politics', the anarcho-syndicalists counterpose communism to syndicalism. But what is syndicalism? The word is used to refer above all to the entire trade-union movement, taken as a whole – that is, the sum total of the unions of a given country.⁸ In that sense, counterposing syndicalism and communism loses all meaning, since to the extent that the trade unions encompass all organised workers, they also include their Communist component. To counterpose the trade unions to the Communist party means counterposing the Communist workers to themselves.

Clearly, the term syndicalism has another meaning. In fact, syndicalism refers to a specific ideological current within the workers' movement and the trade unions. This current's distinctive feature is that it is based above all on the trade unions. But what are the basic features of syndicalism? In the form that its different branches have taken over the course of the last two decades, syndicalism is the theory that the trade-union movement has priority over other forms of the workers' movement.

Thus we see that underlying syndicalism is an anarchist, anti-party, and anti-political tendency. Syndicalism holds that the working class creates its vanguard in the unions, and will accomplish its tasks through the unions. Instructive in this regard is the polemic that arose between syndicalists and Communists in France over the resolution on the trade-union movement adopted by the Communist Party's Marseilles Convention.⁹ When the

8. Lozovsky is referring to the meaning of *syndicalisme* and its equivalents in French and other Latin languages.

9. The Marseilles Convention was held 25–30 December 1921. See Heckert's comments on the trade-union discussion at this convention, p. 571.

convention very cautiously expressed the concept that the Communist party is the vanguard of the proletariat, this met with sharp condemnation from the syndicalists.

As a current within the trade unions, syndicalism strives to elaborate its own programme, tactics, and distinctive forms and methods of struggle, and to unite the working masses in class action. Communism sets itself the same goal. So what we have in countries with a syndicalist workers' movement is not an opposition between trade unions and a party, however vehemently this may be asserted by the different shadings of syndicalism. Rather, we have fundamentally an opposition between two parties, one called Communist and the other syndicalist. Of course, the syndicalists may well be horrified by the mere idea that they essentially represent a party, because, from their point of view, the party is something extremely negative. In this sense, they are successors to the anarchists.

This negative conception of the party arose in these countries out of the corrupt parliamentary traditions and the extreme flexibility of the consciences and backbones of the leaders, not only those of bourgeois but of the so-called socialist movement in the West European countries. Such reformist conduct and parliamentary cretinism provides the seedbed for this confusion of politics with vote trading. Unfortunately, the syndicalists do not recognise the real source and roots of their theory. They therefore see syndicalism as something that has grown up organically from the proletarian mass movement, while the Communist movement, in their eyes, has been implanted artificially, something dragged in from outside by some suspicious 'politicians', who are obviously hostile to the working class as a whole.

As an ideological movement and in its healthy and most realistic form, syndicalism is close to Communism in many ways. It not only sets the same goals – overthrow of capitalism, and so on – but also proposes the same principal method, namely the dictatorship of the proletariat. What mutual relations ought to be established between syndicalists and Communists?

Above all, as previously mentioned, syndicalism does not represent a unified current. Instead, several currents can be distinguished within it. The claim of syndicalism to constitute an alternative to Communism is therefore all the stranger. First, we have the anarcho-syndicalists, who are practically indistinguishable from the anarchists. Then, there are the revolutionary syndicalists, who have already succeeded in differentiating themselves somewhat from anarchism. And, finally, there are the communist syndicalists, who are closer to Communism. Syndicalism is thus not something finished, as if poured into a mould, but, rather, the sum of a whole number of ideological currents located between anarchism and Communism.

This naturally clarifies the Communists' tasks in countries where there is a revolutionary-syndicalist trade-union movement. Above all, the Communists must take the initiative for unity of the left wing of the workers' movement. The communist syndicalists stand closest to us. This is the current within syndicalism today that has actually learned a great deal from the War and the Russian Revolution. They understand what the dictatorship of the proletariat is and they grasp that it is necessary and inevitable during the transitional period. They approach it not from the point of view of an abstract anarchist booklet on the problems of revolution, but from that of experience, as people who really want to apprentice themselves to real life. The most typical of this is the Workers' Life [*La Vie ouvrière*] group in France, which we can term a non-party Communist group. Its entire character is Communist, and it includes quite a few members of the Communist Party. But there is no scope for its activity in the framework of the Communist Party. And, in France, that is certainly not surprising, because the Communist Party of France is not an organisation that carries political authority in the eyes of all revolutionary workers of the country. The Party is still in its formative period. It is marked by ideological differences of opinion and is not yet unified and solid enough to establish dominance over the mass movement in France, although the objective conditions for a serious Communist party are exceptionally favourable.

There is not the slightest doubt that Communism and syndicalism represent two different theories, two different ways of approaching the problems of the workers' movement and the methods of carrying out the tasks before the working class. And, to the degree that we have differences of opinion with those with syndicalist views, Communists must carry out a determined ideological struggle against all anti-Communist tendencies of syndicalism. Communists cannot, in any way, condone a theory and practice that leads to the denial of political parties, regardless of who it is that defends and implements this view. That is why a systematic, stubborn, and methodical ideological struggle is necessary against every anarchist tendency that now exists in the workers' movement. But that must not, in any way, hinder a convergence in action, common activity, and close collaboration between Communists and syndicalists in the struggle not only against the capitalist offensive but also against reformism.

How can this be achieved? Only through revolutionary activity. The weaker and clumsier the Communist party is politically, the stronger and more aggressive is syndicalism. Where the Communist party has the leadership in every event, where it seizes the initiative at the right moment, where it succeeds in discovering the weak points of our class enemy and striking out against them in time – in such conditions, even where syndicalists represent a

real force, they will be compelled to go together with the Communists. On the other hand, where the party is constantly torn by inner frictions, where it is not sure of itself as a Communist current, where it fears to take the initiative, where it is constantly looking to see what others are saying about it – in such conditions, normal mutual relations between Communists and syndicalists will not be possible. Indeed, the Communists will themselves begin to elaborate a theory of independence, making a virtue of necessity.

For Communists, the problem of mutual relations between trade unions and parties is really no problem at all. The Communists' tasks consist of imbuing all workers' organisations with a consistent Communist spirit and will. The Communist party only has a reason for being when it carries out this task methodically and systematically. A party is really and truly Communist only if it carries out the winning over of the trade unions not only in theory but in practice, since that is a precondition for the social revolution.

The Fourth Congress does not need to concern itself with the theoretical side of this question, because that was resolved long ago. Nonetheless, we must take up this question again, not to establish new principles, but to see how our fine old principles are being put into effect. And, here, we must say frankly that many Communists are doing this extremely poorly.

Above all, the mutual relations between the party and the unions cannot be entirely similar in all countries. Although we have theoretical agreement on this question, it is nonetheless obvious to all that, in practice, there is an extraordinary diversity in this area. The mutual relations between the party and the trade unions change depending on the nature of the workers' movement, the special features of its environment, the entire political and social situation, the traditions, the role played by the socialist parties in the country in question, and much more.

In countries with an old labour-union movement and new Communist parties, such as Britain and the United States, the relationship between the party and the unions is much different than in countries that have an old political movement and a young union movement (Russia and other countries). We have correctly set our goal as winning all the unions to Communism, imbuing them with a Communist spirit, and striving to have them follow Communist policy. But the pursuit of this goal does not imply that it can be achieved in every country all at once, let alone with the same means.

Take Britain, for example. This country has a mighty trade-union movement whose traditions have long been hostile to politics and socialism, and a small Communist party with a few thousand members. In this case, we cannot really speak of mutual relations between the unions and the party in the true sense of the term. The trade unions are hostile to the party. In such a country,

the mutual relationship must run not between the party and the unions in general but between the party and a segment – the revolutionary unions – as well as the opposition that is arising inside the unions, based on the development of the class struggle.

The tasks in each country are vastly different. Clearly, it would be quite harmful if, in Britain, the Party limited its attention to its small party cells. Here, the effort must be made to create a broad oppositional movement within the unions. Our Communist groups must be centres around which the oppositional forces gather and crystallise. The entire opposition must be called into being and given form, with all its parts gathered together. With the growth of this opposition, the Communist Party itself will grow. By its very nature, the opposition is diverse, made up of differing forces. Mutual relations between the Party and the opposition must therefore be established in a fashion that ensures the Communists will not be charged with seeking to mechanically subordinate the entire oppositional movement to themselves. Under these circumstances, the goal of winning the working masses for Communism must be achieved with the greatest care, clarity, and perseverance.

In the United States, our task is essentially similar. We have a small Communist party there and a rather large oppositional trade-union movement, which has found its expression in the Trade-Union Educational League.¹⁰ What is then the task of Communists in the United States? They must carry out their work in the trade-union movement on the basis of this league's programme. And what is this programme? That of the Red International of Labour Unions. Of course, it is not formulated as clearly and definitely as that of the Communist International. The Trade-Union Educational League's programme is not as expressive, definite, and pointed as that of the Communist Party of the United States. It cannot have the same character, because it unites the entire opposition.

Our task in the United States is to unite the entire opposition to Gompers. And the Party must display the greatest patience toward the League, all the more given that the League has achieved such tremendous organisational and educational gains in a very short time. Our task in the United States consists of supporting the League in the development of its forces. We should call on all sympathisers of communism to rally actively around the League. We should seek to bring all our resources into play to support its struggle against the Gompers ideology that infects the American workers' movement.

10. The Trade-Union Educational League (TUEL) was founded by W.Z. Foster in November 1920 to unite revolutionary forces working in the American Federation of Labor. When Foster joined the CP in 1921, the RILU adopted the TUEL as its US section.

Of course, the Party faces the question of how to gain influence. Influence in the labour movement is not gained through resolutions, or by some fortunate decisions of the central committee, but through the work that Communists carry out in their respective labour organisations. That is why the question of supervising the League's activity must be raised as little as possible – or not at all. That kind of talk leads to a mechanical control or, more accurately, to interfering mechanically in work that basically the Party can neither carry out nor accomplish. Winning influence in the unions is a task primarily for the party organisation. Above all, we must build a solid and serious political party. We must draw to our organisation as many workers as possible from different branches of the workers' movement. Party members must be welded together through inner discipline. If this is done, our influence in the trade unions will grow uninterruptedly.

The party's influence in the trade unions is directly proportional to its work among the masses and the response it receives there. The task here is to consolidate this influence organisationally. It must be stressed that our organisational work in the unions always lags behind our political work. Germany provides the best example of this. In Germany, we have a very strong Communist movement, and the Communist Party has influence over, roughly speaking, a third of the members of Amsterdam trade unions. But, if you try to count our forces, in organisational terms, you will immediately see that this powerful mass is very weak in its organisational links. The masses following us do not have sufficient cohesion among themselves. We have not been able to consolidate our political successes organisationally.

This contrast between the rapid growth of our political influence and the extremely slow organisational consolidation of this growth of revolutionary ideas stands as a threatening and dangerous aspect of the German workers' movement. It means that, at certain moments of intense political struggle, the Party can find itself in a situation where it does not possess the number of organisational points of support that is required to draw together all the revolutionary energy and lead it with greater effectiveness.

Of course, the question of party-union relations has been and is posed differently in Germany from in Britain or the United States. In Germany, the issue has come to a head with regard to the mutual relations between the Party and the Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers [UHK]. As you know, the UHK was established some time ago on the initiative of the Spartacists.¹¹

11. The Union der Hand- und Kopfarbeiter (UHK) was formed in September 1921 through the fusion of three revolutionary unions, with a combined membership of about one hundred thousand, concentrated in the Ruhr district. It included both Communist and non-Communist currents. Some of its components dated back to 1919, when the German Communists, then known as Spartacists, had been favourable to

Later, the Communist Party changed its policy toward the trade unions, and the UHK, which embraces 150,000 workers, is viewed by many Communist trade unionists in Germany as a hindrance to the Communist movement in their country.

What we see here is a somewhat abstract approach to a practical question and an incorrect approach to our slogan of winning the trade unions. In the opinion of some Communists, since our policy is not to split the trade unions but to win them over, the UHK has therefore lost all justification for its existence. But that is pure metaphysics. The UHK exists, and given the concrete situation in Germany, it will continue to exist in the coming years. And since it exists, it naturally seeks to increase its membership total. There will never be an organisation that does not try to recruit new members. Otherwise, if recruitment died away, the UHK would soon have no members at all.

The Party must oblige its members to promote Communist politics. All the debates on this question and the entire controversy during recent months should have been fought out on just this basis. But the question was not posed in terms of the need for Communist party members to promote Communist politics. Rather, the focus was on the mutual relations between the Party and the UHK, which made the whole business complicated and unclear. Fortunately, the recent congress of the Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers largely resolved the question. The incorrect viewpoint had originated in the attempt to work exclusively in the old trade unions and the desire to put an end to all independent organisations, whatever the cost.

In Italy, the trade-union movement is closely linked with the political movement. The example of the syndicalist movement proves nothing, since this organisation does not have the slightest influence in the workers' movement. The most significant forces are the trade-union federation [CGL] and the Communist Party. As regards Italy, any discussion of mutual relations between the Party and the trade unions is superfluous and redundant.¹²

In France, the question of mutual relations between the Party and the trade unions has a very particular character. Here, we have an old, syndicalist union movement and a young Communist party, with the Party advocating

building independent revolutionary unions as an alternative to the ADGB. It was not until its October 1919 Heidelberg Congress that the KPD adopted a policy of working in ADGB-unions. After the workers' defeat in October 1923, the UHK declined rapidly, and it merged into the ADGB in 1925.

12. Lozovsky appears to be referring to the close historical relations between the CGL and the Italian SP, which contrasted to the traditional separation between party and union in France. However, the working relations between the Italian party and union leaderships had disintegrated since 1920, as a result of the CGL leaders' rightist course and, just before the Fourth Congress, their attempt to reach a *modus vivendi* with Italy's new Fascist rulers.

autonomy and independence of the unions no less passionately than the syndicalists themselves. As you know, the French syndicalists took a particularly decisive stand against the resolutions of the first RILU congress [1921], which established a link between the two Internationals and resolved that the revolutionary trade unions and the Communist parties in every country should work together in all campaigns, whether advancing or retreating. It is significant that this resolution met with resistance not only among the syndicalists but also inside the Communist Party. Members of the Communist Party posed the need for independence and autonomy with particular sharpness, referring mainly to the traditions of the French workers' movement.

If we are to speak of traditions, we must say that this is a bad one. It arose because of the opportunism of the Socialist Party of France, which was understandable and natural during the period in which this party was reformist. At that time, independence from this party signified simply independence from opportunism and reformism. Every Communist has to struggle for that kind of independence. But now we have a Communist party, which should not be afflicted with all the illnesses of its Socialist predecessors. The theory of independence has therefore lost its meaning. Historical tradition is quite irrelevant here.

The Amiens Charter was useful in 1906 as a means of countering an opportunist party suffering from parliamentary cretinism.¹³ Then it was timely. But to apply the Amiens programme to all countries, to attribute to it an international importance without considering the transformation carried out by the Russian Revolution and the Communist International, leads unavoidably to dead formulae that ignore reality. You run the danger of spending your whole life inside these formulae.

In this regard, France is a land of marvels. The Communist Party there demands [union] independence from the Party. Together with the syndicalists, the Communists put through a resolution in the leading committee of the CGTU [United General Confederation of Labour] that brands the expulsion of a trade-union leader from the Party as a hostile action toward the CGTU.

Strictly speaking, in France we have two parties. Not two Communist parties, one of the Left and one of the Centre, but, rather, one party called the French Section of the Communist International, and one that is known as syndicalist. We should not hide the situation: the syndicalists are a party that does not call itself a party. In the Communist Party, there are four tendencies, more or less; in the syndicalist party, there are four or five.

13. Adopted by the CGT in 1906, the Amiens Charter was a programmatic platform for revolutionary syndicalism. See: <www.marxists.org/history/france/cgt/charter-amiens.htm>.

If you tell the anarcho-syndicalists that they constitute a party, they rear up on their hind legs, astonished. 'Us, a party? Certainly not. We are just workers.' As the syndicalists see things, parties are formed by forces that are outside the proletariat, while their party has developed organically within the organised workers' movement.

What, then, characterises the Communist Party of France, and particularly its relationship to the trade-union movement? To shed light on this question, we will provide a few examples.

Above all, we want to say what characterises the Communist party. Each of its members is conscious of the need to work inside the proletariat, to establish an organic link between the party and the class,¹⁴ and is aware that the party is the vanguard of the workers' movement. The syndicalists can think what they will of this. But, if you belong to the party, you adhere to this goal and none other.

Before the Paris Convention of the Communist Party of France, there was a very interesting debate on the theses proposed by Comrade Rosmer. A bloc against these theses was formed by some of our friends who belong to the Communist International and the anarcho-syndicalists, who also opposed these theses.¹⁵ When we see a bloc between Communists and people who are outside the Communist party, this is a symptom of a disease that must be cured at all costs. Some members of the French Communist Party were so alarmed by these theses that, after they had been rejected by the Central Committee, *L'Internationale* wrote, 'The Central Committee has saved the Party, because the proposed theses were extremely dangerous.' And, after the convention, the *Bulletin communiste* published an article by the Party's administrative secretary, Comrade Soutif, who recounted the history of these theses in terms that deserve to be repeated here:

At one point the Lefts presented a resolution to the Central Committee that proposed a completely unacceptable trade-union policy. The resolution read, 'The Communist Party holds that it provides the most precise expression of the aspirations of the working class and is in the best position to achieve its liberation.'¹⁶

14. The concept of an 'organic link' between the RILU and the Comintern was the nub of objections by French revolutionary syndicalists at the first RILU congress in July 1921. See Rosmer 1971, p. 136.

15. Rosmer's theses on the trade unions were amended and approved by a parity committee of representatives of the French CP's Left and Centre in September 1922, as part of an ECCI-sponsored effort to forge a united leadership. In early October, however, the unity process disintegrated, and Rosmer's text was sharply attacked by leaders of the Centre. Wohl 1966, pp. 287–90.

16. See 'Le Congrès national et la crise du parti', in *Bulletin communiste*, 43, 19–26 October 1922.

A Communist, who is administrative director of the French Party, protests because a resolution holds that the Communist Party best expresses the aspirations of the working class. Syndicalists may well protest in these terms; that is their right. We can debate with these comrades. But a protest of this kind by a member of a Communist Party, its director no less, is incomprehensible to us. If the party does not express the workers' strivings, what does it do? Busy itself with parliamentary activity and the writing of newspaper articles? The Communist International has a different view of the party's tasks.

Every party member must be firmly convinced that his party expresses the strivings of the working class better than any other party. Without this conviction, we will achieve nothing; we will be compelled to remain forever passive. A party that does not have this firm conviction is no Communist party. And, if even the party's secretary shrinks back from this concept, clearly the party is sick.

Soutif goes on to say:

It is particularly significant that these theses claim the right to form a sort of communist CGT within the CGTU.

That is incorrect. The resolution says that Communists must join forces not only on a geographical basis, in sections and districts, but also in [union] federations, and so forth.

There are members of the Communist Party of France who, when they begin working in the trade unions, leave their membership book at the door. When they join a union, they forget that they are Communists. At their party meetings they are Communists, but outside the meetings they reserve the right to do whatever they please, and they sometimes act as the most eager supporters of trade-union independence and autonomy.

The Communist International does not aim to subordinate the unions. A Communist party that declared it wished to subordinate the unions to itself would show it had not the slightest idea of the Communist International's policies. But the Communist party must work towards the goal that all its members remain Communist in all their activity. We must seek to fill the trade-union movement with a Communist spirit and to ensure that every party member who belongs to a union acts as a member of the Communist party. A Communist party is not created by calling up the troops. No one joins because they are told to do so. You join willingly, but in so doing you assume obligations that are voluntary but also firm. It is quite impermissible for a party member to say that we are entirely independent in our trade-union policy.

Now, here is another clear example. In the most recently received issue of *Lutte des classes* [*Class Struggle*], there is an article, or more precisely a declara-

tion, signed by Comrades Monatte, Chambelland, [Yvonne] Orlianges, Charbit, and others.¹⁷ Among these six comrades, only Monatte is not a member of the Communist Party. In the declaration, we read:

Some of us are party members; some are not. But we are all revolutionary syndicalists, that is, we assign to the trade unions the main role in the revolutionary struggle for liberation of the proletariat. The Party's role should be one of support, not leadership.

It must be asked why these revolutionary syndicalists are members of the Party. We completely fail to understand why party members who know why they are in the Party and cannot be accused of seeking seats in parliament would stay in this party, if it is assigned only a secondary role. This question must be answered historically. The Communist Party of France is heterogeneous in composition. It is formed from a variety of ideological currents. Each current's old ideology came with it into the Party and struck roots there.

In the theses proposed to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, there is a point that reads as follows:

If, in a given country, there is both a genuinely revolutionary-syndicalist movement and also a party that has insufficient forces and influence in the trade-union movement, clearly, the mutual relationship of party and trade unions must be shaped within the framework of this relationship of forces.¹⁸

Such a relationship must be established because without a working partnership between the trade-union and Communist Internationals, the revolutionary workers' movement will be overwhelmed by the capitalist offensive.

Be that as it may, in France we have, first, a Communist party that itself stands for the autonomy and independence of the trade unions, and, second, trade unions that contend even more energetically for this autonomy and independence. The Communist International is, of course, convinced that there is no foundation whatsoever for the anarcho-syndicalist claim that the trade unions will make the revolution by themselves. We also doubt the feasibility of the slogan, 'All Power to the Trade Unions'. But, in each country, the relations between the political party and the union are what the Communist

17. The declaration by Monatte et al., published 9 November 1922 in *Bulletin communiste*, stated that the signatories 'attribute to the trade unions an essential role in the revolutionary struggle for proletarian emancipation, and assign to the party a supportive rather than directing role'. Maitron 1964–97, 22, p. 56. See Trotsky's comments, p. 972.

18. The quotation is similar to Point 20 in final version of the trade-union theses. See p. 1203.

party deserves. The real struggle, the intensification of antagonisms in France, and the bitter offensive of the bourgeoisie – all this is forcing the French workers, not only syndicalists but Communists as well, to change their outlook regarding party-union relations. However much they may strive to establish that their mutual relationships are based on autonomy, life will teach them and show them that victory is found not under the banner of ‘trade-union autonomy and independence’ but through infusing every expression of the workers’ movement with a unified spirit, a unified Communist will.

The sharper the struggle between the revolutionary workers and the bourgeoisie, the clearer becomes the connection and unity between reformism and modern bourgeois society. I have already spoken of the fact that the intensity of the Amsterdammers’ assault on revolutionary trade unions has grown in pace with the capitalist offensive. This tie becomes all the more plain with regard to the question of trade-union unity. We are not the only ones interested in this question. We know that the trade-union movement will achieve, if slowly, an understanding of the need for struggle against capitalist rule. The bourgeoisie’s aggressive actions can only achieve success if the trade unions are conclusively defeated or broken apart into several hostile segments. The salvation of the bourgeoisie lies in disorganising the workers’ movement, subverting it, and tearing to pieces the organisations created in struggle. The unity of the trade-union movement thus threatens capitalist rule. The pressure of communism is forcing these mighty reformist organisations to shift to the left, and the more that they do so, the greater the prospects for a working-class victory. It is therefore quite logical that the bourgeoisie wants the trade unions to split, to break into splinters, so as then to smash them one by one as they feud among themselves.

It must be noted that the Amsterdammers are chasing after their masters here. The past year was particularly rich in expulsions of revolutionary trade unions. Thus, as you know, the split in the French CGT took place, by and large, under the ‘ideological’ influence of the French bourgeoisie and its agents. It is no less well known that the splitting activity of the Amsterdam supporters in Czechoslovakia took place at a time of overwhelming economic depression and capitalist pressure on the working class. The more difficult the workers’ conditions in Germany, the louder the Amsterdammers shout about the danger on the Left. They openly propose cleansing their ranks in order to banish this danger. Unfortunately, the question has been posed of a split in the international union movement. It is not up to us. It is not the Communists who have called for this split. We have attempted in recent years to struggle inside the trade unions, to lead them along a new path, and to revolutionise the workers’ organisations. But we have always systematically and methodi-

cally advocated winning over the unions, not destroying them. It is not us who placed this split on the agenda.

What are our tasks today? What must the Communists do in face of these grave threats against all the conquests of the working class? Communists must strengthen their work tenfold and oppose this split with all the means at their disposal. We will not permit this split: that must be the slogan of the Communists. We will not permit the split, because it weakens the workers' movement of every country. We will not permit the split, because, at the present moment, it will throw the working class back many years, weakening its capacity for resistance and giving the employers a new weapon against the working class, a new opening to consolidate their rule. We will not allow a split. That should be not just a slogan but the focus of all our practical activity.

Every step by the Communists in the trade unions must focus on the creation and consolidation of unity of our organisations. Where a split has already taken place, and a parallel organisation has been created against our will, the Communists must undertake a most serious and systematic struggle to reunite the movement. The struggle must be waged on two fronts. It must be waged against the reformists, the agents of the bourgeoisie who wish to split the workers' movement at all costs in order to weaken it. And it must also be conducted resolutely and seriously against the so-called lefts, who believe that splitting the trade unions is the salvation of the working class. This radicalism has nothing in common with our revolutionary-Marxist point of view.

In France, we have had radicals who gladly fell for the reformists' provocations. They wanted to waste no time in getting down to a little group of just themselves. We had radicals in Czechoslovakia who believed that the best thing for workers' organisations was to be isolated from other workers' organisations. That is the viewpoint of the leader of the farmworkers' federation, who, a year ago, was doing everything possible to stay outside the unified trade-union movement of Czechoslovakia.¹⁹ Our slogan is for a unified trade-union movement, and Communists therefore must not pull their members out of the reformist unions. For if we pull them out and form them up into revolutionary trade unions, we cannot have the necessary influence on the reformist organisations and force them into unity with the revolutionary organisations. In such cases, the Communists must turn their earnest attention toward applying the united-front tactic.

19. Beginning in November 1920, the agricultural workers' union, headed by Václav Bolen, refused to pay dues to the Social Democrat-led trade-union federation. Bolen persisted in this stance, despite strong objections of the Communist leadership, causing his union to be excluded from the federation's congress in November 1921. See report on Czechoslovak CP, p. 1061.

It is now obvious that the capitalist attack on the most elementary conquests of the working class cannot be beaten off without an agreement between the parallel trade unions. The Communists must explain to the masses the necessity of such an understanding between the trade unions for common defence to protect wage levels and improve living conditions. The leaders of the parallel trade unions must be compelled to come to an agreement on a common course of action. This must become the programme of practical action for the Communist party itself. We must not let ourselves be confused by the attacks of the reformists or the anarcho-syndicalists, who display more zeal than understanding, or even by attacks from Communists. This policy must be carried out systematically with tremendous effort and tenacity. It will lead in action, in practice, to the unification of the parallel, rival organisations.

The struggle for a united front of the trade-union movement is the most important issue before the Communist parties of every country. We know why the reformists want to split the trade-union movement. They want not only to free themselves from ongoing criticism and revolutionary ferment but also, through the split, to make social revolution itself impossible.

Once they had decided never to accept being placed in a minority, the Amsterdam forces logically had to proceed to a split of the trade-union movement all around the world. That is all the more necessary for them as the confidence of workers in their reformist promises diminishes day by day. Every day the capitalist offensive drives a new nail in the coffin of international reformism, whose strength was derived from the bourgeoisie's concessions. Even then, the bourgeoisie gave way only because it feared the revolutionary movement, but, at least in the immediate postwar period, the reformists, playing a mediating role, were able to refer the workers to successes of their policy. The ordinary worker did not notice that these reforms were granted not because of reformist policies but despite them. The reformist acts of the bourgeoisie went hand in hand with a rise in revolutionary discontent and revolutionary outbreaks.

As the revolutionary tide receded, the bourgeoisie went over from defence to attack. Today, it is clear to the most ordinary worker that reformism is bankrupt. It has been shown to be powerless to maintain what was achieved in the first postwar years. The International Labour Office and the League of Nations and all the splendid promises of the Versailles Peace Treaty – all of them now appear in their true and naked form.

Reformism in its decline, sensing that its downfall is near, aims, at all costs, to disorganise the working class to such an extent that it is unable to replace the collapsing bourgeoisie. In response to the systematic split of the trade-union movement, we – Communists as a whole and each Communist party – must declare that we will take every measure to prevent the split.

Day by day it becomes more difficult to block the split. The Amsterdam forces, having decided to liberate themselves from the workers, are taking all measures necessary towards this end. Expulsion of Communists has become an everyday, normal occurrence. And the Communist International, along with the individual Communist parties, must decide how these expulsions are to be resisted.

What are the Amsterdamers aiming at with these expulsions? They want to isolate the Communist leaders from a working class that is sympathetic to communism. They want to cut off the best revolutionary forces from the working masses, in order to maintain Amsterdam's ideological and organisational influence on the union membership. Clearly, the Communist International cannot accept a policy of isolating Communists from the workers' movement. Communists are for unity, but they cannot sacrifice communism on the altar of that unity. And the immediate task is to carefully weigh a series of serious, practical countermeasures against this epidemic of expulsions.

As you know, the expulsions are aimed above all at the leaders. In Germany, they use a system of expelling all Communists who have been elected to union posts. In Czechoslovakia, it is more straightforward: the labour confederation has ordered the expulsion of the chemical and woodworkers' federations, in which a total of 110,000 workers are organised. Each country has its own method of persecuting Communists. The Communist parties must therefore develop their own methods of struggle against the reformists' destruction of the unions.

Nonetheless, there are some general questions that apply to every country. Above all, it must be stressed that our Communist parties are not making sufficient use of the constitutional means of struggle against the expulsions. All union statutes talk of the expulsion of members for specific offences. But, as far as I know, the statutes do not provide for the expulsion of Communists merely because they are Communists. Yet, in a number of cases, expulsions have taken place and elected union staffers have been refused certification solely for this reason. Is it possible to wage a struggle on the basis of the union statutes? It seems to us that such a struggle is possible in many countries.

The trade-union statutes offer ample opportunity for such a struggle. If we make reference only to our formal rights, this will make not the slightest impression on the Amsterdamers. We would be naïve in the extreme to imagine that for a moment. And utilisation of the legal rights enjoyed by every union member should not be understood in this sense. Extensive agitation and propaganda should be developed around the expulsions question among the union members, at every general meeting, every delegates' meeting, wherever the workers gather from the branch of industry where expulsions have taken place. In some countries, our comrades limit themselves to one

or two newspaper articles and then drop the matter. In reality, the expulsion from the union of even a single Communist must touch off ongoing political agitation among the members of this union in favour of readmission. A broad campaign must be carried out in the factories against the expulsions. It is always possible to raise the issue of expulsions. Especially now, when the capitalist offensive has created a very critical situation for the entire working class, every worker understands that these expulsions have an unambiguously traitorous character.

The task of Communist agitation and propaganda is to reveal the true cause of these expulsions and make these hidden motivations clear to every worker. The trade-union bureaucrats should not be able to get away with such things unpunished. It must be made plain to them that such an incident will be the object of constant accusations against them, not for a few days but for years. Only then will they think twice before deciding to exclude or expel the Communists from the unions.

There is more involved. Say, for example, a given local union elects its executive, and the central leadership then refuses certification. There have been cases like this in Germany. What should be done then? New elections? But the new elections will lead to the same political result. Usually, when certification is denied, the elected members are also expelled. So what should we do? Should we limit ourselves here as well to agitation, or should we try to take matters further? Obviously, we cannot limit ourselves here to a mere protest. When a union local has elected Communists, and the elections have been conducted according to the statutes, expulsion or non-certification is a shameless denial of the members' elementary democratic rights. Assuming that the link between the members and their elected leaders is not accidental – that is, Communists were elected because they are Communists – the local must act to save its union and preserve the unity of the workers' movement by refusing to carry out the orders of the centre. This Amsterdam high-handedness must be called to a halt. Of course, this can lead to a serious conflict. The central leaders may expel the entire local for indiscipline. But no local is obligated to carry out unlawful commands of the centre. We are not for a split, but that by no means implies that we can permit the reformists to refashion the union as they see fit.

However much we may struggle against a split, the reformists' attacks will still always target us. So, Communists have a most important task in ensuring that those expelled from the unions are not left dispersed for a single moment. The task of uniting the expelled is extremely important. There are some Communist comrades who suffer from organisational fetishism and therefore believe that gathering and uniting the expelled contradicts the unity

of the union movement. That point of view is absolutely false and extremely damaging. Those who gather the expelled and unite the forces scattered by reformist politics are actually working to restore the unity that has been destroyed. This creates the preconditions for the reunification of the divided and splintered pieces. Depending on the situation, the conditions of struggle, and the peculiarities of the union in question, different types of organisations will be needed. In Germany, for example, in some cases, forces can be united in leagues of the expelled; in others, in the Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers.

There is no single method or form of struggle against the policy of split. Each step must be individually weighed, and this or that means of action chosen, according to the circumstances. And, if the central leadership expels the elected leadership of a local, the local can withhold payment of membership dues until the matter is finally resolved. In fact, in some cases it has to do this.

That does not mean that we should advocate refusal to pay dues to the union. Every union member should continue to pay their dues, which will remain in the local's treasury, and the amounts set by the statutes are debited, but they are not sent off until the conflict has been resolved. Does this method of struggle apply universally? Of course not. It serves as a method of struggle only in a particular situation, under specific conditions.

In general, this struggle will only lead to positive results if it has a mass character. Of course, every single Communist must for his part do everything possible to prevent these expulsions. But all local and central sympathising organisations must be involved in the protest. What is the right form for the protest by those sympathetic with the expelled? The forms of such protests are very hard to determine. But there is not the slightest doubt that such a protest is necessary, that a common, collective form of action is absolutely required to put an end to the expulsion mania. Whether these organisations should express their protest in an organisational, financial, or some other form is, once again, a concrete question. There is not the slightest doubt that every country will find a hundred practical ways of protesting against the expulsions, depending on local conditions. It is important that the parties not limit themselves to resolutions. They must be fully aware of the central fact that if we do not overcome this tide of expulsions, if we do not succeed in beating back the Amsterdam attacks, then the international workers' movement will be split and the moment of victory over the bourgeoisie will be postponed.

We must note that the expulsions epidemic has gathered force since the unification of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, embracing not

only individual countries but also the international associations of different branches of industry. During the last year, a large number of revolutionary trade unions have been expelled from or refused admission to the corresponding international secretariats. Among those denied admission were the Russian federations of metalworkers, textile workers, clerks, wood workers, leather workers, transport workers, postal and telegraph clerks, and so on. The only federation admitted to its international association was the food workers' union, and, even then, only conditionally.

The revolutionary unions of all countries now find themselves facing the question how they should be unified. Until now, there have been international propaganda committees for each branch of industry. But the systematic expulsion of entire unions from the international associations may compel the revolutionary trade unions to shift from propaganda committees to the creation of bureaus to organise new international federations. This is an immediate question, not one posed in the distant future.

What should Communists do in this arena? We must note that even the few Communists who are members of the international committees of the industry associations conduct themselves rather cold-bloodedly with regard to the expulsion of their revolutionary colleagues. That speaks above all for the fact that not all those who call themselves Communists are Communists in fact. In the near future, the revolutionary unions in every country will have to unite into industry associations in order to fight with united forces for the creation of a unified international association in every branch of industry. And Communists must support in every way possible these organisations, which are carrying out the same work on an international scale as the revolutionary workers in each country.

However harsh the struggle of Communists in the trade-union movement may be, we will nonetheless continue to fight for the slogan raised as early as the Second Congress of the Communist International: not the destruction but the winning of the unions. The years since then have shown this policy to be correct. The theory of destroying the unions flowed from the impatience of many Communists and often also their inability to initiate the struggle against the reformist bureaucracy. Where would the Communist International be now if it had made this viewpoint its own? It would not have been able to carry out even a tenth of the work that it has accomplished inside the trade unions of every country. There, in the stronghold of reformism; there, where the broad masses are – that is where the Communists work without rest. Let reformism persecute us, for the pleasure of the bourgeoisie. Let it try to eradicate the Communist infection at the root. Let it ally with the bourgeoisie in efforts to destroy an opposition that grows ever stronger. All will be in

vain. Communism is not something that came in out of nowhere, not something brought in from the outside. It grows organically out of the womb of the working masses. It is the form of what is ripening and fermenting among the productive masses.

The Communist International is the conscious expression of an unconscious historical process, and it would therefore be insanity to abandon consistent, stubborn, systematic work in the trade unions and to raise the slogan of leaving the mass organisations in order to create our own little dwarf federations. No, it is others who are destroying the unions. It is the bourgeoisie that is destroying them. Reformist policies are destroying and weakening the workers' trade unions. Communists will not involve themselves in that.

There are now very few people who have not learned something from the experiences of recent years. You can still find such eccentric figures in the United States, in Germany, and in some syndicalist currents. They believe that the workers' movement will grow if the Communist sheep are separated from the reformist goats through the formation of their own, pure, dwarf trade unions. In reality the workers' movement as a whole can only lose from that. It will lose, because Communist ferment, class consciousness, energy, and initiative will thus be cut off from their natural surroundings. That would artificially turn off the motor of revolution, dealing a very severe blow at the working class and communism.

From this flows the Communists' slogan of winning the trade unions. But what does that mean? And, here, we come to the weak side of our Communist work in many countries. There are countries where winning the trade unions is understood to mean winning their leading posts. If the secretaries and chairpersons of the trade unions are Communists, many Communist parties relax – until the first shock, the first conflict. And, when the conflict begins, they suddenly see that the masses have not yet been won – because winning the leading posts does not mean winning the trade unions. We have had such experiences in Czechoslovakia, in Germany, and in many other countries. What does such a policy signify? It means that our Communist parties have not yet seen the necessity of transforming a communist mood into communist consciousness. It means that they have not built Communist cells, linked by firm discipline inside a single trade union. It means that they submit the fate of the mass organisations to chance currents or the mood of this or that leader. In many countries, the great Communist work of educating the masses is not carried through. For, what winning the trade unions means is winning the masses, their communist education, communist organising of the most developed layers, so that the entire society in all its ramifications from top to bottom is imbued with a communist spirit and consciousness.

Only when the Communists themselves are organised, only when they themselves are united and know what they want – only then can and should they take the initiative to unite the opposition as a whole. This must not be restricted to the unification of our own ranks. At present, the trade-union movement encompasses tens of millions of people. The trade unions are definitely mass organisations. Therefore the question of reciprocal relations of the party to its cells and of the cells to the opposition as a whole is the most important issue in our Communist trade-union policy.

Our Communist cells and groups are the transmission mechanism, the connecting link between the Communist party and the trade unions. How should these relationships be established? The best way to organise the work among these components can be sketched out in each country through the elaboration of an action programme. During the first period of Communist work in the trade unions, our agitation had a purely abstract character. It consisted of proclaiming Communist slogans and popularising the need for social revolution and struggle against the bourgeoisie. But this agitation did not always arise out of the specific, real needs of the country in question. The confrontation between Moscow and Amsterdam was very often quite abstract in character. That is why we have advanced so slowly and why it has taken so long for us to feel our way into the mass organisations.

Communists have the task of giving their propaganda a more specific and practical form and of adapting it to the needs of the moment. The overall demands must be drawn from the specific conditions of the workers of the given country and the given branch of industry. Propaganda must proceed from the immediate struggle to the overall tasks of the working class, and the consciousness of the masses must be raised by practical struggle. That is the only type of work that can lead us to the necessary result. Proceeding in this fashion is the best way to win the trade unions. Winning the unions consists of bringing them to apply in life our practical programme and to carry out our proposals, even when their leaders do not want to do this. This is the way – the only way – to achieve the winning of the trade unions. Of course, carrying through this policy of penetrating all the workers' organisations, and making our slogans the focus of attention for working people, requires not just living, organised, methodical work but also an effective press. Unfortunately, Communist parties pay too little attention to our trade-union press. The trade-union movement gets little space in our general party publications. Not every party publishes a trade-union paper, and those that exist often suffer from financial difficulties. It is as if the trade-union movement were a minor question, and the trade-union press could be cut back if necessary.

Without the winning of the trade unions, the social revolution is impossible. And, to win the trade unions, we must devote special attention in the coming period to our trade-union press. It must be developed and given a much more practical focus. The agitation and propaganda of our press must be expanded. Our press must take up not only overall political and international questions (although these are extremely important and must absolutely be examined), but also questions of specific, practical struggle, questions of tariffs, of organisational development activity, of social insurance, and so on. In a word, all issues that interest and arouse the working masses must always find a place in the columns of our trade-union press. Our party press as a whole must be aware that without conquering this fortress of the reformists, we will not be able move a single step forward.

But it would not be good for us to confine ourselves solely to agitation and propaganda. Each Communist party must give prominence to determining the organisational results of our political work. Otherwise, the discrepancy between the masses' political development and organisational consolidation can lead to a whole series of defeats. Winning the trade unions is a prolonged, obstinate, systematic, and specific organisational task that does not offer immediate results but assures Communism of a firm proletarian foundation for the construction of the great edifice of communism. And that task, already set by the Second Congress of the Communist International, will be carried through all the more quickly if there is less abstraction and more practical experience in the way the issues before the union movement are posed and in our approach to the winning of the masses and the unions.

Our union work, based on a practical and specific action programme, must aim at uniting the trade-union movement in all countries in the Red International of Labour Unions. It must be said that, between the Third and Fourth Congresses, liquidationist moods regarding the RILU surfaced in some parties. There are people who have the opinion that because we are for the united front, for the unity of the trade-union movement, for the winning rather than the destruction of the trade unions, therefore the RILU must be dissolved. They think the true unity of the trade-union movement would then be achieved and the task of the Communists with regard to winning the trade unions made much easier. This concept was raised in the past by Paul Levi and his supporters in Germany. There is a glimmer of this view among some Communists in other countries as well.

At first, many comrades did not perceive the essence of this liquidationist position. It seemed to many that the difference concerned not principle but merely expediency. But these comrades were wrong. Liquidationist attitudes toward the RILU fundamentally implied liquidation of the Communist

International. What, in fact, does liquidation of the RILU mean? It means abandoning the task of gathering the revolutionary trade-union movement around an international focus; it means leaving the revolutionary forces of the international trade-union movement dispersed and divided. If it were merely a question of the Communist fractions and cells in the trade unions, the matter would be very simple, because Communist forces in the union movement do not need a new International. The Communist International has carried out the task of leading and unifying the Communist movement in every country, and done this well.

The RILU is a unification of the revolutionary trade-union movement in all its many forms, in all its diversity. Communists belong here, as do syndicalists of every tendency, and all left-revolutionary workers, all those who want not class peace but proletarian struggle against capitalism and its agents. That is why liquidating the RILU would substantially narrow the basis of international Communist action, which would logically lead to the liquidation of Communist organisations.

The Expanded Executive plenum put an end to these liquidationist moods.²⁰ Now there is scarcely a party in which liquidationist moods of this type are of any importance. But, even if no liquidationist mood exists, there is still a passive attitude to the RILU. Many Communists believe that the RILU question, while interesting, is secondary. For the Communist workers' movement, that is a very damaging error. The revolutionary trade-union movement must have a focus; otherwise the link between the Communist International and revolutionary workers of every tendency will break. Strengthening the RILU means strengthening the Communist International. The Communist parties work for themselves and the Communist International, and therefore their entire trade-union work, their entire politics in the trade-union movement must keep in mind this very important task of the international Communist movement.

During the brief period of its existence, the RILU has already become very powerful. There is no corner of the world where a stubborn struggle is not being waged for our programme and RILU policies. Its close ties to the Communist International have come under especially heavy fire. For that very reason, the full energy of Communist parties is needed in order to widen and deepen the work to win the trade unions and draw them toward the international centre of the revolutionary trade-union movement. This process does

20. Responding to suggestions within the Comintern that the RILU be disbanded, the Expanded ECCI conference of 24 February–4 March 1922 declared that the united-front tactic did not imply any retreat from the RILU's principles, programme, or policies and 'strongly and categorically condemned' impulses in some parties to dissolve the RILU. Tosstorff 2004, p. 396; Comintern 1922b, p. 150.

not split the trade-union movement but unifies it. We do not propose to tear separate groups of workers loose and affiliate them to the RILU. We propose – and no one can dispute our right to do this – to draw the trade unions toward the programme and policies of the RILU. Not organisational breakaways, not destruction of the trade unions, but ideological conquest of these proletarian organisations and their unification, with a revolutionary programme and policies.

Let me express the firm conviction that we will succeed in overcoming the great difficulties that the Communist International faces in the trade-union field. And, soon, the day will come when all expressions of the workers' movement will come together in a unified alliance, and our magnificent Communist banner will wave over all workers organisations.

Clarke (Britain): Comrades, on behalf of the British delegation, I would like to say that we are in full agreement with the proposed general theses. Now, I will say a few words regarding the Amsterdam leaders and the British trade-union movement. There seems to me to be a major misunderstanding regarding the relationship between the British union movement and the Amsterdam trade-union International. It must be understood that the entire British union movement is united in the British Trades' Union Congress, and that all members of this congress, that is everyone who belongs to a trade union, is therefore automatically a member of the Amsterdam trade-union International. From this, it follows that every trade unionist and every member of a trade-union organisation in Britain, by virtue of union membership, belongs to the Amsterdam trade-union International.

At present, we can see certain strong tendencies in Britain that entirely change the prospects for the revolutionary working class. In the last four or five years, there have been efforts to level out the social and economic differences between skilled and unskilled industrial workers in Britain. The gradual wage reductions achieved by the capitalist offensive have more and more brought the British proletariat to a common level.

Now a few words on the shop-steward and factory-council movements. The system of workplace shop stewards has existed in Britain for roughly thirty years. But at the moment when the workers of these institutions needed this institution most urgently, it was completely crippled by legal measures. Much criticism has been expressed at this congress regarding the present inactivity of the shop-stewards' movement in Britain. But I must tell you, comrades, that, as a result of massive unemployment (at present thirty-five per cent of the workers normally working in the big machine factories and docks are jobless) most of those who previously built the shop-stewards' movement are now not inside but outside the factories. In a time when so many of the

members of the working class who understand the importance and functions of factory councils are unemployed, such councils cannot exist. But we are in the process of re-organising our forces, comrades. We are working not only to unite forces inside the factories but also, as the revolutionary wing of the British trade-union movement, we are, for the first time, taking our propaganda into the trade unions.

The comment has been made here that although Britain has a large trade-union movement, we have only a small Communist party, which enjoys practically no influence in the unions.

That is true, but there are many reasons for this. One of the greatest crimes of revolutionary communists or the old revolutionary democrats in the past was their refusal to take responsibility for helping to build the proletarian movement in the factories. Time and again, the revolutionaries refused to work in the unions to strengthen the fighting power of the proletariat. Only recently did we learn from the united-front tactic of the need to go into the trade-union movement and to attempt to win it over. As for the struggle between bureaucrats and revolutionaries in the British trade-union movement, it has not taken on great scope as yet. One possible reason for this is that we have no strength in the Amsterdam trade-union International and have not yet become a force that inspires fear among the Amsterdam leaders. But I do not ask you to adopt this opinion. About twenty per cent of the members of British unions are more-or-less sympathetic to the Communists. But, until now, we have conceded the entire apparatus to the Amsterdam trade-union International. Only when we begin to challenge them for the trade-union posts will they treat us as a dangerous enemy.

If we examine the relationship between the political arena and the broad trade-union movement in the economic arena, we find that the Labour Party, which, despite everything, represents the actual political wing of the broad trade-union movement, has brought the local worker and union councils under its influence. The Labour Party has brought all this under its wing as the political party of the trade-union movement. It has established a rule that no Communist may be elected as a delegate from these local workers' and union councils, because the last Labour Party national congress refused admission to the Communist Party. That is the beginning of the struggle. Here, the Amsterdamers are launching their first attack against the Communists, and we British Communists welcome this attack.

As to the present strength of the Red International of Labour Unions in Britain, we cannot yet say there is a single large union in Britain that has affiliated to the RILU as a national organisation. But, thanks to the Communist Party's activity, during the last twelve months – that is, since the last congress of the

RILU took up the struggle to penetrate the entire trade-union movement, we have added to our ranks 140 local branches of various trade unions, located in the industrial centres of Scotland. In addition, two hundred local branches of various unions in the London district have joined us. In every industrial centre and coal district the forces of the Red International of Labour Unions are gradually being organised. These forces are gaining strength to a degree never before seen in the proletarian movement.

On behalf of the British section, I can say that the trade-union International has a great future in the British union movement.

Lansing (Swabeck, United States²¹): Comrades, Comrade Lozovsky has discussed the trade-union movement so thoroughly that I would like, on behalf of the American delegation, to touch on only a couple of points regarding Communist tasks in the American trade unions. As you may know, despite the highly developed character of American capitalism and the workers' radical traditions, we in the United States have a very backward and reactionary workers' movement. For many years, the leadership of these unions has remained in the same hands, with hardly any challenge. These leaders have adopted with their whole being a policy of labour collaboration. The trade unions have developed a closed character, concerning themselves only with matters affecting their trade, and displaying almost no interest in organising the unskilled and semi-skilled workers employed chiefly in the key industries.

They have, of course, raised the slogan of union political neutrality and pressed for the unions to limit themselves to goals of a purely trade-union character. Despite their reactionary character, these trade unions suffer greatly under the capitalist offensive in the United States. They have been the target of an intense attack whose evident goal was to destroy them entirely, and they have suffered losses both in membership and in the worsening of previously achieved conditions. The organised labour movement has shrunk to fewer than four million workers. Bear in mind that the United States has 110 million inhabitants, of whom at least thirty-six million are wage workers.

The trade unions have suffered one defeat after another. In the spring of this year, there was a noticeable change. The workers began to actually resist the capitalist offensive, forcing even their reactionary leaders to call for resistance.

21. The pseudonym 'Lansing' was used by both Arne Swabeck and William Z. Foster, both of whom were leaders of the US Communist Party's trade-union work. However, only Swabeck was part of the US delegation to the Fourth Congress.

Much can be learned from the recent strikes of miners and railway workers. These struggles provided many extremely important lessons for the American Communist Party. The strikes showed clearly and distinctly that the masses of workers were ready to struggle, and that, with the right leadership, the enormous latent energies of the workers could have been applied successfully. The workers had actually won the strike when they were robbed of the fruits of their victory by the betrayal of the reactionary bureaucrats. Clearly, this betrayal can be utilised by the Communists to join together with the radicals in an ideological struggle for a better leadership and better forms of organisation.

It was also clear that the capitalists are increasingly forcing the United States government to intervene actively even in the daily economic struggles. The government was forced to tear off its hypocritical mask, and thousands of workers now understand the illusory character of democracy. The judicial injunction against the railway workers, banning any participation in the strike, did much to clarify for the workers their class position in society.²² Many trade unions and central labour bodies called for a general strike, which would have been equivalent to a strike against the government. However, this proposal was rejected by the executive council of the American Federation of Labor. Support for independent working-class political action has also gained ground within the unions. In many localities, the Gompers policy of rewarding his friends and punishing his enemies has been rejected once and for all.

These rapidly developing objective conditions provide a basis and a possibility to build a large radical movement. They also demonstrate how essential it is that we call such a movement into being, and that such a movement exist, regardless of whether we play a leading role within it, and whether we have control of it or not.

Comrade Lozovsky said that it is wrong to think of such control in purely mechanical terms, as the majority of our members do in many ways. He said that we do not exert control mechanically but should, rather, seek to achieve control ideologically. The American Communist Party is in a position to achieve such ideological leadership, if it is able to devote all its energy to the service of this large radical movement. The best way to call such a radical movement into life, or, better stated, the absolutely indispensable precondition for such a radical movement is to bend our efforts to develop the legal party that we have created.²³ It must become a genuine party, a party capable

22. Regarding the railway strike, see p. 254, n. 2.

23. Regarding the legal and underground US CPs, see pp. 215–6, nn. 28–30.

of leading the masses, a party that is a true defender of working-class interests. It must be more than just a tool for specific goals. We must create a party that is capable of gathering the best trade-union forces under our banner.

In this way, we must develop these parallel movements politically and economically. In the future, these movements will lead a communist struggle against the strongest imperialism in the world.

The radical movement in the United States has won general recognition and exerts its influence in all trade unions. But you will doubtless understand that we, in the United States, can employ only quite basic slogans, such as for unification of working-class forces through better forms of organisation and better methods of struggle. This segment of the radical movement's programme has now been adopted by gatherings of the federations in eleven states, by two international trade unions, and by thousands of union locals and central labour councils.²⁴ The ideological struggle against Gompers and his reactionary policies is developing very quickly.

We can, of course, predict that if this struggle grows in strength and influence, Gompers and his followers will make use of expulsions. We must expect this policy in the future. Communists and radical forces will be expelled because of their revolutionary activity. However, in developing any sort of countermeasures against such expulsions, we must bring such measures into accord with the situation in each country. Before we decide on any definitive countermeasures, we should study this situation attentively.

Applying this approach to the United States, we find that the Communist struggle against the bureaucrats is still in its early stages, and the policy of expulsion for revolutionary activity is not yet being generally applied. Therefore Communist or radical forces who are expelled for such activity should refuse to recognise its legitimacy. They should turn to the radicals in the unions and call on them to remain there and struggle for the Communists' re-admission, utilising all the options afforded by the statutes. If members or union locals are expelled, they must, of course, remain closely linked with the radicals in the trade unions and not join independent revolutionary unions. This policy might be a good in other countries, but here it would make the struggle for re-admission impossible. As the situation in the United States changes, we will utilise new methods.

In some European countries, the independent revolutionary trade unions provide a solution to the problem of struggling against expulsion. In the

24. Most of the major US labour organisations also functioned in Canada and were therefore called 'international unions'. Central labour councils represented union locals in a given city.

United States, however, these independent unions are still a problem. The American trade-union movement has suffered from a spirit of division. For this reason, many of the best, most active, and revolutionary forces have withdrawn from the trade unions and joined together outside the union movement following the principle of creating ideal trade unions. Experience teaches us, however, that these independent trade unions have not been able to unite the masses – not even in unorganised branches of industry. We have an organisation like the Industrial Workers of the World [IWW], which, in the past, as everyone will concede, aroused enthusiasm in the American working class through its more radical methods of struggle. Today, it is controlled by anarcho-syndicalists, who are hostile to Soviet Russia and whose propaganda borders on counter-revolution.

There are a number of more or less revolutionary independent trade unions. One of the most important challenges that the American Communist Party needs to address is how to bring together harmoniously all the revolutionary forces and how effectively to utilise the radicals who are at present organised in independent trade unions, in organisations that reach the broader masses. The first congress of the Red International of Labour Unions proposed a programme that was adopted by our party. It is a programme to unify the working class on the basis of a single trade union in each industry. We need to carry out this programme, and we have already made a good start.

The slogan of unity must be applied in the American trade unions in a way that encompasses the revolutionary independent unions. They must, of course, announce that they wish to rejoin the mass organisations. They should carry out effective propaganda for re-affiliation. All radical forces in the mass trade unions should carry out the same struggle for the readmission of these unions in order to achieve working-class unity. I am certain that this goal can be achieved if we recognise its necessity. The leaders of the radical movement and the revolutionary independent trade unions, who are, in both cases, Communists, must sit down together and consider the measures needed to carry out this policy.

In conclusion, I would like once again to note that the role of trade unions in the economic struggle against capitalism appears to be receiving more recognition from our enemies, the capitalists and the reactionary labour leaders, than it does among us. We have not yet recognised the necessity that Communists and all radical forces work with the mass working-class organisations. In the United States, that has not yet been completely recognised. It appears that we are afraid that if we concern ourselves 'too much' with trade-union work, we will become infected and no longer appear as Communists.

If we seek to carry out the policy of working in the unions by building cells – which has finally been adopted by the Comintern – we must recognise

that we do not do that merely in order to win new members to our party.²⁵ We do this in order to take part in the workers' daily struggles, to develop these struggles for economic goals into a broad revolutionary struggle, and, further, transform the trade unions of today into a revolutionary instrument in the struggle for communism.

Adjournment: 4:00 p.m.

25. Point 9 of the Twenty-One Conditions, adopted in 1920, called for organisation of Communist cells in all mass workers' organisations. A year later, the Third Congress organisational resolution stated, 'Communist cells are the basic units for carrying out the day-to-day Communist work of the Party in the factories, trade unions, workers' cooperatives, military detachments etc. – wherever there are a few or more party members or candidate members' (Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 768–9; Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 237).

Session 17 – Monday, 20 November 1922

Trade Unions (Continued)

Discussion of the Trade-Union Question. The Communist Party of Turkey.

Speakers: Heckert, Lauridan, Hertha Sturm, Tasca, Garden, Pavlik, Vercik, Kucher, Rosmer, Cachin, Orhan

Convened: 6 p.m.

Chairperson: Carr

Heckert (Germany): Comrades, this morning, Comrade Lozovsky explained that we must adopt a clear and explicit line in the trade-union question. Above all, he said, we must avoid a policy that is jittery, that leads to talking of a split of the unions out of impatience or for some other reason. I believe he coined an excellent phrase in saying that if we had adopted the slogan 'split the trade unions' or made concessions to it, the entire Communist movement would be finished. I also believe that we Communists would have made the worst of errors if we had proposed splitting the unions or had been misled into making concessions to those who wanted to split the unions. I hope that this congress will unanimously state that tendencies toward split must be combated relentlessly. For it is absolutely necessary to declare, before the entire working class, that we are for maintaining and reunifying the trade-union federations, in order to carry out serious propaganda for the united front. To struggle for the united front and also sympathise with a split means that, in

the eyes of the working masses, we look like fools, indeed, we make ourselves despicable, and by this we would commit a great crime.

However, in many countries, the trade unions are already split, not just now as a result of action by the Amsterdam International, but because parallel organisations in these countries already existed before or during the War. Already at the last congress, we stated that our comrades have the task of working in the parallel organisations for a total reunification. But our Communist comrades have not devoted their full strength to this task, as they could and should have done. Indeed, we have had to note, not just in one but in every country where the unions are split, that Communists have been feuding among themselves, instead of struggling together for the common goal. I would therefore like to say that every Communist who does not support other Communists who are in another organisation, and does not struggle with them for the common goal, is simply strengthening reformism and helping those who wish to reduce the union movement to ruins.

That is why our highest law as Communists, in all countries where there are parallel organisations, is to commit ourselves to overcome the disputes among us and establish a platform for common work. I must say frankly that we Germans admire our Italian comrades who have succeeded in achieving an understanding in their party that we must work in the Fascist organisations for the same goals, and that we must build our cells there also.

The policy of building cells came under severe attack inside the Communist International after the Third Congress.¹ We had a quite severe battle over this in the German Communist Party, for example. There was a large group of comrades who declared that cells are harmful. Liquidationist tendencies developed in and around this group, whose logic was to liquidate all the Comintern's trade-union work and give up the entire Communist international trade-union movement. We opposed these circles. The Friesland circle in the Party was based on this kind of thing.² We threw these people out of the organisation and we carried a determined struggle inside the German organisation in order to bring all our revolutionary layers to agreement. Of course, in this struggle, there was sometimes quite a fuss, and some Communists got a bit out of line and did not always act intelligently. But it is not proper to dismiss in a few words the opposition inside the Party to the so-called revolutionary federations, as Comrade Lozovsky did in stating that

1. The only speaker at the Third Congress to attack the policy of building cells of Communist trade-union members was Fritz Meyer (Bergmann), representing the KAPD. (See Comintern 1921b, pp. 721–36.) Brief references were made to disagreements on this question in France and Austria.

2. A current led by Friesland (Ernst Reuter) took shape in the KPD in the second half of 1921; it left the Party at the end of the year.

Comrade Maslow had done something stupid and written a quite idiotic article against Communists, and only Comrades Heckert and Brandler had saved the situation.

Comrades, I do not want to have a medal pinned to my breast for saving the unions [UHK], because I cannot simply brand what Comrade Maslow did as despicable and criminal, without stressing that his statements had an influence on the conduct of the UHK people.³ Blame must be shared between both sides, so that we can pass judgement wisely. The error of the Party in this matter was in not foreseeing, as it should have, that these disagreements were bound to arise if we did not do enough preparatory work in the UHK. We relied on the fact that the UHK was made up of Communists and that they would carry out the work. Our UHK comrades resisted the formation of [party] fractions, and our party comrades let things drift. That is why we ended up with such intense disagreements with the UHK. Fortunately, at the UHK's congress at the beginning of October, we succeeded in reaching agreement on creating a basis for harmonious collaboration on into the future. But the failure to build fractions in the [UHK] unions was a bad example, and some other Communist parties have also provided a bad example in this regard.

I must mention two parties that suffer from this at present. The French Communist Party undertook last year to establish fractions in the CGTU, but did not do so, allowing matters to slide to the point where the split was complete and the French trade-union movement was thrown into total confusion. At the Marseilles Convention [25–31 December 1921], the Party had a chance to take the leadership of the French revolutionary movement, if only it had followed the advice it had received to draw up a programme that could unite all revolutionary forces. But the French Party did not do that.

At the Marseilles Convention, comrades did not address the question of what Communists should be doing in the unions. Instead, Comrade Mayoux, who is now outside the Party, contributed substantially to throwing the Party into quite a crisis.⁴ In my opinion, we must learn from this, in order to do better in the future. When the Party has become accustomed to taking

3. In German, the word *Union* then referred to a revolutionary union formed as an alternative to the traditional trade-union of the ADGB, which was called *Gewerkschaft*. For UHK (Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers), see p. 544, n. 11.

4. François Mayoux, with his wife Marie and about a dozen others, submitted a statement in November 1921, on the eve of the Marseilles congress, maintaining that unions should not in any way be influenced by the Party or drawn into support of electoral struggles. 'We belong to the party in order not to omit any form of action', the statement said, but 'the revolutionary direct action of the unions can be promoted only by the work of unionists', and not by the influence of non-union Communists. François and Marie Mayoux were expelled at the October 1922 Paris congress of the

positions on the questions before it, it will also find it possible to establish a close relationship between the Party and trade-union leaders. That will lead to people like Monmousseau and Monatte becoming truly effective and leading members of the Party in France. That will make it a real party, and prevent people from taking the leadership who carry out politics at the cost of the proletariat. It is not acceptable that old conflicts continue. The entire influence of the Communist International must be exerted on the leaders of the Party and the CGTU, pressing them to work together in the interests of the French working class.

A word about *Czechoslovakia*. Similar currents are present in Czechoslovakia. It was above all the trade-union leaders within the Party who were against forming fractions. Many comrades asked bluntly, what are fractions for? That only leads to grousing, they say; it is sufficient that there are Communists in the leadership of the unions.

But our Czech comrades could not avoid noting that all was not well. If they had built strong fractions a year ago, then Tayerle would not still have his positions as he does now.

But I believe that the bad experiences we have had in Germany, plus the examples of France and Czechoslovakia, provide us with a lesson: to pay more attention in future to what is decided by the previous congresses.

Now, a word about the situation in Germany. We do not claim that every step we have made to win over the trade unions was wise. But what Comrade Lozovsky said this morning regarding the farmworkers' organisation – that tens of thousands left without the Party paying any attention to the farmworkers – this had causes rather different from those cited by Comrade Lozovsky.

It is true that the German farmworkers' movement lost hundreds of thousands of members. But we have a bureaucracy there that simply carries out 'socialist' state policy, and the interests of the working class are subordinated to the Social Democrats' bourgeois state policy. Since no one attended to the interests of the farmworkers, it came to the point where they rebelled. But these farmworkers, of whom eight hundred thousand were organised after the German Revolution, were not organised at all before the War. In its best years, the German Farmworkers' League claimed only twenty-seven thousand workers. During the War, this number shrank down to three thousand. So we were dealing with an entirely new farmworkers' organisation, and the farmworkers were used by their organisation's bureaucracy for its own purposes.

French CP as 'unrepentant syndicalists'. Mayoux's name is given as 'Magoux' in the German text. Maitron 1964–97, 36, p. 169.

We already tried, in 1919, to approach the farmworkers. We established a so-called Communist Farmworkers' League. It suffered an ignominious collapse. If the Revolution had not stalled, if it had gone forward, if we had been able to offer the farmworkers something on the spot, then the outcome might have been different. But that was not the case, and the Social Democrats maintained control of the farmworkers.

Then, in the last year, hundreds of thousands left the league. Our comrades had to decide whether they could bring these working masses back together in an organisation led by Communists, even though we would not be in a position to wage struggles with them. Should we not shy away from the fact that, if we set about founding a league of our own, the Amsterdamers will seize the occasion to jump on us once again, saying: 'Here you have an eloquent example of the fact that the Communists want to split.'

If we set about launching a new organisation in a period in which we did not yet hold the reins, it would just have been more than we could cope with.

I do not dispute the fact that it would have been better if we had been somewhat more active in a number of questions. But, given our terrible lack of available forces, compared to the Amsterdam apparatus that numbers in the tens of thousands, it is hard to manoeuvre, and there are many cases where we have to bring back into line impatient comrades who want to take some stupid initiative.

It is simply not right to undertake some kind of manoeuvre with a body of workers who have not been properly educated, at a time like this when disagreements have grown to be so great and the questions we face are so difficult. In order to gain influence, we need a good, solid apparatus, and not just that, but also the trust of the broad masses of workers in our Communist politics. I believe I can assure you, in the name of our party, that it will be possible in the coming months to struggle more effectively, because our party is now supported by the trust of constantly growing layers of the proletariat. The Party is now based on broad masses who are sympathetic to it. It now has an apparatus whose assistance makes it able to lead a movement. The Party is therefore now able to undertake manoeuvres on a new scale.

However, we cannot say here that it would be wise to draw up any general recipe. Comrade Lozovsky was correct this morning in saying – and I will stress this again – that we need a trade-union programme for every country that corresponds to that country's conditions and sets down our tasks clearly and explicitly, in terms the masses understand. We also need a distinct policy for every sector of industry, and often for every federation. If Comrade Carr will give me another two minutes, I will expand on that a bit.

In Germany, for example, it is very possible to function well with the construction workers. If we have [organised] an entire locality, and the employers

are not yet consolidated in a trust, and are not yet strongly organised across the country, we can defeat them. But, with the railway workers, for example, things are quite different. We have railway workers who are just as revolutionary, but, here, the employer is the entire state, backed up by all its power. It has crafted laws with which to beat down the workers.

We can tell the construction workers that we are finished with Păplow; we won't put up with him any more; we're going to build a separate organisation – and then we can fight alongside those construction workers for better living conditions. But, if we do that with the railway workers, we will lose for sure, because we face the entire state. It has the power to trample us down, and the revolutionary forces, of course, immediately lose their jobs. Over the last year, we have lost about two thousand of our best comrades in this fashion.

And, just as the contrast between the construction and rail workers' situations compels us to adopt different tactics, so it is with the other organisations. In the metalworkers' union, things have come to the point that the Dissmann people no longer dare to expel groups of us, because we have the support of roughly half the membership, and resistance is too strong. As for the farmworkers, we do not know where the Amsterdam policies are heading. Probably, conditions are such that we will have to go over to organising them from scratch, because we cannot accept that the breach be widened.

I conclude my remarks by asking, first, for a decision that all Communist parties are obligated to set about building fractions in all seriousness and to carry out in the coming year the relevant decisions of the Second and Third World Congresses. Second, the parties should establish for each fraction, and if necessary for each branch of industry, action programmes that enable us to struggle for our goals together with the workers, as we must. Third, the parties should prohibit our comrades in the various revolutionary organisations or parallel trade-union organisations from fighting each other, for the entertainment of our opponents. (*Applause*)

Lauridan (France): In sending to the podium a trade unionist, the secretary of an important provincial federation of the French CGTU, the French delegation unanimously wanted to demonstrate the importance it attaches to Communist action in the trade unions.

As Zinoviev said earlier, the trade-union question is among the most important issues before the French movement. We completely agree, and we also agree with Lozovsky that the trade-union question must be resolved on the basis of its historical development and organisational relationships in each country.

The entire French delegation, from the Right to the farthest Left, is in agreement with Lozovsky's report.

Point 20 of this report deserves to be explained, studied, and clarified.⁵ What does this paragraph say? It leaves it to the Communists of each country, and especially the Communists of France, to work out on the spot, in agreement with the syndicalists, the forms and methods of common struggle, and the working relationship in all defensive and offensive actions against capitalism.

It could seem that this is a concession. Why is it needed? First, because, in France, there is a significant revolutionary-syndicalist organisation, the CGTU, with three hundred thousand members. Second, because, among the unionised masses, who are scattered among the non-unionised masses, there is quite justified suspicion of the political parties, including also the Communist Party.

Much has been said about traditions in France, and much is still being said today. But awareness is lacking that tradition belongs to the past and that tradition also sometimes means forgetting. We are led by life, and life sometimes takes on a new face. In France, tradition comes to the fore on every occasion, and sometimes when there is no occasion. Whenever we try to carry out Communist work in any campaign, comrades hold tradition against us. Well, then, since tradition has been posed, let us touch on it briefly.

In what period did the rise of the French syndicalist movement take place? In the period after the Commune, around 1878–80. In this period, in the French political party, there was one man who championed Marxist theory. That was Jules Guesde, the Jules Guesde of the Marseilles congress, not of the War.⁶ He called for the closest of ties between the trade unions and the political party.

The true French tradition relates to this period. Later on, the French Party forgot its traditions. It sank into the most limited and reprehensible parliamentarism, and the disciples of Jules Guesde – like Lebas and Delory, who are still parliamentary deputies from the North [Nord department] – forgot Guesde's trade-union traditions and sank into a syndicalism of the most dangerous and repulsive kind, that of the 'civil peace'.⁷

We all we still remember the speech that Ghesquières gave in the chamber in 1911. He defended it in the congress that followed, where he denounced

5. See Point 20 of the trade-union theses, p. 1203.

6. The views of Jules Guesde, a pioneer of Marxism in France, won wide support at a workers' congress in Marseilles in 1879 (which Guesde himself was unable to attend), leading to the consolidation in the 1880s of the Parti ouvrier (Workers' Party), France's first Marxist party. In 1914, however, Guesde backed the 'sacred union' of socialists with France's rulers for prosecution of the war effort, becoming a cabinet minister in the French government.

7. The German term *Burgfrieden* [civil peace] is equivalent to the French 'l'union sacrée', the class-collaborationist policy followed after 1914 by the majority leadership of the syndicalist CGT.

the revolutionary syndicalists as people of direct action who must be placed outside the law. How can a political party win the confidence of the working masses under such conditions? What happened then?

All things considered, the Amiens Congress of 1906, which gave us the celebrated *Charte d'Amiens*, was nothing other than a response, aimed mainly at the political party, by the vigorous and healthy spirits of the French working class.

The Charter approved by this congress is still today held up to us in the trade unions. There are two aspects to it, one directed inwards – trade-union autonomy – and one directed outwards – syndicalist action. This syndicalism, which was not sufficient in itself, but was yet adequate for all requirements, was a hazy and dangerous political formula.

Then came the War. During the War, both forms of organisation came under a shadow: the political form, which had long ago become tied to the bourgeoisie, and the trade-union form, which could still inspire some hope.

Lozovsky: The War created unity.

Lauridan: Yes, in a negative sense. And, here, in passing, I will pay tribute to a man whom we have lost, Jaurès, so that no one will be able to say any longer that we disparage his memory, even though we do not accept his teachings.⁸

During the War, there was a struggle aimed at steering the Party onto the correct path, with regard to both political and trade-union issues. In this struggle, no line was drawn between those who belonged to the Party and those who focused mainly on the trade-union movement. The Committee for Resumption of International Relations was formed, and it included comrades Lozovsky, Trotsky, Loriot, Rosmer, Souvarine, Monatte, Péricat, Sirolle, and others.⁹

This struggle began during the War, but continued after the armistice. It must be stressed that syndicalists and socialists who knew how the 'union sacrée [sacred unity]' had been brought about attacked the men at the head of the Socialist Party and simultaneously those leading the CGTU. That was the Committee for the Communist International.

8. Regarding the Jaurès dispute in the French Party, see Trotsky's remarks, pp. 991–3.

9. The Committee for Resumption of International Relations was formed January 1916 by French anti-war socialists and syndicalists, with support from Russian revolutionists in exile in France. Its name referred to the fact that pro-war Social Democrats refused contact with their counterparts on the other side of the battle line. The group was renamed Committee for the Third International in 1919, and played a leading role in founding the French CP.

That is how we came to the Tours Congress and the split in the Party.

At this point, comrades, we must raise a reproach against our political friends, and against ourselves as well, in that we did not grasp the importance of the split at the Tours Congress. We did not understand that the Dissidents would seek to win back in the trade-union movement what they had lost in the political party.¹⁰

Why? Because there was a fighting solidarity between the leaders of the French Socialist Party and the Confédération Générale du Travail [CGT]. They were tied to each other as a gang of filth, blood, and crime. They were forced to drive for a split in the trade unions. They had to do it, and they did it.

What is more, the Dissidents in the French Socialist Party, who now form the so-called French Section of the Workers' International, wanted to preserve contact with the working masses. How else could they do this than with the help of the CGT, an organisation that then claimed to have two million members?

Thirdly, they needed to damage the Communist Party and destroy the momentum of the French working class. They used to call this momentum 'mysterious', with good reason. It draws the masses to the Russian Revolution. And that is why they had to undertake, propagate, and develop an attack against the Russian Revolution.

At that time, we had a Communist Party that had issued from the split in Tours. The Russian Revolution and the Soviet system were under attack. What did the Communist Party of France do?

Two paths were open. One was the parliamentary road, the old road of the socialists. But the Party could not go down that road; the masses would not have permitted it. The Party had to penetrate the workers' movement. But it did not do this.

In the French Commission that is discussing the crisis of the French Party, we will have to look into the responsibility for this. Nonetheless, we must say that the main factor in the crisis is the policy of abstention followed with regard to the workers' movement.

Why did the Party wish to do nothing regarding the trade unions? In order to salve its conscience, it refers above all to the Party's tradition. Or it talks about the bad tradition of Guesde, who is no longer the Guesde of 1879–80, and about the bad trade-union traditions that made it possible to convert the

10. The Tours Congress of the French SP (25–30 December 1920) voted by a seventy-five per cent majority to accept the Twenty-One Conditions and affiliate to the Comintern, giving birth to the CP of France. The minority ('Dissidents') split away, preserving the formal name of the SP: French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO).

trade unions into schools for voters, or it simply refers to its tradition from 1906 [the Amiens Charter] and to the reaction sparked by this bad tradition of the Socialist Party.

There is no doubt that the trade-union movement was still based on this tradition of 1906. When the unified CGT [CGTU] held its Paris Congress in December 1921, we who had been expelled from the old CGT were close to a split. The anarchists and pure syndicalists, more eager for a fight than we were, threw the question at us: 'What do you wish to do in the trade-union movement? Do you accept the Amiens Charter?' I was the one who replied to Colomer of the Theatre Clerks' Federation. I said that we accept the Charte d'Amiens, for now, because we do not have time to get into a discussion about it and we must have a basis of agreement. We intend to open a discussion on the Charte d'Amiens at the next congress of the CGTU.

When Monmousseau took the floor at the Saint-Étienne Congress [June–July 1922], he said that syndicalism, although sufficient in itself, no longer met all the demands of the moment. By doing this, Monmousseau broke with the tradition of the French syndicalist movement. Why should the Communists impose on themselves a constraint that Monmousseau himself saw no need for?

In addition, the Communist Party has a more specific duty: it must observe what its members are doing in the unions. Instead of that, the French Communist Party's policy consisted of becoming accomplices of anti-Communists, who took advantage of the situation by utilising the party press and even *l'Humanité*.

By the way, some facts must be cited here. It was said that we could have done something to prevent the trade-union split in France. I have just explained that this split was political in character. We were not properly organised to offer resistance to the split orientation of the Dissidents and the old CGT. Nonetheless, at that time, we had a minority group, called the Revolutionary Syndicalist Committee. Within this committee, Communist forces were a majority, and yet the Committee still followed a path quite different from that of the Communist Party. Why was this? Because the Communist Party found it appropriate to keep entirely silent, in accord with the principle of minimising effort.

Before the Unified CGT's 1921 Congress, the activist Communists should have been brought together. This should have been done to present them with the trade-union thesis of the Marseilles [CP] Congress, which had the task of deciding whether the revolutionary syndicalists would accept the split or not. There was no such meeting. It is said there are excuses for that, especially since no trade-union programme was available. What are we to

say of a Communist Party that, a year after the split, still had no trade-union programme?¹¹

When Lozovsky's telegram arrived, stating that we should seek not to hasten the split but rather to impede it, this hit us like a stone falling from the heavens. We did not understand it. Why? Because the Party had not educated us.

Finally, I wish to refer in passing to an error. While a congress was taking place in Paris of the working-class forces – Communists in their majority – expelled from the old CGT, a congress of the Party was taking place in Marseilles, hundreds of kilometres distant. This isolated the Communist activists at the Paris Congress from their real home.

We now come to the preparations of the Saint-Étienne Congress. The provisional central bureau of the CGTU proposed draft statutes, according to which the syndicalist movement opposes every state – even if it is a proletarian state. This was a direct attack on the principles of communism itself. The Party took no notice. A district federation – it was that of the North – composed alternative draft statutes. And while the North district federation tried to launch a struggle against the anarchists, the *libertaires* [libertarians], we were forced to witness a Communist Party publication, *L'Internationale*, edited by Comrade Renoult, provide a home for articles by pure syndicalists – Besnard, Quinton – and anti-Communists. Citizen Méric wrote in this paper with great pleasure and satisfaction about the article of Comrade Verdier, another anti-Communist.

Renoult: Please note that when this incident you have cited took place, I was in Moscow, where I attended the session of the Expanded Executive held at the beginning of the year.¹²

Lauridan: What Comrade Renoult says does not mean that I said anything incorrect. He was not in France, but the paper, a party publication, was a refuge for anti-Communist articles.

We now come to the Saint-Étienne Congress. Frossard tells us that he carried out the obligations agreed on there because he brought the [Communist] unionists together in Saint-Étienne.

Comrades, you must understand that, given the complete inactivity of the Communist Party of France, we Communist trade-unionists had already been

11. 'The split' refers here to the outcome of the Tours SP Congress in December 1920, which launched the CP. Earlier in the paragraph, Lauridan is referring to the split in the CGT in late 1921, forced through by its right-wing leaders, which resulted in the founding of the CGTU.

12. Renoult was in Moscow for the 24 February–4 March 1922 ECCI conference. The Saint-Étienne CGTU Congress took place 25 June–1 July 1922.

calling on Frossard for a long time before that congress to convene a meeting of Communists. The International's desires corresponded to those of the Communists active within the unions.

The Communist trade unionists were brought together one evening, and that was it. The anarchists, the pure syndicalists, and the supporters of the Monmousseau current met every evening. The Communists could go for a walk, attend the theatre, or do what they pleased. The Saint-Étienne Congress was no longer of interest for them.

We also experienced the following incident, which no party should permit. The anti-Communists distributed to the Saint-Étienne Congress a letter of the Communist deputy Lafont, a lawyer, who set himself up as a defender of the workers' movement. To characterise it in the mildest possible way, this letter was anti-Communist.

Dormoy: But it was an extract from Marx!

Lauridan: After the Saint-Étienne Congress, we were confronted with the formation of a Committee for Syndicalist Defence.¹³ This committee was organised by pure syndicalists and 'libertarians', who claimed that Monmousseau had sold out to the Communist International.

We should have responded to this by forming Communist groups in the trade unions. When we raised this question, a considerable number of comrades raised objections, crying: 'Do not touch the trade unions! If you do, you will destroy all our relations with them.' By the way, we have never had such relations.

As the pact was discovered, it turned out that nothing less than a contract had been established between the various pure syndicalist comrades and others, who had formed a little secret society with the goal of launching an attack on the federations.¹⁴ The aim was, after a successful assault, to divide up the important posts right away among the comrades who were part of the agreement. When the workers saw the agreement, they protested against it. That would have been a wonderful opportunity to open up a struggle against the pure syndicalists and the 'libertarians'. But the Communist Party of France left this opportunity unutilised.

This silence leads us to the conclusion that there were accomplices in the Party who had drafted and signed the pact.

13. Held to a one-third minority at the Saint-Étienne Congress, the 'pure' syndicalist and anarchist forces announced on 14 July the formation of the Comité de défense syndicaliste, headed by Pierre Besnard.

14. The 'pact' in question was a confidential agreement in February 1921 among anarcho-syndicalists within the Committee of Revolutionary Syndicalists (CSR), the left wing of the then still-unified CGT. Its existence was revealed on 15 June 1922.

Lozovsky: Among the eighteen who signed the pact there were three members of the Communist Party of France.

Chair (*breaking in*): Your speaking time is over.

Heckert: Let him speak longer.

Chair: We have a motion to let the speaker continue. Is there any opposition? No.

Lauridan (*continuing*): Then we come to the great event of the French workers' movement this year, the Le Havre strike.¹⁵ Much has been said about this strike, but most of it is nonsense, and it seems appropriate to establish some of the truth.

It must be said that the Party fully dedicated its paper, *L'Humanité*, to cover the strike. It provided very strong support to the departure of the children.¹⁶ Since the Party granted the strike the very great importance that it deserved, and through its paper made the strike known across France and even worldwide, it had the right to come to grips with the strike. But it seems that this was not done. It was said that the Party had no right to get involved in conflicts of this nature. It was said that if the Party had sent so much as one delegate to Le Havre, the striking trade unionists would have refused to welcome him.

It is enough here to refer to the activity of the Communist youth, who did not permit themselves to be intimidated by these many pretexts. Significantly, it was the activity of two young comrades that unleashed the Le Havre strike. The day after the gendarmes fired on the workers, the Communist youth published appeals to the soldiers and distributed posters to the soldiers and the population. (*Applause*)

And the fighting trade unionists of Le Havre gladly accepted what the Communist youth provided, rather than sending them away.

15. Le Havre metalworkers went on strike 20 June 1922 in opposition to a ten per cent wage reduction. Strong local and national support enabled the strike to continue through the summer. In late August, heightened government repression led to a citywide general strike that shut down the docks. By 24 August, more than twenty thousand workers were on strike. On 26 August, the departmental prefect, Lallemand, ordered cavalry to charge the crowds of workers in the street. Troopers fired, killing three workers and seriously wounding one. The crowds stood their ground and did not disperse, but, that evening, most union leaders in Le Havre were arrested. On Sunday, 27 August, the CGTU called a nationwide general strike for Tuesday. The CGT refused support on the grounds that it had not been consulted. The 29 August strike failed, breaking the momentum of the struggle, although Le Havre metalworkers stayed out until 10 October. Barzman 1997, pp. 317–39. See also below, pp. 975–80, 1026–8.

16. The strike committee in Le Havre mobilised national support to feed forty thousand strikers and their families. This support appears to have included providing temporary refuge for many children outside the city.

Recently, a comrade told me – and I do not fully accept his point of view – that, in the Le Havre trade-union milieu, a distinction is drawn between the youth and the Party. They view the youth as a revolutionary force, while the Party is seen as a political force that inspires mistrust.

So we arrived at the 24-hour strike that broke out on demand from the anarchist and pure syndicalist forces – a strike decided on Sunday and carried out on Tuesday. The instructions were relayed to the regions not by the CGTU but by the Party's official publication, *L'Humanité*.

For my part, I received the strike order in Lille on Monday at 11 a.m. I knew nothing about it. I read the instructions in *L'Humanité*, my party's official publication. I decided that we had to take part. It was not the time to argue. Afterwards, I could criticise, but at the moment, I had to go along, whatever the cost.

Within a few hours, we brought the whole North district into rebellion. We carried out the strike, and, in the North, 150,000 workers took part.

The Communist Party carried out its duty in the North and in other districts. Nonetheless, we did not have the right to speak out regarding what we thought about the strike, namely, that it was decided too early and called too early. Why is this? Because the Party pays no attention to what happens in the CGTU. It is not interested in what the CGTU is doing. Of course, there are friendly relations between individual party comrades and comrades of the CGTU. Individual comrades, to be sure, visit CGTU comrades from time to time, in order to show them a trade-union thesis or some project or some article. But, as soon as it is a matter of coming to grips with serious trade-union issues, no one goes, simply because no one is left who can go.

But we have *L'Humanité*, and, at that time, we also had *L'Internationale*, with a run of eighty thousand copies during the strike period. What use was all this to us? These instruments gave the Communist Party the right to be silent, and gave the anti-Communists the right to say: 'Look at the Communists! They are called revolutionaries, and yet they do not have even the courage to speak out!'

And so we come to the last meeting of the CGTU national committee, where we had four very serious problems to discuss – above all that of the united front. It is said that Frossard has carried out his duties in this regard. Well, that was certainly very easy. Since March, the workers have in practice been carrying out the united-front tactic.

Then, we have the metalworkers' strike in Lille, for example. The CGTU union, with forty active members, faced the Dissidents' metalworkers' union, which supposedly had five thousand members. We demanded a united front, not by agreement with the Communist Party of France, because it did not want this, but in agreement with the spirit of the Communist International.

Our union only gained by the achievement of the united front. Not only did it not lose ground; on the contrary, it won new recruits. Its influence among the worker masses was such that although it consisted of only forty active members, it was able to unite the strikers who had no party affiliation, give them a committee, and even provide them with assistance, so that they could march together with us under the revolutionary banner.

In this way, we achieved the united front in life. It is simple to return to France and say that we accept the united front, because, in practice, we had already done this in our country.

The same is true for the question of unity.

At the last meeting of the [CGTU] national committee, the question of unity was placed on the agenda. True to its policies, the Communist Party of France was completely unconcerned regarding the question placed on the agenda of the national committee. It merely took note.

Do you think that the anti-Communists acted in this manner? Not in the slightest. They proposed a method to achieve unity. They said they really did want unity, but without the leaders – the CGT without its leaders and the CGTU without its leaders. What could this produce? They would have established their anti-Communist dictatorship and led the French unions to the anarchist International that is now being formed in Berlin.

The response of the Communist Party of France to these events was simply to let matters slide.

It's the same story with the factory committees. We discussed this question in the last meeting of the national committee at the same time that the Communist Party of France was busy with what we must call its shameful Paris Congress [October 1922].

We had to discuss the question of factory committees, and we did not have access to any documents, any data. We, the Communists, sat there in the national committee, some of us in one corner, and some of us in another, and we asked what we should do. The Party was silent.

In the Périgueux affair, the attacks were much more severe. What was it that happened here?

The Communist section in Périgueux had expelled the secretary of the [CGTU] district federation from its ranks for the very good reason that he said that he was a Communist in the Party, but, in the district [union] federation, he did not recognise the Party. Where we are, that is the prevailing mentality. The party section explained cogently that a trade-union secretary who is also a Communist must never forget that he is a Communist.

The Périgueux section therefore stated: 'Very good. Since you do not recognise the Party's district organisation, you must leave the Party.' An army of defenders immediately rose up in the CGTU. Monmousseau himself raised

an uproar saying the Party had been guilty of subordinating [the unions]. An indirect reprimand of the Party appeared in the press. *L'Humanité* did not respond. The Party did not respond. We of the national committee had to respond to this reprimand in order to banish this insult from the French workers' movement.

What are the results of this trade-union abstention policy by the French Party? These are results, comrades, on which your decision must have an influence. That is why I was compelled to take this look backwards, for which I hope comrades will forgive me, because I have tried to keep it as modest as possible.

Ah, the results! Everywhere the anti-Communists have gained in scope. The Communist Party enjoys no influence among the working masses. The Communist International and – what is still more unfortunate – Moscow is everywhere attacked, slandered, and dealt with contemptuously before the French working masses, who had clung to Moscow as to their very life.

For months on end, we witnessed the affair of the trial of the Social Revolutionaries. The entire French workers' press acted as judges of Moscow. The entire reactionary press and the so-called French workers' press – the CGT's *Le Peuple*, the Dissidents' paper, the Social Democrats' paper, the entire press set themselves up as judges, attacking Moscow. And the Communist Party did nothing, absolutely nothing!

Many voices: That is not true!

Paquereaux: That is untrue! This is pathetic!

Cachin: This is dreadful!

Lauridan: The comrades of the centre tendency claim that none of them have ever forgotten to defend the Russian Revolution in meetings. That is the least of what they could have done. I am convinced that none of them forgot to do that. But the Party as such should have fought back against this campaign of lies and demagoguery. (*Applause*)

One single organisation raised its voice in protest, the district committee of CGTU unions in the North. This is the same organisation that raised a protest in the Shapiro affair.¹⁷ The Party did not have the courage to speak out about this.

17. L.G. Shapiro, a leader of Soviet political educational work and a former Menshevik, was expelled from the Russian CP in 1921 during a party-wide campaign aimed at excluding self-seeking and corrupt elements in its ranks. A controversy ensued, in the course of which Lenin interceded on Shapiro's behalf. Shapiro was subsequently re-admitted to the Party. See Lenin 1958–65, 54, pp. 52–5; this letter is not found in the English edition of Lenin's works.

And it was we, once again, who had to defend the Russian Revolution in the national committee, when an attempt was made to put it on trial because of the charges against the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Shapiro affair. That is why the Communist Party's prestige was reduced.

Cachin (*interjection*): To speak of such a serious matter in this way is at the very least a distortion of reality. Not only did the Party's newspaper make its columns available, defending the Moscow Communists and the Moscow courts each day for months, but we also did this through our daily action. For my part, I took the floor in parliament against the Dissidents, against the bourgeois, and I, quite alone, defended Moscow.

Paquereaux: This is not honest of you, Lauridan.

Lauridan: Permit me a question, Cachin. You know how much I respect you and how I am concerned for truth, particularly when it concerns me. I ask you this question. Did the Communist Party of France as such, in its entirety, ever undertake anything to counter the demagogic campaign of the Social Revolutionaries?

Cachin: I must state that the party newspaper protested every day.

Several voices: That is not true!

Lauridan: I am asking you, Cachin, to reply to my question. Did the Party in its entirety undertake anything? No!

Cachin: The general secretary came here to give his testimony.¹⁸ I believe that is clear and emphatic enough!

Paquereaux: To portray us as accomplices of the Social Revolutionaries is truly horrific.

Chair (*breaking in*): The speaking time is now exhausted.

Interjections: Let him speak longer!

Chair: It has been proposed to once again extend the speaking time – (*Applause*)

Interjection: Ten minutes!

18. French CP general secretary Louis-Oscar Frossard came to Moscow in the summer of 1922 to give testimony as a witness for the prosecution in the trial of twenty-two members of the Right Socialist-Revolutionary Party central committee accused of terrorist conspiracy against the Soviet government. Frossard also took part in the June ECCI conference.

Chair: – by ten minutes. Is there any opposition? No.

Lauridan: I will try to conclude rapidly.

Is the problem of the Communist International too formidable to be resolved? One question must be strongly emphasised: no one in France, not even the Left, has any intention of violating trade-union autonomy. But we want the Communists in the trade union to act as Communists and to build Communist groups in the trade unions.

No one can dispute the right of the Communist Party to take an interest in the workers' movement and, flowing from that, to form cells in the factories.

Let us take the example of the North, where there is a Guesdist grouping. Our Communist organisation has eight thousand members, who are almost all proletarians. (We have only two or three lawyers, who, by the way, are quite a pain.) Both the Party and the trade unions benefit from this.

During the three-month-long textile strike in Roubaix-Tours-Tourcoing in 1921, the Communist organisation in the North turned over its newspaper, *Le Prolétaire du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais*, entirely to the strikers. The paper even faced prosecution. The district committee of the North can, for its part, point to a counter-draft against the statutes of the CGTU, a protest against the trial of the Social Revolutionaries, against its participation in the united front, and against the trial of Shapiro.

In every field – the trade unions, the cooperatives, freedom of thought – everywhere we, as Communists, must fight as Communists in order to bring our ideas to victory.

Dormoy: This is certainly possible.

Lauridan: Comrade Dormoy says that this is certainly possible. Yes, but you do not do it.

Lozovsky's theses proclaim that Communism must have primacy everywhere. Communists sit in the offices of the CGTU; Communists are the secretaries of the federations of mineworkers, road workers, and so on; Communists are secretaries of the most important district committees; in the local committees, in the trade unions, everywhere we find Communists.

Yet, everywhere, the Communists do whatever they please, without paying any attention to their party.

This is a brutal fact. Comrades, what do you make of a party, 80,000 strong, and a CGTU, with 300,000 members, which is not at all under the influence of the Communist Party? If the Party had only 2,000 or 3,000 members, that would be understandable – 2,000 or 3,000 against 300,000! Then, it would certainly be possible to say there is nothing we can do. But we are 80,000, facing 300,000. We must feel strong enough to inject our ideas into the others and, in particular, to make our influence felt in the workers' trade unions.

Lozovsky has just said that Marxism takes life as it comes. In France, the Communist Party is not a genuine party. That is why there is mistrust. By contrast, the workers' organisation, the CGTU, is revolutionary and proletarian. It has influence on the worker masses. We must take that into account.

We are making a concession, and we hope that this concession is only one of form, and that things will develop toward a community of action, offensively and defensively, against capitalism.¹⁹ If we are genuine Communists, we will keep a firm grip on the CGTU.

Lozovsky's theses say there are Communists in the unions. To this must be added that there are also Communists in the Party.

Inside the Party, there is a strong body of convinced Communists, and we find the same in the trade unions. These two forces must unify and succeed in building a genuine Communist party, a party that will be free of all professional politicians and climbers, a party that will serve as the lighthouse of the working class and the true leader of the French proletariat.

And then – you need have no concerns here – the question of relationships between the Party and the trade unions will not come up any more, because the Party will be a genuine proletarian party. It will take its rightful place at the head of the organisations struggling against world capitalism, rather than at the rear, as is the case today. (*Loud applause*)

Chair: Comrades, Comrade Rosmer has asked to be placed at the end of the speakers' list.

Clark: (*interjection translated by the chair*) Nothing is being translated into English. Changes are being made in the agenda, and the British comrades do not even know what is happening. From now on, I will protest every time.

Chair: We will now assign Comrade Marshall to always translate what is being discussed for the English-speaking comrades. While I am in the chair, I will do my own translation into English.

Hertha Sturm (Germany): Comrades, we have examined the trade-union question and the strengthening of the united front here essentially in formal terms. We have asked how it is possible to maintain the organisational unity of the trade unions and what should be the relationship between the Communist party and the unions, in order to influence them in a communist direction. On both issues, we encounter the resistance of the reformists, the Amsterdam trade-union bureaucracy. These are, of course, political questions. Our success in maintaining and strengthening organisational unity will depend on the clarity, resolution, and fighting capacity of the Communist

19. The 'concession' concerned RILU-Comintern relations. See p. 536, n. 7.

parties. This has already been considered under other agenda points such as that of the capitalist offensive and tactics.

However, I would like to illustrate the very close relationship of the two sides of this question by considering the role played in these tasks by *working women* in the trade unions. The question is of great importance because working women represent a layer of the working class whose size and weight in production and in the trade unions is constantly growing. In European countries, women represent between 20% and 45% of those employed, depending on the economic structure of the country. These figures rose greatly during the War, and they remained higher in the postwar period than they had been previously. In the new capitalist countries of Japan and Korea, with their millions of workers, working women represent even more than 50% of the workforce.

On the other hand, as we know, working women are among the layers that capitalism and its accomplices actually utilise to strengthen and maintain their positions of power. Comrade Bukharin pointed this out in our discussion of programme. Working women are played off against the male workers in a fashion similar to the colonial peoples, at whose expense the European workers were able to achieve certain temporary victories.

Clearly, the united front of workers and the organisational unity of the trade unions will be strengthened to the degree that all layers of the working class consciously stand together, and that the layers that stand aside in passivity if not hostility are as narrow as possible. It is essential at this moment that these layers of working women rally around the united front. Especially now, during the capitalist offensive, the fact that the main body of working women do not take part actively in the struggle endangers not only their personal interests but the interests of the working class as a whole.

The capitalist offensive proceeds methodically along the path of least resistance. I will refer briefly to three points, of which the first concerns the eight-hour day and, more generally, the *protection of labour*. Our overall experience is that the capitalists are beginning everywhere to persuade women to give up the eight-hour day and accept supposedly voluntary overtime. Then, pointing to the real and supposed technical requirements of the factory, they succeed, first in these factories and then in all of them, in subjecting all workers to the conditions established for women. Already, we must note efforts in almost all countries to entrench in law the dismantling of the eight-hour day and protection of labour. But, even without that, these measures are already being carried out, partly through regulations and partly in violation of the existing laws.

The second question is that of *wages*, which became urgent from the first moment when the use of machines in industry led to women being thrown

onto the labour market as the most willing and cheapest objects of exploitation. The wage question has now again become urgent, because capitalism in crisis is no longer capable of meeting workers' demands. Forced to revert to its earliest primitive forms of exploitation, it is heightening exploitation through extending working time and intensifying labour, in order to make up for the fact that labour productivity has declined because of the technical deterioration of factory equipment. In addition, real wages are falling. The low wages of working women cause a decline in the wages of working men as well. The old slogan of equal wages for equal work should therefore be placed in the centre of our discussions and struggles, and posed more actively than ever in our trade-union struggles.

The third question is that of *unemployment*, which has once again taken on a character similar to that in the period when the industrial labour of women originated. Once again workers' thinking is haunted by the illusion that the possibilities for workers' survival would be improved if women's labour was eliminated. A very vigorous struggle is needed here in order to meet the danger that a wedge will be driven between working men and women, who may view each other as competitors rather than joining together in solidarity. This is similar to the unity we strive for between workers who are in the factories and those who are unemployed.

The second important consideration is that Communist influence in the trade unions will be strengthened to the degree that the broad masses in the unions recognise that the struggles concern their immediate and direct interests. In general, our task today is to show the working class that they must fight for immediate demands of the hour. This is all the more true for working women who, because of their greater backwardness, generally do not understand as well as working men that struggle must be conducted for distant goals. Obviously, the trade-union bureaucracy cannot act in this fashion, because it knows that, the moment it mobilises the masses for such immediate demands, it will arouse a fighting force directed against themselves.

But, when we ask what the Communist parties have achieved in this regard, we must say it is very little. Moreover, they have done much less to mobilise working women than they have to organising trade-union work as a whole. That is, obviously, no accident, because, as a rule, all the weaknesses of the Communist movement are reflected – indeed, are augmented – in the Communist Women's Movement.²⁰ It represents only one part of the Communist

20. The terms Communist Women's Movement or Communist Women's International referred to the structure headed by the International Communist Women's Secretariat, established by the ECCI in April 1920 as a section of the Comintern, with Clara Zetkin as its secretary. It published a journal, *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*

movement as a whole, with which it is united for good or ill. But the organisational and ideological weaknesses of the Communist movement have greater impact in work among women, to the degree that most women are politically, organisationally, ideologically, and economically more backward. This is because they have less contact with social life.

The total membership of most Communist parties is numerically small, compared with the size of the working class as a whole. And the number of female members is insignificant, both absolutely and relatively. In a party where the situation is most favourable, in Czechoslovakia, the proportion of female members is about 20%. In Italy, in a rather important party, women make up less than 2% of the membership. To the degree that we have statistics, the rough average in Communist parties as a whole is about 10%. That makes clear how much harder it is for this relatively small number of Communist women to influence the broad masses of women, than it is for Communist men to influence the masses of male workers outside their ranks.

Moreover, it has not yet penetrated the thinking of all parties that winning working women to revolution must be organised in a methodical way. We note that the Communist International is still debating whether to form cells. It has not yet become a matter of course in both theory and practice that the Party should commit all its strength in obliging each of its members to carry out intensive Communist work in the unions. It should not surprise us, therefore, that almost nothing has been done to train Communist women for trade-union work.

We must recognise that only in a very few of our relatively strong parties – in Russia, Germany, and also in Austria – has this work been tackled. In all the other countries, this remains almost entirely untilled land.

There are two organisational tasks facing us immediately.

Firstly, in building Communist cells in the trade unions, we must take care that all female party members in the unions, everywhere, join their fraction.

Comrades, that may seem banal and obvious, but it is not so in reality. We observe that the women's movement in the Communist parties, especially the new ones, is something that runs along parallel to party activity as a whole, instead of being tied closely to it. Such a lack of contact is particularly alarming in trade-union work. But the fact is that the Party's leading bodies and responsible staff members are often not aware which of the female members are union members, where they work, and what kind of contact they have with their cell. Granted, to gather such personal data and thoroughly organ-

[*Communist Women's International*] from 1921 to 1925, and coordinated the work of women's committees and bureaus in each Communist party. The secretariat was dissolved in 1926.

ise the women members is arduous, demanding attention to detail, but it is extraordinarily fruitful and is indispensable as a solid basis for other tasks.

Secondly, the party leadership and the party executive must assure that there is an immediate and close link between the Communist Party's central women's committee and the body that takes responsibility for trade-union work, whether it is called the trade-union division or section or council. These bodies must work together to set up a plan on how the work will be organised and centralised, and what steps should be taken for further education and systematic organisation of the women trade unionists for their tasks among the broad masses.

Prospects for this work are very favourable, because the masses of women workers offer us a field for recruitment where there are few prejudices against us, precisely because it is unorganised. The masses of working women are not tied to the same extent to a political leadership and a trade-union bureaucracy. Their class instincts are more primitive but therefore, perhaps, healthier and less distorted, enabling them to more readily take a decisive stand with a class struggle point of view. They will be quicker to defend their class interests without concern for all the relationships that now make it so hard for us to make headway among the masses of Social-Democratic workers and trade unionists who have been organised for decades.

I would like to make a comparison that should be instructive. When women's right to vote was introduced in various countries as a result of the political events of November 1918, we have seen that the bourgeoisie was able to draw into the bourgeois camp the masses of women who had largely had no contact with political questions. Not only did the bourgeois women become the best agents of their parties, but also the broad masses of women workers were drawn over into the nationalist camp, the bourgeois parties, the clerical camp – that is, into the camp of their class enemy. They have contributed in this way to strengthening the bourgeoisie, if only in a parliamentary framework. We must ensure that something like this does not happen in the trade-union field, which has a quite different meaning for the class struggle than parliament. And women will be won by the party that comes on the scene energetically, focused on its goals, and is best able to link up with the interests, cares, and needs of the masses and lead these masses in struggle for their demands. With these masses we will succeed in greatly strengthening our attack against the trade-union bureaucracy. We will win even broader masses away from the trade-union leadership and draw them into the camp of revolutionary class struggle. (*Applause*)

Tasca (Italy): I am speaking here on behalf of the Italian delegation as a whole. I can do that because the Communist Party of Italy recognised the

importance of trade-union work from the start and began building cells in the trade unions even before the split at Livorno.²¹ This has enabled us to gather together common experiences and develop a unified method of work.

I will dispose of the less important issues very briefly. First of all, I must explain that the delegation approved the proposal to defer discussion of the role of the unemployed in the trade unions. However, the delegation considers it vital to stress the extraordinary importance of the tasks of the Communist Party regarding the defence of the trade-union rights of the jobless, rights that the reformist leaders try to hush up.

We have also decided not to demand discussion of Communist activity in the nationalist unions, the company unions, and – in Italy – the Fascist unions.

We must state explicitly that Communists must work in the Fascist unions, but only when this is an unavoidable condition to prevent them from being driven out of the trade-union arena, that is, when there is no way to be active in red trade unions in the interest of the Party.

Lozovsky's theses give much attention to the problem of unity and splits. These are the most immediate and urgent problems of the trade-union movement. We agree fully with him on this question, both for the reasons that he stated and for other reasons.

The reformist policy of splitting, which enjoys more or less acknowledged support from the employer class, aims to hamper as much as possible the defensive actions of the trade-union minorities. It aims to deprive red trade unions of any possibility of practical work and of defending the daily interests of workers, which is absolutely necessary to their continued existence and development.

In addition, it must be stressed that, when a Communist union that remains a minority within a workers' organisation is expelled, and can no longer find support in the unified organisation, it becomes much more difficult to maintain the legal work of the Communist party, which normally gains very useful support from the trade union.

It is absolutely essential to clarify certain points in Lozovsky's theses. When we talk of Communists, we must use more precise criteria, which Communists themselves can utilise in their trade-union work.

We have not properly understood whether the break from Amsterdam should come when we have a majority in the international federation of a

21. Tasca is referring here to the work of the Communist current in the Italian SP before the January 1921 Livorno Congress, which gave birth to the Communist Party. For more on the Congress, see p. 1039, n. 8.

branch of industry or when we are a majority in the national confederation. We ask Comrade Lozovsky to clarify this point.

As for us, we are for the second approach, that is, that we break the tie to Amsterdam if we have a majority in the national confederation, because we consider that this approach reduces the danger of a split.

Of course there is no way to avoid the danger of a split entirely, given that the Red Trade-Union International [RILU] is striving to become a propaganda agency in an international confederation of trade unions. But we must seek the course that reduces such dangers as much as possible.

I do not have the time to take up the question of the organisational link between the Communist International and the RILU. But I maintain that this question must be resolved at the Communist International congress. It is absolutely necessary for the Communist comrades taking part in the RILU congress to arrive at an agreement on what they should support there.

I would like to ask Lozovsky to explain one point concerning the question of the factory councils.

In Germany, the factory-council movement is becoming more and more important. There is a close relationship between this question and that of the splits. We would like something to be said about this, as the issue is now being posed in other countries.

Regarding the building of cells, we consider that the RILU should seek to establish conditions for joint work with syndicalists, anarchists, and even unaffiliated workers, in order to displace the reformists and oppose their influence. In our opinion, we must assure that purely Communist cells are built, uniting all Communists working in the trade unions. This is needed in order to utilise every possibility to develop our activity toward revolutionary struggle.

We are against adopting Point 20 of the overall theses by Comrade Lozovsky. It follows Point 17, which says that Communists may not renounce their right to form cells in the trade unions in the name of abstract anarcho-syndicalist principles, regardless of the orientation of the trade unions.²² No one can deny them that right. Point 20 states that, in countries where there are significant syndicalist organisations, such as France, and where certain layers of revolutionary workers are still influenced by a suspicion of political parties arising from a number of historical circumstances, the Communists on the spot must work out the forms and methods of common struggle and activity in all defensive and offensive actions against capitalism in accord with the syndicalists and with the specific characteristics of the country and its workers' movement.

22. For Points 17 and 20 of the trade-union theses, see pp. 1202, 1203.

The fact that this appears following Point 17 leaves the Italian comrades with the impression that, in France, all this is to replace the immediate work of building Communist cells. We would like this question to be clarified. If this is a way of posing the united front, we are not opposed, because this must take place not only in France but in all countries, and, moreover, not merely with the syndicalists but with all revolutionaries. But will this mean that the Communists in France will refrain out of purely local considerations from carrying out their own forms of struggle, and that, in this regard, they must first obtain agreement from the syndicalists? We are against leaving in the theses a formulation that is open to such an interpretation.

Comrade Lozovsky explained that the nature of the ties between parties and trade unions is a matter of relationship of forces. That is correct, but we must be careful that we understand each other precisely. The application of Communist principles and methods is always subject to the relationship of forces, but that does not mean that the principles are replaced by the relationship of forces.

Lozovsky says that theory does not create the movement, rather the movement creates the theory. I know very well that Lozovsky is far removed from any misreading of this sentence. Still, as it stands it is reminiscent of Bernstein's formulation, when he said that the movement is everything.²³ We should not open the door to an interpretation along these lines by those who have such an inclination or interest.

Even if it were true that the trade unions in France, because of their historical evolution, must play a leading role in the proletarian revolution, this would not be grounds to reject building Communist cells. On the contrary, it is one additional reason to pursue the formation of cells and assure ourselves of a leading role in the proletarian revolution.

We are fully aware of the difficulties that exist in France. Given that trade-union issues form the basis of the French question, it seems to us impossible to put such a thoroughly ambiguous paragraph in the overall theses. Its place is in the conclusions of the French Commission, which will make the necessary suggestions. Everything has to be clarified there, including whatever cannot be covered [in the trade-union theses] regarding the duties of Communists in the unions. Otherwise, the concessions that must be made in response to certain local conditions can take on a scope that contributes to prolonging the very difficult situation that several comrades here have referred to.

23. In the preface to the book known in English as *Evolutionary Socialism*, Bernstein wrote that 'the movement means everything for me and that what is *usually* called "the final aim of socialism" is nothing'. See Bernstein 1961, p. xxix.

That is why we believe that these formulations should be removed from the overall theses. The only motivation that can be raised against building cells in France is the workers' suspicion against the Communist Party of France. But this is a vicious circle, which we must break through. We are convinced that the creation of conditions for systematic Communist work in the trade unions is a life-and-death question for the Communist Party of France. But that is good reason for taking up this question in the conclusions of the French Commission rather than in the overall theses on the trade-union movement.

Now, a few words on the question of subordinating the unions to the party. We are generally of the view that the development of a Communist party is assured by the fact that it is able to state its views on every event in the life of the working class. How could the Communist Party of France take a position on questions that interest French workers, if it has no organisational connection with the life of the working class, in all the forms through which this life is expressed? It may seem a very simple matter to issue slogans, but the party must derive these slogans from an intimate understanding of working-class life. That is the only guarantee that the working masses will take these slogans as its own, as slogans that will correspond to their conditions.

Of course, we combat any subordination of the trade unions to the party. But the Communists must carry out the tasks flowing from their trade-union policies by entering the unions and carrying out methodical work there in order to win the trust of the masses. After winning that trust, they should not act as the reformist 'experts' do, but should place their entire experience at the service of the party for the overall goals of communism. They must inspire a feeling among the non-Communist masses that their slogans do not fall from heaven and are not imported from afar, but are slogans that flow from the workers' immediate experience and require only a slight effort to comprehend. If the French Communists and those of other countries work along these lines, we will be in a position to make good the losses that the Communist movement is suffering during the present struggles. There is an ancient myth that tells of a giant who, even though wounded and mutilated, regained his strength thanks to the fact that he touched the earth.²⁴ The Communist party will only grow to become a giant if it is put in a position to touch the earth, that is, if it is in contact with the working masses, in order to have the possibility of regaining its strength and pursuing and broadening its struggle for the final goal of revolution. (*Applause*)

24. In Greek mythology, the giant Antaeus gained strength whenever he touched the earth, his mother Gaia.

Garden (Australia): Comrades, on behalf of the Australian delegation, I would like to say that we support Comrade Lozovsky's theses. Lenin said that the greatest task of the parties in the West lies in organisational work. I would like to address some words to the British section, which as we all know is organisationally weak. You see that the German Party is capable of having an impact on the masses. And, despite all the disagreements among French workers, you will nonetheless see that expressions of its influence on the masses. This is true in Italy as well. But, when you consider the British movement, you will find that the Communist Party is weak, and it lacks the influence on the masses that the other parties have.

I believe that the Communist Party of Australia, despite its small size, has found the right approach to organisational work. The Communist Party of Australia has a membership of only 1,000, but it is still capable of leading about 400,000 workers, including the 237,000 workers of New South Wales – in short, the entire organised workforce. It also leads the 110,000 organised workers of Brisbane in Queensland.

The Communist Party was founded in Australia on the cell system. Each trade union has Communist cells, from twenty to two, and there is not a single trade union without a cell. The leaders of the cells must meet once a week and discuss the problems of their organisation and of the Australian working class. In each meeting, they decide on policy, and then they go to their unions, factories, and mines and carry out the adopted political line. This line is worked out by the political executive, in collaboration with the leaders of the cells. On every burning question affecting the working class, you will find that the leaders of the cells are the first on the spot to give direction to the working class on how to respond to the given situation.

The New South Wales Labor Council includes 120 unions. Nonetheless, the Communist Party has full control of the executive. Of its twelve members, eleven are members of the Communist Party, and they lead these 120 unions, determining the policies of every union. The Australian Labor Party is structured in the same way as the British Labour Party – that is, the Party is founded on the union movement. We face the same difficulties as the British Party. In 1919 we ran into a dispute in the Australian Labor Party and were defeated at the party convention by six votes. We then isolated ourselves, took no part in politics, and devoted our entire energy to industrial work. Everyone plunged into organising the working class, striving to eliminate the boundaries between the individual unions and to create a single trade union for every branch of industry, uniting all our forces in a union consisting of six branches. We tried to unite all transport workers, all construction workers, all miners, all farmworkers, each in their own branch of Australia's working class as a whole.

By devoting all our energy inwards we were able to eliminate the IWW, the only class struggle organisation in Australia. The IWW changed its policies. It united with us and worked in the craft unions for the building of industrial unions, striving to break down the craft divisions and unite all the union forces in Australia in six large industrial federations.

At this point, we decided in favour of political activity. At that time, there existed in Australia the Australian Socialist Party [ASP], the Socialist Labor Party, and the dissidents within the Labor Party. The ASP called all workers in New South Wales who adhered to the class struggle to come to a conference to launch a Communist party. It was decided to build a Communist party. After a short while, there was a split, but finally we came together again, and, at present, we are the only Communist party in Australia. The result is that the Communist Party leads the entire activity of the trade unions. As for the Labor Party, we found we were able to lead its politics as well – a party imbued with opportunism and led by reformists. We found that the active forces in the working class could themselves guide the politics of this party.

In June 1921, the Labor Party cried out for help. It called on workers to grant the Party their full assistance, and we decided to take part in a conference called by the Labor Party. That month in Melbourne, the largest congress ever held in Australia took place, and the delegates participating represented seven hundred thousand workers. What came of that? We found that we were in a position to alter the policies of the Labor Party.

The Labor Party believed in maintaining a white Australia; it believed in nationalisation. We changed the goal from nationalisation to socialisation of industry through revolutionary political and trade-union action. The Labor Party was however not in agreement. It left the conference and, in October, called a gathering of its own supporters. They changed the words, 'through revolutionary political and industrial action' to read 'through constitutional means'. Another congress was held in June this year, at which the trade unions and the Communist Party together told the Labor Party that they could approve only the policies of the June 1921 conference. The 1922 gathering approved the policies of June 1921 and went further, asking the Labor Party to open its doors for the affiliation of the Communist Party under conditions of full propaganda and organisational freedom. It was a proposal that the Labor Party had rejected in 1921. So we see that a year's activity in the trade unions enabled us to reach a goal that we had previously not been able to achieve.

When the capitalist attacks on the workers began, we did not permit them to strike down one section of the workers after another, leaving each to perish in its isolation. Instead, we united all the workers and declared, 'The working class of Australia must stand firm, speak with one voice, and act together.' We

resolved to hold firm in this stand. The employers turned to the government, and a conference was called. Some trade unions raised objections. However, we sent our representatives to this conference. At this major conference called by the government, among the eighteen labour representatives were nine Communists from different Australian states.

What were the results of this conference? The employers walked out. They said that our entire activity here consisted of nothing more than explaining the doctrines of Lenin and Trotsky. We were Russian mercenaries, they said, who did not have the welfare or interests of the Australian working class at heart. We then turned to the masses with a propagandistic call. The masses gathered under our banner, and Australia is the first country of the world that has withstood the offensive. They were in a position to declare, 'No longer will you reduce our wages, no longer will you haggle with us about extending our hours of work. We will reduce our working time, not extend it.' It was the only country of the world where the masses united around the slogan, 'Hands Off Our Wages and Hours of Work'. This entire campaign was led by the Communist Party of Australia, which is small in numbers but great in its influence.

In addition, we do not just let anyone join who would like to be a member of the Party. If someone in a trade union comes to the Party and applies to join, we pass on his name to the leader of the cell in his union, and the applicant is observed for a period of time. If a proposal in the interests of the working class is made in his union, and he opposes it, that is grounds not to accept him into the Party. We then state that he is not suited to be a member of the Communist Party of Australia.

We believe it is vital to influence the masses, and we utilise every means to extend our influence by leading their political activity and organising them. We are convinced that the masses are ready to struggle at any time. They are determined to struggle and not to let their living conditions be worsened. The task of the Communist party is to work for this goal and to lead the masses in this direction.

Let me turn briefly to the question of the split. The movement to split the trade unions began in 1918. For two and a half years, we battled the reformists, with the result that they lost their footing, while supporters of the class struggle gained in influence. The revolutionary current continued its ardent work in the unions, which control the apparatus for propaganda: the Labor Council of New South Wales, which leads the entire political activity in the state. The revolutionaries held this apparatus in their hands, which could carry propaganda outwards.

When the splits began in the trade unions, the reactionaries demanded expulsion of all revolutionary workers. We went to the working-class ranks

and obtained their full support. We advised the IWW to go right into the union movement and work there like white ants. Here, I must explain that the white ants are creatures that only attack fallen timber and never disturb a living being.

The result of our work was that we gained an agricultural union with 120,000 members. In the mining industry, we united all the workers – miners, machinists, smiths – 45,000 in all. In the field of continent-wide transport, we have united all the railway workers, from the engineers to the baggage handlers, 58,000 in all. There are seventeen unions in construction, who have all declared their readiness to build a unified organisation, the industrial union of construction workers. It includes 42,000 workers. All this reinforces the class struggle and serves as evidence that capitalism can be overthrown only by revolutionary political and trade-union action.

The result of our class struggle activity was the combination of all crafts in a single large union, which rips down the partitions between the different skilled trades.

One more thing. When a political line is decided on, the details are printed and passed out at the weekly meeting of leaders of the cells, so they can provide advice to all the unions regarding their positions.

In conclusion, I would like to read the position adopted by the Labor Council recommending support of the Labor Party. It is as follows:

- 1.) The Labor Council recognises the class struggle as the foundation for its organisational plans and propaganda.

In addition, the Labor Council recognises that this class struggle takes the form in capitalist society of a political struggle, that is, a struggle for political power. The Labor Council can no more remain neutral in the complex struggle among these parties than it can be neutral in the struggle itself. The Labor Council therefore presents the following as the basis of its stance toward the existing political parties.

- 2.) The trade-union movement in Australia is marked by both a weak understanding of the class struggle and support for a reformist party, the Australian Labor Party. To fully support this party, its methods, and its goals, would mean that the growing revolutionary self-consciousness of the working class, including its desire to initiate the class struggle against the capitalist system, would be transformed into a social peace and a negation of the class struggle.

- 3.) The Labor Council considers that the Labor Party forms part of the working-class movement. From time to time, when questions such as maintaining the minimum wage and the forty-four-hour week arise in the workers' daily struggle, this party promotes the interests of the working class.

The Labor Council will therefore support the Labor Party at certain times, to the degree that this seems necessary to the defence of the workers' immediate demands. The Labor Council also believes that in view of the concerted attacks by capitalist class against the working class, it is in the latter's interests in this critical situation for the Labor Party to return to power:

- a.) Because it would meet the attacks of the capitalist class against basic wages with stronger resistance than would the Nationalist Party.
- b.) Because this would assist the propaganda and organisational activity of the working class.
- c.) Because it will also show the workers that the Labor Party cannot bring them any enduring gains through legislative activity within the framework of the capitalist state.
- 4.) While striving in daily struggle to improve the conditions of the working class, the Labor Council is fully aware that it is impossible for workers to achieve economic security under capitalism. The Labor Council therefore strives to transform this daily working-class struggle into one for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of working-class political power. Such a struggle can be organised and conducted in the interests of the working class as a whole only if the trade unions act in full unity with a revolutionary political party.

This is an example of the directives that we give the cells for distribution in the unions and for orientation of their activity among the masses. In our opinion, if the other Anglo-Saxon countries – Britain, the United States, Ireland, and so on – carry out this political line, the Anglo-Saxon Communist parties will develop a capacity to lead the future politics of the working masses of these countries.

Pavlik (Czechoslovakia): Dear comrades, brothers and sisters: I must begin by stating that Comrade Lozovsky's report did not satisfy me in the slightest. I expected more. Although the theses of the last congresses were valid, we must also consider that this congress took place fifteen months ago. And, during these fifteen months, a great deal took place not only in Czechoslovakia but in other countries. I will say in advance that both the trade unions and the political party in Czechoslovakia carry out common actions in full harmony. I also want to point out that Comrade Lozovsky's report, as translated, declared that the expelled must be united organisationally. What does that mean? That builds on the old thesis of the [RILU] First Congress.²⁵ It is on this

25. Pavlik is referring to the first RILU congress, held in July 1921. After strenuous debate, it adopted a proposal to encourage the close to seven thousand revolutionary unionists expelled from Germany's main union federation to join the UHK, an

basis that the expelled are to be brought back together again organisationally. That means that Comrade Lozovsky is still going by a thesis that was not drawn up for the new period and the changed circumstances.

Now, I would like to know how we are supposed to unite the expelled. In an industrial federation? If we create such a federation, which recruits the expelled, the Amsterdamers will right away say they have expelled not only the Communists but also the federation that has united the expelled. This federation of the expelled includes several tens of thousands of members. And I therefore must ask whether it is possible to unite the expelled in a single organisation. Would it not be better to choose the form of organisation that corresponds to the different groups from which they were expelled? That remains an unanswered question. And that is why I am saying that Comrade Lozovsky's report is still based on the theses of the First [RILU] Congress.

What disturbed me the most was that proper provision was not made for the future. I am not asking for anything special regarding conditions in our republic. But I would like to know that a clear programme will be created for the future, one that can serve as a guide for our representatives in all countries. In particular, it should be clearly stated how the expelled should be organised.

Comrade Lozovsky also says that where Communists are in a majority, they should apply to the Moscow [trade-union] International, without consideration for the fact that the federation is an integral part of the Amsterdam International. What is the result of that? The Amsterdam people in Czechoslovakia are smart enough to prevent us from attaining such a majority. After sufficient evidence was present, and they had seen that Communist fractions had achieved a majority in different federations, the expulsions were no longer directed against individuals but against entire groups that had aligned themselves with the fractions. It went so far that they took action to expel entire federations.

What Comrade Lozovsky presented in his report is somewhat unclear. We accept the framework of the united front, to be sure, but the moment that comrades ask to join the Moscow International, they are expelled. We cannot make progress in this fashion.

I would like to say a few words about my friend Heckert, who felt the need to touch on the Czechoslovakia question. He said that, if fractions existed in the groups in Czechoslovakia, Tayerle's strength would not be so great. The

independent revolutionary-union federation. Objections that this policy would tend toward a split in the unions met the response that the RILU could not abandon these workers. See Tosstorff 2004, pp. 339–40. The dispute led to an exchange of letters between Lenin and two leaders of the German CP: see Lenin 1990, pp. 276–82, and Lenin 1960–71, 45, p. 218.

exact opposite is true. Because we have fractions, because, even today, we have so many Communist workers in the federations, we must therefore place all the more value on their staying in them. But what is happening? Before congresses of individual federations in Czechoslovakia, the Amsterdamers simply expelled the revolutionary groups, because it was inconvenient to let them appear in the congress. It is not true that we had no fractions in Czechoslovakia. Wherever we established a firm foothold, we won the majority of organised workers. And that is the main question. In my opinion, we must find a middle way. Something must be done for the countries that have developed beyond the theses of the First Congress. A federation must be created that can integrate all the groups that have been expelled by the Amsterdam people.

Twenty thousand textile workers have been expelled in Czechoslovakia. They then asked to be taken into the Czechoslovakia textile federation (the Brünn [Brno] federation). But they were refused admission. They then opened up negotiations with the Reichenberg [Liberec] social-patriotic federation.²⁶ That's how things are with us. We are further along in our development and have so far tried every alternative without success, because we run up against the stubbornness and rigidity of the Amsterdam people. And that's why I'd like to ask you, please, to show us a way forward. For us, there is only one possibility; no others are open to us. If further federations are expelled, they will have recourse to the step of founding a general federation that can include all the expelled, so that the masses can be encompassed. If we do not do that as rapidly as possible, there is a danger that people will lapse into indifference – especially now, a time of great crisis in Czechoslovakia. The Commission has the duty to take this into account and give us appropriate and precise instructions.

Vercik (Czechoslovakia): Comrades, the trade-union question is the Achilles heel not only of the Communist parties but of the entire International. In building the Communist parties, we have not devoted appropriate attention to this question. *'The masses are in the trade unions and we must be where the masses are'*, Comrade Lozovsky told us. Still, the path is not marked out clearly enough. Comrade Lozovsky's report spoke of unity in the trade

26. After the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, socialist unions of most nationalities fused into the Czechoslovak Trade-Union Association, which had a membership in 1921 of about 650,000. The ethnically German unions, however, stood apart, organised in the Gewerkschaftsbund [Trade-Union Federation], whose 1921 membership was approximately 375,000. The third major federation, with about 300,000 members (1921), was aligned with the national socialists. McDermott 1988, pp. 36–7, 248. Vercik provides the Congress with a somewhat different estimate; see p. 603. Regarding 'national socialists', see p. 134, n. 11.

unions, even with the social patriots. Comrade Heckert said that *anyone who wants a split today is bringing grist to the mill of the reformists. Founding independent red federations is not our strength but our weakness*. But, on the other hand, comrades, we must recognise that the line of the Red International of Labour Unions was not always sufficiently clear. The masses need a clear, distinct, and firm line for their movement. We have not had this guideline. We have had instructions, but they were rather vague. They did not say yes and did not say no. The RILU's point of view could be interpreted two ways. Obviously, Communists always interpreted it in a left direction. But when the masses came into motion toward the RILU, and splits seemed unavoidable, Moscow warned us to be cautious, and the leadership slipped out of the hands of our parties.

In the party leaderships and the trade unions, our comrades battled each other with theses and resolutions, which were used even to point out breaches of discipline. Everything could be proven with theses, just as with the Bible – in black and white.

In France, things came to a split. Then the Amsterdam people provoked a split in Czechoslovakia. Even Germany was thrust by the social patriots down the same road as us. Our comrades were not strong enough to head that off. Even today, the Scheidemanns fear bringing about a split, yet they will do it. Given the enormous economic crisis, it is in the interests of the yellow trade unionists to relieve the burden on their treasury by reducing their membership. In periods of enormous unemployment, when hundreds of thousands of jobless have a claim for support, they welcome every opportunity to expel members from the federations for supposed breach of discipline. That's the situation we have landed in.

I will touch briefly on the developments in Czechoslovakia. The trade-union organisations are divided between the Czechs, the Germans, and both national and social-Christian unions of both nations. The Czechoslovak trade-union commission, which belongs to the Amsterdam International, has about 800,000 members. The German confederation has 350,000; the national socialists about 200,000. The German confederation also belongs to the yellow International [Amsterdam]. They give no thought to unification. Not only nationalist but also economic relationships are at work here.

The Germans, including their socialist wing, consider themselves to be *nationally oppressed*. Clearly, this point of view has no foundation in socialism. But there is a link between the German bourgeoisie and the German social-patriotic workers. In addition, we must bear in mind that 70% of the capitalist enterprises are in the hands of the German bourgeoisie. On the other hand, it is the financially weaker capitalists, the Czech patriots, who hold state power.

There are contradictions between the Czech and German bourgeoisies. This would require that the working class create a united front against the competing German and Czech bourgeoisies, without distinction of nationality. Still, the reformists are against creating such unity on the basis of the class struggle. The working class must be convinced by its own dire conditions, ground down by unemployment and poverty, that its only salvation lies in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

The capitalists of both nations make common cause, setting aside their mutual hostility at a period of attack against the proletariat. This must be answered with common action by the proletariat. Wages have been reduced 40%–50%. The trade-union organisations are unfit for a fight. Every battle ends in the defeat of the workers. The Party has no clear platform on the trade-union question. The Central Committee's authority is undermined by a lack of discipline. For example, when the Amsterdam people convened a congress of farmworkers, we did not attend, although Comrade Bolen, chairman of the farmworker federation and a member of the Central Committee, had voted for the motion to take part in the congress at all costs.²⁷ As a result, the vote led to a victory of the Amsterdamers, even though a genuine majority of the working people were for Moscow.

Right after that, the yellow forces began to break apart our organisations. Expulsions began – of individuals, local organisations, and also federations. Under these conditions, a conference was held in Berlin on 17 July, where the trade-union situation was discussed. Comrade Lozovsky approved a resolution that recommended the withholding of membership dues. Under normal conditions, this would have meant a loss for the social patriots. But, given the present economic crisis, this is a victory for them, since local organisations who do this are automatically expelled from their federations.

Comrade Lozovsky has suggested that the masses are going over to the nationalists and the Christian socialists. We are not experiencing this. The economic crisis is not following its natural course. The bourgeoisie is artificially making it worse by shutting down production and exports in order to wrestle down the proletariat. Huge levels of unemployment are driving the trade unions' supporters into indifference.

In Czechoslovakia, we are where the masses are. At our last congress, more than three hundred thousand trade-union members were in our ranks. The congress decided to introduce a new type of organisation, similar to the 'One Big Union'.²⁸

27. This incident is discussed by Lozovsky on p. 629.

28. 'One Big Union' was a movement for unification of all workers in a single world union organisation, promoted especially by the Industrial Workers of the World.

We must stand firm behind this type of organisation, which is forced on us by events, even if we are told that it will either greatly damage the trade-union movement or destroy it completely. We must hold firm to this position.

The Congress should direct our future activity. It must indicate our actions clearly and definitely, bearing in mind that the split either has already been carried out or is being prepared. The future guidelines must be capable of only *one* interpretation. We, as a party, will support and carry out the resolutions and theses of the Fourth World Congress with all our resources.

Comrade Heckert says that Communists have fallen into mutual conflicts. Well, a lack of clarity in the resolutions and theses has contributed a great deal to that. In order to put an end to the quarrelling, it must be determined *what is and what must be*. We know that the trade unions constitute a life-and-death question for the party, and it is therefore extremely important to speak clearly. To recommend that our comrades in Czechoslovakia hold out in the yellow unions would be met with suspicion. Given that the social patriots are methodically carrying through the split, we must draw the remainder, who are still with the social patriots, over to us, making appropriate use of the united-front slogan. That will unify them for the struggle against the bourgeoisie. The correct path must be found to carry out this task.

Kucher (United States): Comrades, I am here not to tell you a long story, but rather only to convey a few facts as briefly as possible.

I have, in fact, asked for the floor only because the speaker who claimed to represent the American workers' movement presented the situation quite wrongly, distorting the facts. I leave it to you to decide whether this should be attributed to a lack of understanding or evil intentions.

I want to stress that I speak as representative, not of an opposition current in the United States, but of a separate movement, the independent trade unions, and on behalf of the United Labor Council in the United States. I am here to protest against the opposition of a propaganda group that has come here with the claim of speaking for the American working class.²⁹

The independent trade unions, which are industrial unions in their activity and structure, are blamed for being the cause of the trade-union movement's weakness in the United States, because radicals are in their ranks. You have been told that such 'parallel unionism' is the root of all evil. Even if that were true, the unions known as independent would not be the cause of this, because they are in no way 'parallel' in concept.

29. Kucher led a number of local unions in New York and New Jersey, which had been expelled from or quit AFL federations and joined in an independent union council. See Cannon 1973, p. 193.

They originated, in part, due to the expulsion over many years of countless radical trade-union members and minorities. Unable to return to the unions affiliated to the Federation [American Federation of Labor – AFL], they were forced to unite and build their own organisation. In addition, the AFL has restricted itself to uniting skilled workers in craft organisations, simply ignoring the broad masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. These neglected workers quite spontaneously form their own unions, which often exist in only one locality and remain quite isolated. These organisations refused to join the Federation or their trade unions.

In order to unify the activity of all these groups and to link them together, it was necessary to form the United Labor Council. This council has aimed at coordinating the work and bringing together related unions in ‘a single union in each industry’. The existing independent unions have never followed a policy of split or of coercion against minorities who seek to go back to the so-called ‘overall’ movement. There was broad scope for our activity among the unorganised. We have worked along these lines, and we find that workers respond to the call of industrial unions. For the most part, workers recognise the weaknesses of the craft organisations. Even when radicals join the Federation, the masses will not follow them. All that we would achieve would be to totally discredit radicals who now enjoy the confidence of the workers.

To say, in the face of these facts, that the United Labor Council of the United States can grow only at the cost of the unions affiliated to the Federation shows a lack of knowledge on the part of the self-styled representatives of the United States.

We are criticised for forming a parallel federation. But, in fact, we are seeking only to gather the various forces outside the Federation, in order to carry out unified policies for unified goals in the entire movement. This will enable us, at last, to have our own movement, which can and will fight for the workers against the unified powers of capitalism.

We are in agreement with the programme of the RILU and protest against certain forces in the United States that distort this programme to suit their own purposes.

All those who lack an understanding of the American movement claim that the independent unions are artificial creations with the goal of founding ‘ideal’ unions. This is not the case. The independent union movement in the United States is the result of a natural development, and, to the degree that it follows the general line of development, we must recognise it as a factor and take it into account in our work.

In the stenographic report of Comrade Zinoviev’s opening address, I find that he estimates the number of Communist party members in the United

States at 8,000, while we are told by the report of the representative of the Trade-Union Educational League who spoke earlier that the League claims 422,000 active members.³⁰ Comrade Zinoviev referred to the fact that these two reports are incompatible. He said that it is unnatural for the Party to be so weak and nonetheless exert such influence in the trade-union arena.

As for the American question, I had hoped that you all, and especially the Russian and German comrades, would take on the task of examining the different phases of the American movement before you make a final decision with regard to the dissolution of groups that are considered to be revolutionary or independent trade unions. I would like to take the occasion to protest against the misuse of the official press by a part of the movement that presents only its own viewpoint while failing to advance any specific facts to substantiate it. If it were only a matter of facts, well and good, but, in this case, the distortions were so great that it is a crime against the movement to permit such things to be published. As for the independent trade unions, I must tell you that, immediately after the Red International of Labour Unions was founded, they applied to join. The large majority of fighters and radical workers naturally feel drawn to the revolutionary trade unions, and affiliation to the RILU received unanimous approval. This reflects the mood of workers in these unions.

There is one other point that deserves emphasis. One of the previous American speakers said that the independent trade unions should dissolve and join the American Federation of Labor. Their slogan is, 'To the masses!' But we do not find the masses in the Federation [AFL]. The previous speaker on the American question said that there are thirty-six million workers that are potential members of the Federation. But never has the Federation had more than 4.5 million members, and, today, you will find they have barely more than two million, if that. The masses do not want to join the Federation. They are opposed to the Federation.

The hope that the masses could be motivated to join the Federation will definitely remain unfulfilled. The Federation has used up all its credit to the point that the masses will not follow that call. If the slogan is 'To the masses', well and good. Let us go to them, but let us not go looking for them in the collapsed structure of the Federation. The main argument is that we must join the Federation in order to reform it. But an organisation like the Federation cannot be reformed. To understand the American movement, you must accept that any idea of reforming the Federation is completely futile.

I would like to say a great deal more regarding the agitation that has caused great damage in the ranks of the American movement or at least has aroused

30. See speech by Swabeck (Lansing), pp. 563–7.

unease. But I will refrain from doing that now. I would like to make the following proposal. We, in the independent trade unions, recognise that in so far as there are useful forces in the American Federation of Labor and there is a structure there that can be utilised for at least one purpose, work should be carried out in the Federation, not to reform it (because that is virtually impossible) but to expose the methods used by the reactionary bureaucracy, and in addition, to carry out agitation for a broad unification on an industrial basis – not because we hope to achieve that goal but as a means of propaganda.

For this reason, we are sympathetic to the idea that the Trade-Union Educational League [TUEL] should restrict its work to the Federation. The independent trade unions must be entrusted with sole responsibility for work among the independent unions and the unorganised workers.

If the TUEL, working in this framework, shows the worth of its activity, and the independent trade unions, spurred on and provided with support, pursues its work among the independent unions and the unorganised workers – if both organisations work each in their own field, then an ultimate solution moves into the realm of the possible. An intermediary organisation is needed for these two fields of work, to coordinate the work of both groups, bring them into accord, and carry out common activity in both groups. This is a practical option for the American movement.

The objection has been raised that this creates a parallel movement. That is not the case. It would create only an intermediary body to unite the work of the two groups in order to carry out common campaigns. We have seen enough to know that the Federation has given its approval to the expulsion of all Communists from its ranks. Should these groups now be simply thrown out of the trade unions and placed on the sidelines? That will happen, because so far we do not have a mechanism to lead agitation to stay in the Federation, and until such a mechanism is created, all activity has to be carried out independently of the Federation.

An organisation must be created that admits all forces that cannot struggle for a return to the Federation. The Trade-Union Educational League needs something resembling an organisation to struggle for readmission of expelled forces. It needs a central committee or a council to bring together the activity of these two groups. Until this is done, you cannot expect to have a unified movement in the United States. The sooner you recognise this fact, the better.

It was unfortunate that many of those who pose as leaders or representatives have little understanding for the movement in the United States. What we have had is chiefly a purely theoretical discussion of what should be done, while the facts are never examined. There is but one key question: 'What

are the facts?’ Then we must act accordingly. These people have hammered together a theory into which they try to fit the facts.

I will take no more of your time, because I only wanted to raise these points. This is our position, and we are convinced that the entire question should be thoroughly discussed, particularly when you see developments in other countries where the movement is splitting. This question must be resolved in both the United States and Britain.

Rosmer (France): I completely agree with what Comrade Tasca has said. But I come to a conclusion different from his, and I ask that Point 20 in the proposed theses be retained.

I will not say much regarding the conduct of the Communist Party of France. The presentation by Comrade Lauridan here has given the delegates a clear picture regarding the activity – or, better said, the inactivity – of the Communist Party in the trade-union arena.

All the facts he presented are accurate. There are some points that might appear secondary, such as what he said about the conduct of *L’Humanité* during the trial of the Social Revolutionaries. However, Comrade Lauridan mentioned this example only to emphasise that the trade-union federation of the North had to take the initiative which the Party had let slip.

Of course, he did not intend to imply that *L’Humanité* never spoke about the trial. He wanted only to say that *L’Humanité* did not say what the French workers expected of it in responding to the lies of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic press.

As for the views of the French Party’s leaders on the trade-union question, Comrade Lozovsky read here this morning two passages of an article by the Party’s administrative secretary.³¹ This article has special importance because its author is not just any old member of the Party. He is a Central Committee member and administrative secretary of the Party. He wrote this article immediately after he signed a declaration, along with other Central Committee members, stating their intention to carry out the policies of the Communist International. After submitting this fine declaration, he wrote an article commenting on a motion on the trade unions. He quoted a passage from this motion stating that the Communist Party is the Party that best incorporates the endeavours of the working class and is best able to ensure the defence of this class. He is then quick to add that this is a thoroughly excessive and dangerous formulation, which the Central Committee, of course, could not accept. Other such passages could be cited, but this is not particularly helpful,

31. For the quotations from Soutif, see p. 547–8.

and for us it is also a bit humiliating to have to display this picture of the French Party.

As Comrade Tasca explained here, the trade-union question stands at the heart of the French question. So long as the Party has not resolved this issue, it obviously cannot be regarded as a Communist party. Why is it, then, that the theses distributed to the Congress contain this Point 20, regarding which we already had such an intense debate with Comrade Azzario in the commission meeting?

Just like Comrade Tasca today, Comrade Azzario asked why the theses and general decisions should take up the special case of France. If special instructions are needed regarding France, he said, there will always be time for this in dealing with the French question and in discussing the resolution that will close the debates on this point.

Yet we consider that a special point is still needed in these theses. Why? Because of this situation in the Communist Party of France.

Before the Congress, you had a more or less approximate concept of the French Party's conduct. Now you know it quite precisely. You know that the French Party has not yet taken the first step on the trade-union question, and that it does not even want to take this first step. Moreover, when individual party members demand that the Party emerge from its passivity and demonstrate its will to act as a true Communist workers' party, you can be sure that they are sharply disavowed by the Central Committee members and maliciously attacked by those who have political reasons for making common cause with the syndicalists.

That is the present situation in France. The Communist Party, which has no trade-union policy of its own, faces the CGTU, which, of course, maintains its ties with the masses. The CGTU's activity expresses communism in France reasonably well, or at least, given the circumstances, expresses it better than the Party.

The Party votes for the decisions of the Communist International. When these decisions are presented to it a second time, it votes for them again. But nothing changes. Its policies remain exactly the same as what they were before.

All economic battles are carried out by the CGTU, and the Communist Party limits itself to offering unconditional support.

In Point 20 of the theses, we present the general situation in France, where a mighty revolutionary-syndicalist movement exists alongside a Communist party that is not yet a Communist party. We do not want in the slightest to weaken the general observations that have just been voiced, and we do not want in any way to moderate the principles and methods of the Communist International.

We confidently hope that these principles and methods will, at a certain point, no longer seem excessive, even in France, and that they will be applied in exactly the same way as is notably already the case in Italy.

The comrades of the Left have quite a different conception of relations with the CGTU from comrades who have until now led the Party. In our view, the Party's relations to the CGTU will take on the character that is essential to serve the interests of both the trade-union organisation and the Party and workers' movement as a whole only when these relations are imbued with the Left's conceptions. As I just said, our theories are different from those of our syndicalist comrades. As long as they remain revolutionary syndicalists and we remain Communists, we will have significant theoretical differences with them.

Should we hide these differences? Not at all. Otherwise, we will merely continue the previous policy of abdication by the Party with regard to the CGTU. This policy is not Communist; it is incompatible with the essence of the Communist party. This policy is, so to speak, the source of all the difficulties now affecting the French Party.

On the contrary, we believe that no unpleasant results will follow from admitting the theoretical disagreements that separate us from the syndicalists and, where necessary, even emphasising them. This will in no way disrupt the working relationship that must exist between the CGTU and the Party. When the Party establishes its direction emphatically and energetically, there will be discussions and perhaps unavoidable frictions with the CGTU comrades. Nonetheless, we are convinced that the work will then proceed under much more favourable conditions. The revolutionary syndicalists will hold the Party in more esteem than is the case today. Why should a syndicalist respect the Communist Party today, given that it does not essentially differ from the old Socialist Party?

It has already been said that the formulation that trade unions should be subordinated to the Party, which crops up so often in these controversies, is impossible, and certainly does not express in any way the Communist attitude to party/trade-union relations. Rather, if you observe the present events in France, what you see is, in fact, a subordination of the Party to the CGTU.

When a workers' organisation takes a decision and adopts an agenda that now and then includes clearly anti-Communist statements, this decision or agenda is passed on to *L'Humanité* for publication. If the editor for this item decides to add a short comment saying that the text includes things that no Communist can accept, this causes something of a scandal. That's because we are so accustomed to having every message reproduced without comment, no matter what its character and importance may be.

And I must say that this attitude is also reflected in *L'Humanité*.

Cachin: Please permit me to make a correction. In fact, there were two occasions on which the CGTU sent a delegation to *L'Humanité*. They came to complain of the following:

- 1.) Because of the non-publication of an official decision written by the CGTU's bureau or the trade-union federation of the Seine district.
- 2.) Because of the fact that an official statement submitted to an editor of *L'Humanité* was not published in its original form. Rather, comments were inserted inside the text.

The delegation came simply to tell us: 'We do not in the slightest deny the right of *L'Humanité* to make criticisms of our statements. But, because *L'Humanité* is a working-class newspaper, it should publish our texts and then make comments at its discretion. We demand only that the comments not be inserted into the text.'

That was the only time we received a complaint and a request for its correction.

I confess that the director of *L'Humanité* told the comrade who is responsible for the *Vie sociale* [*Social Issues*] column that we believe it is correct for the official CGTU statement to appear in the paper and that a comment appear only afterwards.

As for the second incident that you have alluded to, it concerns the following. The CGTU brought us an article. The article did not appear. The CGTU then protested through a second delegation.

In this case, too, the *L'Humanité* leadership agreed it was necessary that the article appear, followed by the commentary.

That is a more precise portrayal of the facts you have pointed to, facts that – permit me to tell you this – you have not conveyed accurately.

Rosmer: If I were to present all the complaints that Communists can raise against *L'Humanité*'s treatment of trade-union matters, I would need far more time than the fifteen minutes I have been granted.

We will have time in the French Commission to discuss these facts and these points of view. We will also discuss some of the editorials that have appeared recently, in which this situation is dealt with directly or by allusion.

I merely tried to show through examples the nature of the situation in France with regard to the discussion initiated by Comrade Tasca regarding Point 20. I have showed that the Communist Party refrains from any initiative in the arena of worker struggles, that it limits itself to supporting and assisting

the CGTU. I maintain, contrary to Comrade Tasca, that this situation, which was dealt with in the drafting of Point 20, belongs in the overall theses.

For, although these theses are general in nature, they take up specific problems of trade-union action, talking of unity, split, and propaganda in the international industrial federations. The question is no longer posed as at the Second Congress, where it was a matter of defining for the first time the Party's role and the relations between party and trade unions.

Comrade Azzario also wanted the Commission to include in the proposed text a passage that would recall the role of the party and the Communist International's policy in the trade-union arena. We suggested to him that there is no need to include this wording once again. We said: 'To include it again is superfluous for you Italians, since you have already carried it out. If you wish it to be published again for France, that brings us no advantage, because the French problem is much more difficult to resolve.'

This work must start anew in France. In Italy, you have already systematically applied the policies adopted by Communist International. But the situation in France is quite the opposite. The work has not yet been tackled. It must begin, so that the French Party can become a Communist party. In my opinion, it is appropriate for this very reason that this text, which is general in character, include a special paragraph dealing with France. Of course, if this concerned a matter of principle, if it concerned modifying one of the Communist International's basic principles regarding relations between party and trade unions, we would be the first to oppose it. But I repeat, once again, that question is practical in nature. It's a matter of characterising the given situation and deducing from that the appropriate form of action.

For this reason, I ask our Comrade Tasca and our Italian comrades not to insist on their motion to delete Point 20. We, for our part, can assure them that this is absolutely not to be understood as showing an inclination to cancel the principles adopted by the Communist International in its thesis on the relations between the party and the trade unions.

Chair: Comrades, the summary by Comrade Lozovsky will be postponed until tomorrow. The Presidium has decided to give the floor this evening to a Turkish comrade, who has to make an important and urgent statement.

Orhan (Sadrettin Celal Antel, Turkey): Comrades, you have all read the newspaper reports of mass arrests of Communists in Asia Minor [Anatolia] and the dissolution of the Turkish workers' union in Constantinople [Istanbul]. To enable you to gain an accurate understanding of this repression and the meaning of this new orientation of Kemalism, I believe it is necessary to inform the

Congress regarding the activity of the Angora [Ankara] and Constantinople Communist Parties and the policies of the nationalist government.³²

The Communist Party of Turkey was founded at a time when the bourgeois-nationalist government, which had been able to place itself at the head of the freedom movement initiated by the workers and peasants, turned against the vital interests of the working masses. As a result, the newly founded Communist Party faced two enemies: imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. The Party considered that the struggle against imperialism, its main enemy, was of overriding importance. It decided to support the government as long as it was combating imperialism. But it also continued to demand democratic reforms for the workers and peasants and endeavoured to organise them. These decisions corresponded to the resolutions of the Second Congress on the national and colonial questions.³³

From its founding until the present moment, the Party has not altered this policy in the slightest. To indicate this, I will cite as an example the Party's proclamations to the army, the workers, and the peasants, calling on them to fight onward to final victory. On the other hand, its proclamation to the Greek army and working masses called on them to arise and disorganise the army, which is fighting only for the profit of the Greek bourgeoisie and British imperialism.

Very recently, the Party issued another proclamation calling on the inhabitants of Constantinople to form a united front against reaction and imperialism, and to prevent the Sultan from escaping and place him before the Supreme People's Court.³⁴

The government of Grand National Assembly, which arose out of the movement for independence, always proclaimed the defence of the National Pact and the struggle against imperialism, which drew strength from the support of the entire East.³⁵ But its activity during the last three years has shown that

32. Following the expulsion of the Greek army from Anatolia in September 1922, the present territory of Turkey was divided between Anatolia, ruled by the nationalist régime in Angora; and Constantinople and surrounding territories, occupied by Entente forces and ruled by the Turkish sultan under their domination. On 1 November, the Angora government declared the sultan deposed; three days later, it took over administration of Constantinople. See also p. 122, n. 7.

33. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 283–90.

34. Three days before Orhan's speech, on 17 November, the deposed Sultan Mehmed left Constantinople aboard a British warship and went into exile in Italy.

35. Revolutionary-nationalist forces convened the Grand National Assembly in Angora on 23 April 1920. The National Pact was a declaration initiated by a congress of revolutionary nationalists who met in Ezerum, July–August 1919. It demanded the recovery of Constantinople from Entente occupation and the union under Turkish sovereignty of all parts of the former Ottoman Empire inhabited by an 'Ottoman Muslim majority'.

this was merely a policy of deceit. In this regard, the following facts are particularly indicative.

- 1.) As the government was in the process of establishing its initial relations with the Soviet government, the delegates it sent to Moscow claimed that a large Communist party existed in their country. It had mainly attracted peasants, they said, and, in many localities, there were even functioning peasant soviets.
- 2.) In order to deceive Soviet Russia, during the initial period of their rule they constructed a so-called Bolshevik party, the 'Green Army', which consisted exclusively of bourgeois forces.
- 3.) After the arrival of the first Soviet ambassador in Angora, they founded an official Communist Party formed of the remnants of this Green Army plus high officials and intellectuals.
- 4.) In order to please the imperialist governments, the delegation travelling to the London Conference proclaimed in all capitals that about twenty Communists, including our outstanding comrades Subhi and Ethem Nejad, had been killed; that all other imprisoned Communists would be killed; and that the Bolshevik plague would not trouble their country.³⁶
- 5.) The treaty concluded with France in 1921 showed that the government had loosened its ties with the East and was making concessions at the expense of the National Pact.³⁷
- 6.) Finally, the repressive measures taken against the Communist Party and the Turkish Workers' Union coincide with the convocation of the Lausanne Conference.³⁸

36. 'London Conference' probably refers to the meeting held in London by the Supreme Council of Allied powers in February–March 1921 and attended by delegates of both the Angora and Constantinople Turkish governments. The Allied powers offered modifications of the Sèvres Treaty, which were rejected by both Greek and Turkish representatives.

37. Following the failure of the London Conference, France acted unilaterally to conclude an agreement with the Angora government, published 20 October 1921. France evacuated Cilicia (southern Anatolia), ceded territory along the Syrian border, and recognised the Angora régime, obtaining, in return, commercial concessions. British foreign secretary Lord Curzon protested about the agreement in a diplomatic note of 5 November 1921.

38. The Lausanne Conference convened 20 November 1922 to resolve the international crisis provoked by the victory of the Turkish independence movement and the collapse of the Treaty of Sèvres. After much negotiation, a treaty was signed 24 July 1923, recognising Turkish sovereignty over all the territory of the present-day Turkish Republic. Turkey accepted certain measures for demilitarisation of the Straits, which were revoked in 1936. Turkey was thus the first defeated power of the World War to shake itself free of the imposed peace treaty and achieve a new agreement consistent with its basic demands.

As for the Angora government's internal policies, they consist of obstructing the work of any group or party that has a programme of democratic reforms, destroying any opposition before it becomes strong or entrenched, and deceiving the people with solemn promises. This policy is expressed in the following facts:

- 1.) They suppressed the 'People's Group' that was formed within the Grand National Assembly and that was advocating a broad programme of reforms.
- 2.) They rejected the proposal of voting by profession that had been raised during the drafting of the constitution.
- 3.) In order to oppress the opposition groups that existed within the Grand National Assembly, they created the 'Solidarity group', and formed groups in every part of Asia Minor in order to secure their rule over the broad layers of the people. These groups consisted exclusively of members of the bourgeoisie, large landholders, and other speculators.
- 4.) Despite their promises, they carried out no reforms of any kind in the interests of the working masses. On the contrary, they took all possible measures to block the foundation of trade unions and workers' associations and left the peasants to be crushed by the weight of unbearable taxes.

The Party's relationship with the masses

The slogans advanced by the Party received a strong response from the broad masses of exploited workers and peasants, leading the more class conscious among them to join the Party. Despite repeated waves of governmental repression against the Party, the workers and peasants clung to it all the more strongly. In a short period, it achieved important successes. During the second period of its activity, from March to October 1922, it carried out fruitful work in propaganda and education and in organising the red trade-union and Communist youth organisations. Noticing its strong influence among the masses, the government prepared to bring the Party's activity to an end.

Constantinople

I will say something more about the workers' movement and the influence of the Communist group in Constantinople, where the Turkish Workers' Union has just been banned on the pretext that it was engaging in Communist propaganda. The work carried out there was much more difficult. There is no need, comrades, to describe the harsh and tragic conditions of the comrades who are locked in struggle with the reactionary Turkish government and imperial-

ism as a whole, which is an out-and-out enemy of communism. But, despite all obstacles and all the terror, the Communist group in Constantinople, after almost two years of illegal work, has achieved significant mass influence. It has built cells in factories, workplaces, and almost everywhere that there are working people. It has distributed legal and illegal leaflets, magazines, manifestos, and essays, as well as many Communist publications, which it regularly obtains from the Communist organisations.

It is, of course, impossible this evening to tell you of everything that the Communist group in Constantinople has accomplished. But, in order to give you an idea of its activity, let me mention that, in July, the most important workers' organisations of Constantinople gathered in order to achieve a proletarian united front against the general capitalist offensive.

The International Union of Workers,³⁹ which we had, until then, viewed as the most class-conscious workers' organisation, sabotaged this initiative to establish a united front. These comrades said that the working class was not yet prepared and had first to be educated. We responded that it was the leaders who did not want unity, which would be created through action. We also said that, if we did not succeed in achieving this unity, the bourgeoisie would then destroy all the workers' organisations that were not linked together. Events have proven that we were right. Today we see the results.

The government's new orientation and our perspectives

As for the new orientation of Kemalism, we can summarise it by saying that the Turkish national bourgeoisie, which displayed such hatred for imperialism at the London Conference, has been led by the lure of sharing in the exploitation of the Turkish working people to change its policy, from one of all-out war to one of concessions and betrayals. Since the London Conference, the revolutionary mood of the national bourgeoisie has vanished. And, now, the Angora government is headed for the Lausanne Conference, seeking to achieve the peace terms that are needed for its existence and the interests of the big bourgeoisie. It aims to do this through concessions relating to the National Pact, made at the cost of the working masses.

As you see, the Angora government has not abstained from the overall capitalist offensive that targets the proletariat and the Communists. When

39. The International Union of Workers was formed in Constantinople late in 1920 and united about five thousand workers, mainly ethnic Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. It joined the RILU the following year. In the summer of 1922, the IUW declined to unite with a Turkish workers' association in a labour confederation. In October, however, the two groups joined in agitating for withdrawal of Allied occupation forces, and both were driven underground.

Comrade Clara Zetkin denounced in the opening session the persecution of Communists in Italy, Poland, Romania, Greece, Latvia, and elsewhere, we had already received the telegram informing us of the barbaric repression by Mustafa Kemal's government against the Communist Party of Turkey. We rightly term this repression barbaric, because the police subjected the prisoners to inhuman torture with open razors and sharpened iron bars.

In carrying out these mass arrests, the Mustafa Kemal government accused the arrested comrades of having spied in the interests of Soviet Russia, making them guilty of high treason. According to reports received more recently, the arrests are continuing. The number of arrested now exceeds two hundred. In Constantinople itself, the union of workers of Turkey was shut down, and Communists are being hunted down. There is no other country where so many arrests have taken place in normal times. Despite the repression and terror, the workers and peasants, who have now learned to distinguish their true friends and foes, are gathering even more closely around their party. We can illustrate this with a few facts:

- 1.) When the Communist workers were arrested in the Angora munitions factory, the non-Communist workers asked why the arrests were taking place. When told it was because the arrested were Communists, they said: 'Since you are arresting those who defend the proletariat's interests, you can arrest us too. We were not Communists before, but we are now.'
- 2.) The appeal of a Communist worker, protesting against this arbitrary action and calling on the workers to unite around the Communist Party, was supported by most of the workers present. There was a clash, and the officers rushing to the scene had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.
- 3.) When arrests were carried out in peasant organisations, peasant resistance was quite strong.
- 4.) In Constantinople, the Communists remain at their posts in the struggle, despite the dictatorship and the terror of the now united imperialism and bourgeoisie.

Comrades, the information I have passed on to you enables you to grasp that the Communist Parties of Turkey and Constantinople have always supported the national-liberation struggle, in line with the directives of the Communist International. In view of the overall situation, the Communist Parties have always devoted their activity to organising and educating the proletariat, while demanding democratic reforms for the broad masses. The bourgeois-nationalist government has always persecuted the Party, despite its forthcoming and favourable stance. We now see that it is determined to destroy every revolutionary and communist movement.

It is truly strange that the government is proceeding in this fashion with its blind anti-Communist policies at a moment when all imperialist forces are united to achieve Turkey's full subjugation – a moment when the government needs greater support from the working masses and the entire world proletariat. However, the stupidity and criminal character of its actions will be clearly shown as the working masses and world proletariat, which have supported the struggle during these three years, undertake to strike back. This will not be long in coming.

Comrades, the Turkish delegation proposes that the Fourth Congress of the Communist International send the following open letter in the name of the world proletariat to the working people of Turkey who suffer under the dictatorship of imperialism and the government of national betrayal, as well as to the comrades in prison, who bravely await the coming great day of liberation.

To the Communists and Working Masses of Turkey

The Fourth Congress of the Third International, held at the moment of the fifth anniversary of the great proletarian revolution, sends the workers and peasants of Turkey its warm greetings on the success of your heroic struggle for independence against Western imperialism.

Comrades of Turkey, you have provided to the entire subjugated East and to all colonial countries the living example of a revolutionary independence movement.

However, recent events show that the bourgeois-nationalist government seeks to usurp the fruits of this victory, achieved through your enormous sacrifices. The nationalist government in Angora is ready to come to terms with the imperialists in return for some concessions favouring the Turkish big bourgeoisie.

It has initiated this new policy by dissolving the Communist Party, suppressing all its organisations, carrying out mass arrests, and mistreating the arrested comrades in barbaric fashion. It has suppressed the union of workers of Turkey in Constantinople. The Communist Party of Turkey always supported the bourgeois-nationalist government in the struggle of the working masses against imperialism. The Communist Party of Turkey showed itself ready, in the face of the common enemy, even to make temporary sacrifices with regard to its programme and ideas.

The conduct of the bourgeois government toward the Communist Party is explained by its desire to sweep aside the class-conscious representatives of the workers and peasants, who demand realisation of the reforms promised them in order to obtain their aid. It also wants to appear at the Lausanne Conference as a true bourgeois government. The bourgeois government of Turkey

has the audacity to commit these crimes against you and your representatives, crimes that arouse intense indignation on the part of the entire world proletariat, led by the Russian proletariat, which grudged no material sacrifice during the difficult time when all the imperialist and capitalist classes united in the attempt to strangle Turkey's working people.

The nationalist government aims to destroy your true representatives and separate you from your friends abroad, as it prepares to come to agreement with imperialism.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International protests vigorously against this barbaric action and considers it as its duty to solemnly declare that it stands ready to support any government or political party that rejects the role of imperialist gendarme, continues the struggle against imperialism and reaction, and carries out democratic reforms in favour of the working masses of Turkey.

The Communist International, as general staff and defender of the world proletariat as a whole, greets you with heartfelt warmth, arrested comrades, as the class-conscious and dedicated representatives of the Turkish working masses.

Do not forget, comrades, that the gloom of dungeons can never obscure the sun of revolution.

Do not forget, comrades, that, on the eve of revolutionary victory, the impotence of the ruling class is expressed in heightened brutality. Capitalism is collapsing under the weight of its internal contradictions, and the clash of imperialist rivalries is at its peak. It is at this moment that we see the international bourgeoisie redouble its persecution against vanguard fighters and creators of the new communist society.

But no white terror can shake those with firm belief in inevitable and final victory. And in place of every comrade thrown in prison or shot, hundreds of comrades will step forward from the ranks of the exploited proletarian masses in order to continue the liberation struggle with renewed vigour.

Comrades, the Third International takes it as its vital duty to do all necessary to rescue you from the hands of your hangmen.

Long live the world-revolution!

Long live the devoted Turkish Communists!

Long live the Communist International!

Long live Soviet Russia!

(The resolution is unanimously adopted.)

Adjournment: 11:30 p.m.

Session 18 – Tuesday, 21 November 1922

Trade Unions (Summary); Programme; Workers' Aid

Trade-Union Question. Declaration of the Russian Delegation on the Programme. Motion by the Presidium and Declaration of the Italian Delegation on the Question of the Programme. Workers' Aid.

Speakers: Lozovsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Bordiga, Radek, Béron, Münzenberg

Convened: 12 noon

Chairperson: Neurath

Lozovsky: Comrades, the debate that unfolded yesterday following my report shows, above all, that we are in agreement regarding the essence of this question and the principles at stake here. But some differences of opinion exist among us regarding the form and methods of practical Communist work in the trade unions. In my opinion, some comrades have expressed ideas that are incorrect. I will begin with the objections of Comrade Heckert.

I referred in my talk to the fact that certain cases have arisen in *Germany* where our comrades did not act with sufficient skill, leading to unfavourable results for the Communist movement. I will cite only two examples: that of the Federation of Manual and Intellectual Workers [UHK] and that of the Federation of Farmworkers.

We agree entirely with our KPD comrades that all is not well with the UHK. What is the Federation of Manual and Intellectual Workers? It is an organisation encompassing various syndicalist, Communist,

and unaffiliated forces. It includes many backward workers who do not yet have a clear and defined understanding of communism in either theoretical or practical terms, but who are good, battle-ready revolutionaries. It is natural that our influence with such an organisation will be different in its forms and methods from what it is with an organisation directly affiliated to the Communist Party.

When we encounter confusion in the Communist Party, we take decisive measures against it, the nature of which can be organisational, broadly political, or related to party politics. But, when we face confusion of this sort in a non-party organisation, we must develop comprehensive educational, political, and organisational activity in order to instil communist class consciousness in non-party masses.

The disagreement between me and Comrade Heckert does not relate to whether this activity to raise the communist consciousness of the proletarian masses should be carried out, but to the way it is conducted. The criticisms that our German comrades are now energetically raising with regard to the UHK are, of course, fundamentally correct. The UHK is a confusionist organisation. But a number of measures that the German comrades took against the UHK were incorrect, because these actions could drive good revolutionary forces away from the Communist Party.

A conference of party and trade-union staffers held in Berlin illustrates this problem. In a conflict between the employers and miners in the Ruhr district, the miners planned to launch a strike in two weeks. The old miners' union proposed to inform the employers about the strike in advance. Every worker had to sign an individual notification regarding the strike. That was an extremely unusual roundabout approach, but it could possibly have exerted some pressure on the employers. The reformist union took this decision in the hope that it would reassure the working masses who had been aroused by the employers' offensive. But the UHK declared that this tactic was unacceptable. They said that it was an opportunist procedure, and they recognised only revolutionary methods of struggle, and they would not sign and send off any such notifications to the employers.

The Party opposed the UHK's policy. It told the UHKers that if the reformists are taking a certain step, they should do so likewise, while explaining to the workers: 'This step is insufficient. More radical, revolutionary methods of struggle are needed against capitalism. But if you do not sign the declaration proposed by the old miners' union, revolutionary workers will say that you are just playing with words, while you reject united struggle.' The UHK was in the wrong in this case, acting on the basis of abstract 'eternal' principles rather than the requirements of reality.

We held a conference in Berlin, in which the secretary of the Communist organisation in Rhineland-Westphalia took part. In this meeting, I asked Comrade König, 'How many members are there in the UHK of Rhineland-Westphalia?' He told me there were 70,000.

And how many members in the Party? His answer was 29,000.

So I asked a final question, 'How is it possible that, with 29,000 members in the Party, you are not able to influence the UHK?'

Comrade König told me frankly, 'Even among the Communists, there is much confusion.'

At which I said, 'If confusion is so widespread in the ranks of the Party, it must cure itself, before it undertakes to stamp out confusionism among the non-party UHK-members.'

Certainly, compared to the German workers' movement as a whole, the UHK is an insignificant force, with only 150,000 members. But, among them, are 120,000 miners in the Ruhr-district, and that is a force that can by no means be ignored or remain unnoticed.

The RILU [Red International of Labour Unions] and the Communist International succeeded in resolving the conflict that was brewing between the KPD and the UHK. All of the RILU's proposals were ultimately adopted by the UHK's last congress.

Comrade Heckert has asked how we can organise the workers who are leaving the trade unions, and whether this activity will promote a policy of splitting the unions. In my opinion, we have to consider this question thoroughly. Let us take for example the German farmworkers' federation. This union had 500,000 members or more. In two years, it has lost 200,000 to 300,000 members. We have a choice. Either we remain inactive and say, 'Good, you can go', or the KPD takes on the task to organise the workers who are leaving this union.

Do we run the risk of being accused of splitting the trade unions because we organise these forces who have left the unions? Of course not. If we do not organise these workers, we are not Communists. For us, as Marxists, the organisation is not a goal but a means of achieving our goal. We are fighting for the unity of the trade-union movement, but we cannot sacrifice to an abstract principle the organisation of hundreds of thousands of workers.

I will now speak of *France*. Many comrades will say that the speech by Comrade Lauridan was a call to battle against syndicalism. I do not agree. It is an appeal for Communist dignity. Lauridan talked to us about the most ordinary things, which are nonetheless the most essential for every Communist. What he wants is also what we want. We want Communists in the trade unions and cooperatives always to remain Communists. They must act as Communists

everywhere – not isolated, disconnected, but unified by a collective Communist will. We pose the question above all whether the Communist Party of France had its own trade-union policy. It had resolutions on the trade-union question but no trade-union policy, because it enjoyed no collective influence and because there was no will to carry out such a trade-union policy. We want Communists to apply our practical slogans, our ideas and points of view, our decisions and class-struggle methods. And it must be added that, wherever Communists are together, even if there are only three of them, they must always, when required, come to agreement.

When I came to Saint-Étienne,¹ I asked our Communist comrades how it is possible for two or three thousand anarchists to exert more influence in the trade unions than the Communist Party with its hundred thousand members? Is that because one anarchist is worth fifty Communists? That can only happen if the Communists do not want to carry out communist work and hold themselves aloof from their party. A Communist who is not aggressive is not a Communist. I mean aggressiveness not verbally but in reality, in active struggle against the bourgeoisie, in which Communists must always take the lead. To be a Communist does not just mean having a membership card. It means being deeply convinced of the correctness of the Communist programme and tactics.

Is it true, I ask, that anarcho-syndicalists print articles in the Communist Party's publications that are directed against the Communist International, the RILU, and the Communist Party itself? You will concede that this was actually the case. Is it true that anarcho-syndicalists develop their propaganda in the French Communist Party's publications? Yes, it is true. I could provide hundreds of examples. Is it true that there was a bloc between some anarcho-syndicalists and members of the Communist Party?

Lauridan: They signed a secret agreement.

Lozovsky: Yes, certainly! Communists signed a secret agreement with anarcho-syndicalists.²

How did the Communist Party respond to the publication of this agreement? When the agreement was published, the Central Committee of the

1. The Saint-Étienne Congress of the CGTU (25 June–1 July 1922) was marked by a struggle between the revolutionary syndicalists of *La Vie ouvrière*, in which some CP members were active, and an anarchist current. A Communist motion for affiliation to the RILU did not win wide support. The *Vie ouvrière* group proposed affiliation on the condition that the principle of syndicalist autonomy was preserved, and this passed by a two-thirds majority.

2. See p. 571, n. 4.

Party took no measures to call to order the Communists and Communist supporters who had signed this agreement in secret.

Cachin: With your permission, there was a trade-union commission, assigned responsibility for work in the unions. The chairman of this commission was Comrade Tommasi of the left wing. He did not make a single report on these matters to the Central Committee. Responsibility must be precisely determined, and not just always blamed on the same people.

Paquereaux: That is an accusation directed against the other current.

Lozovsky (*continuing*): Please be assured that, at this point, I am not trying to blame anyone. I believe that you and I agree that the chairman of a commission, regardless of the current he belongs to – left, right, or centre – should be removed from the Party if he does not carry out his responsibilities. (*Applause.* *Interjection by Lauridan: 'Very true'.*)

Neither the trade-union commission nor the Central Committee took any action against the party members who signed an anti-Communist agreement. In my view, that is an abnormal occurrence. Whether it is left, right, or other comrades who fail in their duty, responsibility rests on the Party in its totality.

We can determine that, at present, the Party as a whole does not have an influence in the French trade-union movement corresponding to its numbers. If the Communist Party was cohesive and united in its actions, its influence would be ten times as great.

Now, I would like to raise another question that is perhaps a bit awkward. After the Saint-Étienne Congress, I read an article of Comrade Frossard, in which he writes, in part, 'In the trade-union movement we are followers of the glorious tradition of Jean Jaurès.' We have the deepest respect for the memory of Jaurès. But his traditions are not Communist in character. We can say that without any fear of dishonouring his memory. Jaurès was one of the outstanding leaders of the Second International. He gave his life for his deep convictions. But our respect for him should not lead us to hold that everything he did was right. No, Jaurès's policies are unacceptable for the Communist party. If the Communist parties lived from tradition, they would not achieve much. There are useful traditions that we have to take into account, and also bad traditions that we must reject.³

There is also another kind of tradition in the French trade-union movement. The traditions of the industrial proletariat of northern France are different from those of the small craftsmen of Paris. The strength of the industrial

3. See also Trotsky's comments on the Jaurès controversy on pp. 991–3.

regions lies in the linkage of the trade unions with the political movement. And, if we are to take traditions into account, I prefer the superior traditions of northern France.

Finally, I have something more to say on France. The Communist Party of France has, during the entire recent period, lacked a defined and clear position on the trade-union question. Indeed, they feared taking such a position and were constantly sneaking a look at the syndicalists. But, with all due regard to the syndicalists' autonomy, the French Communists should not forget that they themselves are just as autonomous and independent, and they must have the courage not always to heed the syndicalists but to express their own point of view.

I will now move on to *Italy*, to the remarks of Comrade Tasca. He portrayed a sorrowful picture, in which even Bernstein and reformism gained mention. What was it in my report that provided the basis for the dreary picture portrayed by Comrade Tasca? What did he find shocking? It was my statement that life cannot be adapted to theses, but, rather, that theses must be adapted to the requirements of life. He believes he has seen something in these words that is reminiscent of Bernstein. Of course, what I said had nothing in common with Bernstein's principles.

The reformists say that the final goal can be achieved through reforms, without any exertion. We, on the other hand, say that, on the foundations of daily struggle, we will organise an army, ready for battle, to defeat the bourgeoisie and achieve our final goal, communism.

Communism is our final goal. How will we achieve it? In different ways, because, in each country, the condition of the working class has its unique features, and each country is at a different stage, a different point on the road leading to our goal. We must take these peculiarities of each country into account and apply the corresponding policies. Such a conception is in no way equivalent to Bernstein's rejection of the final goal. The fears of Comrade Tasca are therefore without foundation.

We are today confronted with strong reformist unions in which a vast educational effort must be carried out in order to alter the ideology of the working masses. We are rather far removed from that goal, because we have to overcome a large number of historical difficulties. These difficulties consist of the abnormal relationships of many Communist parties to the trade unions that arose on the basis of parliamentary-socialist traditions.

What is the essence of Point 20 of my theses? This point states that, in the countries where the Party is not yet strong enough and where an internal struggle is still taking place, such reciprocal relationships between trade unions and the Party must be created in a form corresponding to the current

situation. In France, as you know, a distinct party grew up inside the trade unions that was known as syndicalism. Our task is to unite the best forces in the present Communist party and the unions. On the basis of common action, the best forces of both organisations will come closer and closer to each other. Out of this process a true and unified Communist party will take shape, a true vanguard of the French proletariat. The two parties, syndicalist and communist, are not developing along parallel lines that never meet. No, their lines will come together, and the Communist Party of France will then finally be organised.

When we determine the principles of our work in this or that country, we must start with the real relationship of forces and the current relationships that have evolved in each country between the trade unions and the party. That is why we included Point 20 in the theses. In doing this, we followed the advice of Lassalle: 'Say what is; say the truth, whatever it may be.'

Comrade Tasca told us that the RILU is no more than a propaganda bureau and that if it wished to be more, if it wished to become a centre unifying the international revolutionary trade-union movement, this would cause a split in the world trade-union movement.⁴ That assertion is incorrect. Of course, we are a centre for propaganda, but, at the same time, we are an organisation. The RILU's specific character consists of the fact that it includes not only the revolutionary organisations affiliated to it directly but also the revolutionary minorities in the trade-union federations that belong to Amsterdam. The RILU is a true international organisation, enjoying great moral and political authority among the working masses. If we were to decide to withdraw from the Amsterdam trade unions all the working masses sympathetic to us in all countries, and establish immediate and exclusive relations between them and the RILU, this would mean a split. But because we do not desire a split, we say that, despite all the difficulties, we will remain inside the Amsterdam trade unions and work there in the interests of the RILU.

Comrade Tasca spoke of the factory councils. This question was taken up at the Second Congress, and I do not believe we need to go into it here. The factory-council movement in Germany at present is an enormous mass movement. But I repeat that we will not take up this question here, since it is dealt with in the theses on the Communist International's overall tactics.⁵

Then there is the question of when the national organisations should declare their affiliation to the RILU. That is a tactical question. If a country's

4. For Tasca's speech, see pp. 591–5.

5. See 'Theses on the Trade-Union Movement, Factory Committees, and the Communist International', Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 625–34; and below, pp. 1162–3.

trade-union confederation is with us, we say: 'You must affiliate to the RILU.' In the interests of clarity, I would like to illustrate this point with an example. We proposed to the official representatives of the Italian workers' confederation that they join the RILU. They signed a document with us, which they then themselves tore up. Whether the official organisation joins us or not, we are still against a split. One thing is clear: we must develop revolutionary-communist activity in the trade unions. We must spur the reformist organisations to action. Forms and methods of work must be found in each country that bring to us the broad working masses in their full extent and thus safeguard the unity of the trade-union movement.

The policy we are recommending regarding affiliation to the RILU is, however, considered incorrect by many trade-union organisations. In Norway, for example, 80% of the working class sympathise with us. Twice already, the national organisation of Norwegian trade unions has decided to join us. Their hesitations however arose from the fact that 20% of the members of Norwegian unions sympathise with Amsterdam. Is this a split, when a union organisation where only 10% or 20% of the members are reformist in outlook joins us? Certainly not! We declare that the minority must stay in the trade union and subordinate itself to the majority. That is what we do, when we are in the minority. Certainly, the majority should not be subordinate to the minority. In a situation where our supporters are a majority in a union organisation, their duty is to affiliate officially to the RILU.

Now, I will speak of the international federations [in each industry].⁶ No one can question the right of the international propaganda committees to carry out propaganda on a national and international level. A union that joins an organisation carrying out propagandistic activity still remains a member of its international federation. It continues its work in the international federation, seeking to win as large as possible a proportion of its organisations away from the federation's ideological influence and toward our political beliefs.

We do not wish to carry out a split in the international industry federations. When the Russian and Bulgarian trade unions requested to become members of the international federations, they were thrown out. They went back again and were once again shown the door. They went back yet again, because they do not want a split. But, at the point where the Amsterdammers represent only the trade-union leadership and the workers are ready to follow us, we will not hesitate to create our own international organisation.

6. See p. 533, n. 4.

The final question that we wish to take up here is that of *Czechoslovakia*. There are at present two trade-union organisations in Czechoslovakia.⁷ The split in Czechoslovakia took place in much the same manner as in France. Here, too, there were mass expulsions of revolutionary workers from the trade unions, and the minority then organised and called a congress to re-establish unity.

At the present moment, we face the accomplished fact. We have to deal with two parallel organisations. I would like to refer to a characteristic aspect of the activity of our comrades in Czechoslovakia. About ten months ago, in March, the Communists were in a position to obtain a majority at the congress of the trade-union confederation. What then happened? Many Communists in Czechoslovakia want to be 'independent' of the Party – fewer than in France, but nonetheless a quite considerable number. The large federation of farmworkers, led by Comrade Bolen, refused before the congress to pay its membership dues. It stuck to this position for six months and succeeded in getting its representatives excluded from the congress.⁸

How did the Party respond to this? I must add that Comrade Bolen, who leads the farmworkers' federation, is also a member of the Party's Central Committee. It did nothing at all. The reformists would have had exactly the same number of votes as the Communists, if fifty comrades had not remained outside the congress solely because of the money question. But, at that time, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia feared gaining a majority at the congress, which would have landed it in many subsequent difficulties. And what was the final outcome? The reformists expelled the revolutionary unions and carried out a split that took place under conditions that were very difficult for our comrades.

After I returned from Saint-Étienne, I conducted negotiations with the comrades from Czechoslovakia, and we worked out ways to counter the split. We settled on a number of methods of struggle and made it clear that we did not want a split.

I would now like to direct your attention to a different question. Our Czechoslovak comrades decided at their congress to create a unified [trade-union] organisation, abolishing the individual independent federations. (That is what has happened in France in the Moselle department.) The individual industrial federations were to become divisions of a unified national trade-union

7. Lozovsky is referring to the division in Czechoslovakia between the Social-Democratic-led unions and the revolutionary unions they expelled during 1922. A congress of the red unions 26–9 October formed the International All-Trade-Union Federation, with a membership of more than 300,000, by its own estimation, or 89,941, according to the State Statistical Office. See also p. 602, n. 26.

8. See comments by Vercik on p. 604.

organisation. When the comrades sent us this plan, we told them: 'Be careful! That is the future of the organisation, not its present. Right now many workers sympathetic to communism are still influenced by corporatist prejudices, which are difficult to overcome. The attempt to create a completely unified organisation in a single stroke will surely provoke internal opposition.'

We will deal with this question in more detail at the RILU congress, which will fully examine organisational issues and relationships between the local sections and the centre. But it must be stressed that the Communist International and the RILU told these comrades: 'Be careful. You will have difficulties on this road, because you will encounter resistance, and the resistance will come from your own ranks.'

Lauridan: You are quite right. The same difficulties arose when the unions were fused in Moselle department.

Lozovsky: My conclusion is straightforward. International Communism now represents a powerful force. We can say that it is the only revolutionary force in the entire world. When we discuss the issues in each country with such passion, fervour, and sometimes also in a sharp tone, this is because an incorrect policy in one country impinges on other countries. Irresolution and vacillation in one country disrupts the unified Communist front and drives back international Communism as a whole. We want our work in every country to be organised in a way that expands our influence from day to day. We do not want a French, Dutch, and German Communism, as we had in the Second International, where socialism had a national character. We are distinguished from the other Internationals by the fact that the Communist International and the RILU are genuine world organisations, in which international interests outweigh national interests.

Through mutual criticism, collective work, and collective improvement of our activity in each country, we will make it possible for the Communist International to carry through its task – the overthrow of capitalism – to a victorious conclusion. (*Applause*)

Chair: We must now elect a commission charged with once again editing the trade-union theses, before they are submitted to the Congress for a vote. The Presidium proposes the election of the following comrades to this commission: Lozovsky (Russia); Rosmer (France); Heckert (Germany); Lansing (United States); Tasca (Italy); Pavlik (Czechoslovakia); Kolarov (Bulgaria).

Does anyone wish the floor regarding these proposals?

Murphy (Britain): (*Proposes that Comrade Clarke be elected to this commission for Britain*)

Chair: It has been proposed that, in addition to the named comrades, Comrade Clarke too be elected to the commission for Britain.

Is there any opposition to these proposals? There is none. Therefore, seeing no objection to the proposals as a whole, this commission is elected as proposed.

Comrades, we come once more to the question of our *programme*. First, I will give the floor to Comrade Bukharin, speaking on behalf of the Russian delegation.

Bukharin: On behalf of the Russian delegation, I submit the following declaration:

Given that the dispute over how to formulate transitional demands and where to place them in the programme has given an entirely erroneous impression of a disagreement on principle, the Russian delegation unanimously confirms that it cannot be considered opportunism to include transitional demands in the programmes of the national sections and to formulate them in general terms and motivate them theoretically in the overall segment of the programme.⁹

Representing the Russian delegation:

Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Bukharin

Chair: The Presidium has considered this matter in detail and has drafted a motion. I give the floor on this point to Comrade Zinoviev.

Zinoviev: I will simply read this motion. We have been informed that it is also supported by a number of delegations who have had the opportunity to examine it, starting with those of Germany, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, and then a number of others.

The motion reads as follows:

Resolution on the Programme¹⁰

- 1.) All drafts of the programme will be forwarded to the Executive of the Communist International or to a commission it chooses for consideration

9. Regarding the nature of transitional demands, see p. 504, n. 19.

10. This resolution was drafted by Lenin at a meeting held the previous day, 20 November, by the five members of the Russian Central Committee assigned to Comintern work: Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, and Bukharin. For Lenin's draft, see Lenin 1960–71, 42, 427–8. See also p. 479, n. 1.

and careful review. The Communist International Executive is charged with publishing the draft programmes submitted to it as quickly as possible.

- 2.) The Congress affirms that the national sections of the Communist International that do not yet have national programmes are obliged to begin work on them immediately, so that they may be submitted to the Executive no later than three months before the Fifth Congress, in order to be approved by the next congress.
- 3.) The programmes of the national sections must motivate clearly and decisively the need to struggle for transitional demands, with the appropriate proviso that these demands are derived from the specific conditions of place and time.
- 4.) The overall programme must definitely provide a theoretical framework for all transitional and immediate demands. At the same time, the Fourth Congress strongly condemns efforts to portray as opportunism the inclusion of transitional demands in the programme, as well as attempts to employ partial demands to conceal or supplant our fundamental revolutionary tasks.
- 5.) The overall programme must clearly portray the basic historical variants of transitional demands raised by the national sections, corresponding to the fundamental differences in the economic and political structure of each country, such as in Britain as against in India, and so on.

Chair: The Presidium considers that this motion can be adopted without discussion. Most delegations have already taken a stand for this motion. Nonetheless, we are in favour of granting the delegations another opportunity to consider their position. I therefore adjourn this session for twenty minutes.

(Recess)

I would like to announce the following. According to what I have been told, all the [national] sections are fundamentally in agreement with the Presidium proposal. However, the Italian delegation has said that, although it is in basic agreement with our proposal, it wishes to make a statement. I have now been informed that, if the Italian section submits a statement, other sections will do so also. I therefore turn to the Italian section with the request that it forgo its statement.

Bordiga: The Italian delegation is agreeable that its statement appear in the proceedings, without being read out, but it is not in a position to give up the declaration itself.

Radek: Then it should just read it!

Chair: The Italian section is in agreement that its declaration will not be presented to us here but will only be included in the proceedings.

Radek: That is a misunderstanding. The Italian delegation has not given up its declaration; it merely wants the statement to be included in the proceedings. However, something that is included in the proceedings must also be presented to the session.

Chair: Good. We will present this statement to the gathering, unless the Italian delegation withdraws its request to put the statement in the minutes.

Bordiga: We have had precedents for this. If Comrade Radek believes that a statement that is not read in the session cannot be included in the proceedings, then the Italian delegation insists that its statement be read.

Béron (*reads the statement*): 'The Italian delegation votes for the resolution postponing the programme question, but wishes to note in the proceedings that it would have preferred to have the programme of the Communist International discussed and adopted at this congress. The delegation agrees with the criterion that Bukharin, the reporter, defended as to the programme's makeup. It also considers that, even though finalising the text has been postponed, the question of the programme's nature could have been specified more precisely at this congress.'

Chair: Does any other delegation wish to make a statement? That is not the case. Is anyone against the Presidium's proposal? That is not the case.

The Presidium proposal is therefore unanimously adopted.

Before we move on to the next agenda point, I give the floor to Comrade Zinoviev.

Zinoviev: I would like to stress again, briefly, why we have proposed to adopt this resolution without discussion. I hope that I will express the opinion of the great majority of those present.

It was our opinion that, in the given situation, a stunted, abbreviated surrogate for a discussion could only be harmful. That is why we have proposed – with the clear agreement of the majority of those present – the adoption of the resolution without beginning an abbreviated discussion that in this complex question could only be harmful.

I hope that the solution we have found is for the best.

Chair: We come to the next agenda point: *Workers' Aid*.¹¹ Comrade Münzenberg has the floor.

Münzenberg: Comrades, I have divided my report into two parts. I will first speak for a few minutes about the famine relief campaign we have carried out and then, in the second section, take up immediate issues of economic aid.

Obviously, I cannot on this occasion go into the causes, the scope, and the course of the famine itself. Most of the delegates are only too familiar with the facts. The catastrophic famine in Russia during the last year has been termed by Lenin as the greatest difficulty encountered in Russia's reconstruction. All the press and public opinion as a whole have received exhaustive reports. It is enough to refer briefly to the fact that about forty million people were immediately affected by the famine, and about three million died in the course of it.

It is important to note that the famine was quelled and overcome not by foreign aid, either bourgeois or workers' aid, but through Soviet Russia alone.

I resolved to bring almost no statistics with me today. But, in this regard, I must cite two facts that are quite unknown to the broad public regarding the contributions actually made to overcoming the famine.

All the areas outside Russia, including the Red Cross, the American Relief Agency, [Fridtjof] Nansen, the Quakers, and the Workers' Aid shipped 33 million poods of grain into Russia. Russia itself produced 165 million poods of grain for consumption and 31 million poods of seed-grain, which adds up to 196 million poods of grain. The entire contribution from abroad, from all the various associations, provided a sixth of what famine-stricken Russia achieved to combat the famine.

The famine in the Volga region sparked a worker solidarity campaign such as we – and we can say this without exaggeration – have never seen previously in the history of the socialist workers' movement. The campaign started up spontaneously, even before any organisational leadership or party executive had addressed an appeal to the workers. German, Austrian, and Dutch workers responded to the first appeals with sizeable collections. The campaign extended to every country. Actions for famine aid were carried out in India, North and South America, and all the European countries.

In most countries, the campaign continued undiminished for more than a year. In the course of the campaign there were a great many moving displays of fraternal solidarity with the Russian working class. We witnessed how in

11. International Workers' Aid was founded on 12 September 1921, with headquarters in Berlin, to lead Communist-led famine relief work in Soviet Russia. Headed by Willi Münzenberg, it coordinated international efforts to assist Soviet economic construction, later branching out into film distribution and production. It ceased functioning in the mid-1930s.

Britain and above all in the Netherlands, a large number of women workers donated their last piece of jewellery, usually their ring, for the hungry in Soviet Russia. Working-class children emptied their savings accounts and contributed their pencils and notebooks as aid. In Germany, prisoners supported the hungry in Russia with their meagre stipend.

During the last several decades, there has seldom been a campaign that has been so popular among proletarians, that has encompassed such broad layers, as the campaign in response to the catastrophic Russian famine. I do not wish to bore you with statistics, but I will read a few lines from a report from Bulgaria.

Whenever there are marriage celebrations, or a baby is born, or someone is buried, or at any other family event, always thoughts turn to the hungry people in Russia. Many cases have been recorded where women declined to carry out religious customs and donated the money set aside for these services to the hungry in Russia. Many gave up smoking for weeks, others gave up getting a shave; indeed it happened that comrades even gave up having lunch several times a month, in order to turn over the money thus saved to the famine relief.

These are not isolated incidents. As evidence for that, I point to the evidence that this campaign encompassed non-Communist layers and awakened and heightened awareness and solidarity with Russia.

Comrade Zinoviev noted in his report that this campaign was among the most remarkable conducted by the Communist International during the last year. It is indisputable that almost all Communist parties and groups, with very few exceptions, were encompassed in this campaign and helped to carry it out. But it must be noted here that some comrades and groups in the Party displayed quite a different opinion and assessment of the campaign. In Germany, there was a large group of comrades who viewed the campaign only as a matter of philanthropic donations and gave it a corresponding priority. In my opinion, nothing could be more erroneous than to see in the campaign behind us and the coming economic campaign only a collection of donations of a philanthropic character. It is not this but the political side of the campaign that gets the main emphasis.

The just-concluded famine-aid campaign had to accomplish major political tasks, which have in fact been met only partially, because to some extent the Communist milieu had to be compelled by the masses to carry out the campaign with all the breadth and scope that was required.

What were the immediate results, as the famine broke out? A large number of bourgeois governments immediately began to heighten their blackmail against Soviet Russia. In September and October 1920, the sabre-rattling of

the Polish and French militarists resounded around the world. And in the British and Polish wars against Russia, the British workers succeeded in putting Britain under such pressure that it was restrained from providing military assistance against Soviet Russia.¹² So, too, the famine-aid campaign, with some assistance from the trade-union International, which must be acknowledged here, and from broad, uncommitted masses, managed to generate a mood that held France back from carrying out its plans against Russia with the scope that had been planned by the cabinet, when the first news arrived from the famine-stricken regions.

During the campaign, this pressure grew. The support of public opinion in favour of those stricken by hunger, in favour of Soviet Russia, grew to the point that even reactionary governments, like that of France, were compelled to come up with and commit resources for the hungry.

A second political task was the campaign's relationship to the debate with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and their associated trade unions. The spontaneous mass rallies for the hungry led the official leadership bodies of these Internationals and their trade unions and parties to take a stand, in August and September 1921, for a broad campaign of aid. But only a few months later, when the mass pressure on the leadership bodies was less forceful, they wavered, seeking to utilise the famine against Russia and above all against Soviet Russia.

All the Social-Democratic papers portrayed a desolate picture, somewhat on the theme: 'Here you see where communism and Bolshevism leads. It is barbarism!' I need only recall the words of Wels, the deputy, at the most recent Social-Democratic convention. 'What is Bolshevism?' he asked. 'It is the road backward to capitalism by way of cannibalism.' The Social-Democratic papers in all the Western countries struck this note for months on end.

The task of the Communist parties here was to counter such baiting by pointing out the real causes of the famine. The true causes lay not in Bolshevism but in those people who prevented the blockade from being lifted and who supported the military interventions in Russia. Here, our press carried out this task only in part. (*Very true!*) The Social-Democratic press conducted the campaign against Russia with a much broader scope and more effective presentation than the Communist press did on Russia's behalf.

Comrades, the major political significance of the famine-relief campaign consisted in linking up with the interest in Soviet Russia aroused far and wide

12. British interventionist forces occupied parts of Russia from the summer of 1918 to autumn of 1919. Poland launched an offensive into Soviet territory in April 1920, capturing Kiev. In Britain, dockworkers refused to load munitions for Poland, while the Labour Party and unions threatened general strike in case of British intervention.

in the workers' milieu by public discussion of the catastrophic famine in the Volga region. We had to link up through lectures, popular magazines, and other events that could bring the masses together and educate them regarding the origin and course of the Russian Revolution, presenting the famine as one link in this entire chain. Wherever our committees and parties understood this task, we can point to good political results.

I need only recall the United States and Japan, two countries that are quite typical. The famine relief and the campaign around it in the United States made it possible, for the first time, for the Communist current to work in the broadest layers of the trade unions and to draw these layers into a relief campaign that was controlled by the Communist Party. The same can be said of Japan. Twelve broad organisations were created in Japan, mainly workers' and trade-union organisations, but also including even bourgeois women's organisations, which all worked together in a committee. It proved possible in this way to involve broad masses for the first time in discussions of Soviet Russia, proletarian revolution, and more.

I will be brief. Still, I want to use the occasion to draw attention to a political factor, namely, the effect of the campaign within Soviet Russia itself. It is not only outside Russia that the bourgeois organisations sought to turn the famine against Soviet Russia. They also sought to incite and lead the suffering workers and peasants inside Soviet Russia against the Soviet government.

The American relief campaign stuck on every soup bowl in which their pea soup was distributed, in big bold letters, 'We, the American bourgeoisie, are helping you, after you have been brought to this horrendous condition by the Bolshevik government.'¹³

The Amsterdam trade-union International toured many delegates for months through the famine regions. Everywhere, they had the peasants and workers adopt supportive statements toward their trade-union International.

So, comrades, we made a change, assigning the entire operation to a distribution apparatus and special facilities for care – in Samara, Saratov, Orenburg, the Urals, and Crimea – in order to set up a barrier against this outrageous utilisation of Soviet Russia's emergency. Thus the piece of bread or meat that we could provide to the peasants and suffering workers was handed over in the name of the Communist International.

Of course, the Russian peasants and workers do not perhaps have the intellectual level and schooling of the participants in the fourth Communist world congress. In their thinking, things appear in simpler and somewhat more

13. For the American Relief Administration's account of its operations in Russia, see Fisher 1927.

primitive terms. Previously, they received from the Communist International only reports from the Congresses in the form of resolutions and professions of support by Western workers for Soviet Russia. During the famine-relief campaign, they experienced, for the first time, the Communist International in flesh and blood. They experienced a genuine action providing them with practical support. In this way, the famine-relief campaign achieved quite positive political results for the Communist International within Russia itself.

Comrades, let me touch on the actual course of the famine-relief campaign. For the most part, comrades are well informed about the actual course of the campaign by the ongoing reports. We tried, of course, beginning with the Communist International Executive, to bring into being a workers' united front for famine relief. Negotiations took place with the leaderships of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and with the trade-union International. This led to two joint conferences in Berlin, which did not have positive organisational results. Only in Italy and Czechoslovakia was it possible, for a time, to form joint committees including representatives of the different parties, trade unions, and cooperatives. But, after a few months, as the question of how to use the funds came to the fore, the committees broke apart, because the Czechoslovakia Social Democrats demanded categorically that the funds be turned over to Amsterdam.

From that point, the workers' relief campaign for the victims of famine in Russia proceeded in two separate arenas: first, the [Amsterdam] trade-union International; and second, the Communist International.

Let me say something regarding the character of the Amsterdam trade-union International. Its work was supported by all the Social-Democratic parties and the then independent centrist parties. Moreover, under the pressure of the spontaneous demonstrations by the masses of a desire to help, the Amsterdam bureau expressed itself cleverly and effectively.

Manifestos appeared in various newspapers, saying: 'Workers, help Soviet Russia, because if Soviet Russia collapses, disaster will spread across all Europe!' The centrist and Social-Democratic newspapers said nothing about these manifestos. Later, as the press agitation subsided, the Amsterdam trade-union International also reduced its work, and we can say the campaign finished up half a year ago. According to our records, as of April 1922, the trade unions and the Social Democrats collected in all 1.4 million Dutch guilders, with which they fed 40,000 children for several months and, on one occasion, sent 50,000 meals to railway workers.¹⁴

14. In 1922, the Dutch guilder was worth approximately US\$0.60. See: <www.iisg.nl/hpw>.

The aid from international cooperatives was much more limited and almost too modest, since only the Czechoslovak and Italian cooperatives actually provided significant contributions in the form of clothing.

Now a few words about the course of the Communist International's campaign. After the failure of the plan to unify all trade unions and workers' parties in a massive united front against the famine in Russia, the Communist party attempted to win support as broadly as possible directly in the factories and trade unions. This led to good results in certain countries, such as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and in part also in the United States. The Communist party campaign won large groups of sympathisers and a considerable number of uncommitted workers to the campaign.

Its material results were unexpectedly good. As we initiated the campaign, none of us expected that it would be possible to raise the large sums of money that eventually came in. From Comrade Eberlein's report, you have heard how weak the Western parties are organisationally.¹⁵ Moreover, the high level of unemployment in the United States, Britain, Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway greatly restricted the campaign, while in Germany and Austria the conditions of workers had deteriorated because of rapid inflation to such a degree that even good Communists sometimes found it hard to ask these comrades for additional sacrifices.

All in all, the activity of the Communist aid committees raised – in goods, money, and material assets – a total of more than \$2.5 million.

To better illustrate these quantities, I would like to make two comparisons. In Switzerland, the 250,000 trade unionists and Social Democrats that carried out a campaign there raised only 80,000 Swiss francs.¹⁶ By contrast, the Swiss aid committee of the Communist party, which has only a few thousand members, collected 540,000 Swiss francs in all, that is, more than half a million. (*Applause*) These figures show distinctly that the Communist committee succeeded in reaching wide layers of the uncommitted and received their monetary support.

I said earlier that the entire [Amsterdam] trade-union International, with more than twenty million members, collected only 1.4 million Dutch guilders. About a month ago, the committee of the quite small Dutch Communist Party, on its own, had collected almost half a million Dutch guilders. I believe that the Dutch Party has only four to five thousand members, and they collected almost half a million Dutch guilders, while the Amsterdam trade-union International, for its part, with its millions of members, collected only 1.4 million guilders up to March 15. I believe these two figures show that it was possible

15. See Credentials Commission report, pp. 435–42.

16. A Swiss franc was then worth approximately US\$0.20.

to achieve good results when the individual Communist parties carried out their agitation with skill and a sense of tactics. This also shows a great readiness for sacrifice on the part of broad layers of workers.

The \$2.5 million dollars that were collected were used to send about 30,000 tons of food and other relief goods to Russia. The work in Russia began as early as November. In December, the first aid shipments arrived in Kazan and other parts of the famine-stricken region. I will not dwell at length on the statistical results of our work in Russia, all the more since some of our comrades working in the famine region did not keep precise records. They forgot to make entries for much of the aid that they distributed. But it is better to forget to record someone in the statistics than to forget to care for them, as I believe happened in the case of some of the bourgeois organisations. During the months of famine, we cared fully for 200,000 to 220,000 people, and, beyond that, we distributed rations and donations of food to important occupational groups such as railway workers and workers in various machinery factories. We took over children's homes in different famine-stricken areas, in which, at present, we are fully providing for 14,000 children. We also directly equipped the homes.

The Communist International's relief campaign was distinguished from all the actions of the bourgeoisie and its philanthropic societies, from the outset, by the fact that we combined famine relief, that is, simple basic nourishment, with aid in the reconstruction of Russian agriculture and industry that had been devastated by famine in these regions.

I now come to the second part of my report: economic aid. Here, I must start by taking a look backwards. The desire of West European and American workers to combine political support through the Communist party with immediate, practical, economic aid has been evident for several years. As early as the fall of 1919, and even more so early in 1920, groups of American, Swedish, Norwegian, and German workers emigrated to Russia and attempted with much idealism and little skill to rebuild the Russian economy. Most such experiments ended in a total fiasco. I recall the affair of Kolomna, very well known in Germany.¹⁷

17. About 120 German immigrants arrived in Soviet Russia in 1920 and settled in Kolomna, about 100 kilometres from Moscow. They set to work in a machine-building factory, at a time of extreme industrial collapse and economic hardship in Russia. They were visited that summer by Wilhelm Dittmann, a leader of the USPD, and he subsequently published an account of his visit in *Freiheit*, the main USPD newspaper. According to Dittmann, the German workers in Kolomna reported that the factory was a shambles, the Russian workforce apathetic and hostile, and the living conditions unbearably bad. Most of the German workers wanted to return home, Dittmann wrote, and many refused to work. See Dittmann 1995, pp. 752–7.

For about a year now, mainly as a result of the famine relief campaign, we have seen an increased desire and impulse among the West European and especially American workers to help Russia economically. In Germany, a large number of factories have funded machines or are in the process of acquiring various tools, agricultural equipment, and forms of aid for provision to Russia. In Italy, it is above all the cooperatives that are attempting and are presently engaged in providing economic help. They aim to work 100,000 hectares of land. In Britain, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia there are now associations and groups, construction workers for example, who wish to emigrate to Russia with tools and some capital. The same tendency is evident in South Africa and especially in the United States. Various large groups have come here – for example, the undertaking of the Dutch engineer Rutgers, who has several thousand black workers in the Kuzbas and has taken over the running of mines and galleries.¹⁸

In the United States, there is the Committee of Friends of Soviet Russia, which is closely linked with the Communist International: it is also now providing economic help. I think of the twenty tractors that are functioning near Perm. We have a technical aid organisation that has sent many tractors to Russia. It has many branches and several thousand members. We have the venture of Comrade Heiman, for example, which is at work raising a loan of \$1 million for Russia, and which has reached an agreement with the tailors' union to take in hand some important tailoring shops.

In recent days, the Russian government formed a commission under the leadership of Comrades Eiduk and Martens, which will bring eight thousand American workers to Russia early next year.

I believe the Communist International has the duty of taking a position on these developments. In the United States, there are at least twenty thousand people who are directly or indirectly interested in these activities and efforts; in Europe, there are perhaps just as many. Perhaps they are not adept; in that case, they must be educated and drawn together into large and broad campaigns for economic aid. For most of these workers who are now pressing to emigrate to Russia, the desire to help Russia is mixed in with the desire to help themselves. They are convinced that it will be years before the state is

18. Kuzbas (Kuznetsk Basin), a coal-mining region near Tomsk in central Siberia, was the site of a project to establish a colony of US revolutionary workers in order to speed adoption of advanced industrial and management techniques in Russia. Launched in 1921 with much assistance from Lenin and led by Dutch engineer S.J. Rutgers, the colony by late 1922 included more than 500 workers and family from the United States. In 1925–6, the enterprises under the colony's management were transferred to standard Soviet industrial administration. The colony dissolved, but many participants continued to work in Soviet industry. See Morray 1983.

overthrown in the United States or Europe. But Russia is undergoing a process of improvement. So their response is, let's pack our suitcase and head there.

The Communist International has repeatedly spoken out against tendencies of this kind, and it must continue to do so most forcefully. With regard to plans to bring 8,000–10,000 emigrants to Russia, we have the obligation to tell the Russian comrades that we have the greatest reservations, with regard both to what these emigrants can accomplish here and the weakening of revolutionary striking power that would result in their countries of origin.

There is no reason why we should try to ease the huge economic crisis in France or Czechoslovakia by bringing masses of unemployed to Soviet Russia. I believe we must firmly take the position, as the Communist International has done in the past, that we, as a Communist party, are against mass emigration of European and American workers to Russia. That would not be a form of support for Russia but, rather, an easing of the crisis in the Western capitalist countries.

It's quite another matter when specially trained skilled workers, whose skills are unavailable in Russia, are used in certain cases for specific factories. In such cases, the resettlement of West European or American workers is perhaps possible, under the control of and in agreement with the Russian trade unions.

Comrades, whatever position is taken regarding this kind of development, a position must be taken here, and the Congress must come to a decision. Either the immigration of foreign workers is good and worthy of support, or it is bad, and we should take a position against it.

Personally, I believe the question of economic aid is one that deserves the strongest support from the Communist International. But we must clearly understand the nature of this aid. We must break with fantasies of the type that economic aid could be a new campaign, a new way to solve the world's problems, opening up a productive competition of classes, and other such talk from different comrades along these lines. We must draw a firm line here.

There are a number of comrades who have great reservations regarding economic aid. They see in it the danger of petty-bourgeois opportunism. They fear that economic experiments will fail, with regrettable effects on political propaganda. They refer to Kolomna and other such cases.

It is quite right that famine relief and, even more, economic aid is a very tricky way for the Communist International to express support to Soviet Russia. It harbours many serious dangers. But there is no tactic and no method of struggle that does not bring with it dangers. We have discussed the united front for almost a year, in terms of whether it can be achieved, and the entire

Congress agrees that this tactic carries with it major left and also right dangers. Nonetheless, the vote was unanimous to carry it out. The fact that a policy brings with it dangers is far from being an argument not to apply it and carry it out, if this is possible, useful, and productive. The question is to create enough safeguards, nationally and internationally, so that this danger is reduced to a minimum.

Comrades, in my opinion, the question of economic aid is, above all, a matter of expediency and practicality. Above all, it must be asked whether the energies expended stand in appropriate proportion to the results obtained. On this point, the Congress should have no doubt that the first and best defence of the reconstruction of Russia's economic life is for Communists and other workers' parties to increase the political pressure that they exert on the government of their country. That involves pressure for the recognition of Soviet Russia and for conclusion of favourable trade relations with it. It also involves carrying out the revolution in their own country. The comrades now entrusted with this work know full well, as do our collaborators, that economic aid cannot in any way replace or diminish political support for Soviet Russia. We stand firmly on the grounds that the political, revolutionary struggle in a country is and will remain the best and most essential support for Soviet Russia.

The question posed here at the Congress is whether, in the specific present world political and economic situation, the world proletariat and the Communist International have only this one means, political struggle, with which to support Soviet Russia and to promote its economic reconstruction.

We all agree regarding the importance of Soviet Russia. The reports of Lenin, Trotsky, and Zinoviev, adopted by the entire congress, once again set out what has become ABC for every comrade: without Soviet Russia, the proletarian revolution cannot be continued and unleashed anew.

The higher that the fascist wave rises abroad, the more Soviet Russia must be supported as the only line of retreat for all the proletarian armies of the world. In this very delicate situation, we ask whether the world proletariat has only its political strength with which to support Soviet Russia. I believe the answer is no. It also has a minimum of economic strength. We do not have machines and factories – these belong to the capitalists – but we have knowledge: of our trades and of technology, and also organisational know-how. This minimal economic strength should be mobilised through a campaign of economic aid and thrown onto the scale in Soviet Russia's favour in its economic war with the imperialists.

Comrades, in conclusion, I will take up some tactical objections that have been raised by various comrades. It has been said that all this is well and good, but, right now, we just cannot do any more. We are worn out. The

famine lasted a year and led to such exhaustion that we simply cannot continue like this any longer.

Comrades, of all the objections against this campaign, this is the one that is worthy of the most careful attention. It is true that, because of the length of this campaign, a portion of the proletariat, above all in Central Europe, is tired of taking up collections. There is no doubt that we must absolutely stop taking collections the way we have done in the past. The methods we have used in the past cannot be used for this campaign. However, if we believe we have reached agreement that a campaign is necessary and positive in principle, the question of how to carry it out technically and organisationally is quite another matter. The collections in their present form must cease. Other means will be found to mobilise a minimum of the proletariat's financial resources for Soviet Russia.

Another argument advanced is that the Communist parties are financially exhausted. All our demands will be in vain, because people simply cannot give any more money. This objection speaks not against the campaign but against those that raise this argument. We have never suggested to the Communist International or any Communist party that it should drain its staff and membership to the point where they can no longer pay their party dues. What we demanded was that each Communist party should utilise its staff to carry our campaign into uncommitted circles who are sympathetic to Russia. And we find that, everywhere in the party organisations, if the agitation and the appeal is made correctly, we have worked with success and achieved good results.

One of the more weighty objections we hear is that the economic-aid campaign is restricting the parties' revolutionary political struggle by taking away our best comrades. That is not true. In parties like the German, for example, with two hundred thousand members, these are not all simply political activists. The moment the Communist party is organised as an open party, which anyone won by our agitation can join, it wins a large number of forces who may well not be politically active in the purely political daily work.

Here are thousands of workers and party comrades who are inactive. Given a careful selection, every Communist party could win forces with special aptitude for the economic-aid campaign in every locality, just as it does for its youth, party, and educational work.

But it is objected that the party's political character is diminished and given more than a hint of a philanthropic, petty-bourgeois character. That shows only that these parties do not know how to apply the policy. It amounts to the same argument as when it is said that the united front must be rejected because it is carried out wrongly by this or that party unit. The economic-aid campaign provides us with a hundred starting points where we can pose the

Russian question and, flowing from that, revolutionary questions in general. It enables us to work with the broad masses in daily political struggle and to discuss proletarian revolution.

Finally, the main argument. Comrades say, 'What do we get out of this? We utilise hundreds of party members, allocate half a column every week in our press, and what results do we get?' I will speak first of the political results and then end by taking up the material results.

Comrades, we know full well that as workers and as the Communist International we are not capable through our financial efforts of rebuilding Soviet Russia. That is excluded. If that were possible, our Executive would long since have carried out the appropriate accounting transaction. But, if individual successes lead us to overestimate what we can achieve, most comrades today underestimate what we can accomplish financially. Most comrades have absolutely no idea of the scope of financial resources that the international proletariat can mobilise today through a broad assistance campaign.

In the famine campaign, the proletariat directly or indirectly raised five million dollars, which amounts to ten million gold roubles. Comrades, recall the speech by Comrade Lenin, in which he said that the greatest success of economic policy in the last year is the fact that we have saved twenty million gold roubles for the reconstruction of heavy industry. The entire huge state apparatus came up with these twenty million gold roubles, and the proletariat by contrast raised ten million gold roubles for famine aid, without fully utilising the resources of a single Communist party, trade-union, or cooperative, or of the other workers' parties. A minimal exertion of our overall resources should enable us to raise at least twice as much. I can well imagine that, at a certain point, a workers' economic-aid campaign would be senseless idiocy, but, given the present economic situation of Soviet Russia, the financial strength of the proletariat can help a great deal.

Now, a second demonstration. The Workers' Aid already has a number of its own enterprises in Soviet Russia: fisheries, shoe factories, large farms, and so on. There were times when thirty thousand workers were directly active in the Workers' Aid enterprises. Recall the words of Comrade Trotsky, who said that there were one million workers in the state enterprises and forty thousand workers in the capitalist enterprises.

Comrades, given a limited increase in our activity, it is possible that our factories and enterprises could encompass fifty thousand workers and even more – perhaps one-tenth of the workers that the state employs in its factories and at least as many as are employed in the capitalist factories.

I must repeat that the main reason why we are carrying out the economic-aid campaign, why we advocate it and work for it, is Soviet Russia's present economic condition. That is what makes it possible for the world proletariat

to afford genuine and practical help, without forfeiting anything from our revolutionary political character.

That is what we are advocating. I must say that, over the last nine months, we have had good success with a number of enterprises in Russia. We have three farms near Kazan that, in one year, produced a surplus enabling them to feed more than one hundred children. We have organised a fishery now with good success and caught a huge number of fish, which are now being distributed in the famine-stricken regions. We are now negotiating with the Russian government regarding the use of a million-dollar loan that we have announced.

The funds may be used in part to reorganise the leather industry. We are now being asked to take part in logging several million railway ties and to make them available for the railway lines early next year. Previous experience shows that we can indeed provide effective help in the construction of Soviet Russia.

I have said that we are now raising a million-dollar loan in order to provide funds for our enterprises in Russia. It is interesting to note where this loan project found a response. It was not only among workers or Communists; substantial layers of the bourgeoisie signed for this loan. The Deutsche Bank in Berlin and the Brussels state bank have also taken up portions of the workers' loan. A good number of middle-class groups and individuals have subscribed. The Dutch workers have signed on for a sum of 75,000 Dutch guilders through their payment cards, and this money will be in hand in a few weeks. I have no doubt that, by the new year, this million-dollar loan will be fully subscribed, providing new resources for the construction of enterprises in Russia. So, in answer to the question whether it is worthwhile to mobilise financial resources for this campaign, I must say that certainly our experiences and perspectives indicate that a certain sum of money can be raised with which practical work can be carried out in Russia.

But the purely material side of this loan plays only a secondary role in the economic aid. The main significance of continuing the economic aid is that this ongoing campaign enables us to approach the broadest masses, whose ideas are still very rudimentary, and who are otherwise hard to reach with Communist propaganda. This economic aid campaign offers us the possibility, through films, newspapers, and so on, to approach the uncommitted masses, and that is the great propagandistic value of our campaign. For this reason we believe we must propose to the Congress that the famine aid be continued, come what may, in the form of economic aid.

Our immediate task is to attempt a centralisation of all the existing groups. We have begun by uniting with the Dutch engineer Rutgers. The tendency

is to unify all the different bodies working for economic aid and to bring together all our forces.

Finally, I would like to summarise in a few sentences the political direction of the campaign. We must clearly recognise that there have been exaggerations in our literature, suggesting that this work is opening up a new epoch in the class struggle and human history, that economic aid will lead to victory, and the like. On the other hand, we find a complete misunderstanding of the campaign's political significance, confusing it with philanthropic and humanitarian concerns. It is and must be an extension of the political efforts of the Communist parties to help Soviet Russia energetically over a short period. The day is close at hand when revolution in Germany and France will make this campaign superfluous, stupid, and harmful. But, in the present world political situation, and taking into account the situation in Russia, the economic-aid campaign can be a very useful complement to political action that will bring immediate benefits while giving Soviet Russia the best form of help and support. (*Loud applause*)

Adjournment: 1:00 p.m.

Session 19 – Wednesday, 22 November 1922

The Eastern Question

Speakers: Ravesteyn, Kolarov, Overstraeten, Ravesteyn, Roy, Katayama, Tahar Boudengha, Béron

Convened: 12 noon

Chairperson: Carr

Chair: The Presidium decided yesterday evening to propose the establishment of a commission to consider the report of Comrade Münzenberg and present to the Congress in its final form the resolution he has drafted. The Commission will include one comrade each from France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Britain, Russia, the Balkan countries, Scandinavia, the United States, and Canada, and also representatives of the Profintern [RILU] Presidium, the cooperative section, and the Youth International. Comrade Münzenberg will himself also take part in and convene the Commission. (*Adopted*)

Given that the question of the East is up for discussion today, the Presidium has decided to have four reporters, whose time will be limited as follows: Comrades Roy and Ravesteyn, forty-five minutes each; Comrades Boudengha and Katayama, thirty minutes each.

Comrade Ravesteyn has the floor.

Ravesteyn (Netherlands): Comrades, I do not agree with the presidium proposal. Until now, the speaking time of reporters on major questions has been – I will not say unrestricted – but at least much longer than forty-five minutes. (*Very true!*) It is not our

fault, comrades, and also not my fault that the congress sessions start so late, that considerable time is lost, while we sit here doing nothing. I was invited here by the Executive expressly in order to deal with this question. It is simply impossible for me in the short time that I have been granted to give my report in the manner I have planned. So if the Congress adopts the presidium proposal, I will be forced to break off my report at a point where it is not yet concluded and ask you to at least include the last part of the report in the proceedings.

Kolarov: I must insist on the Presidium's proposal. I well understand Comrade Ravesteyn's request. He was asked to come here for this purpose, and he prepared his report in the understanding that he would be able to speak at length. But the Congress must take into account the overall plan for its deliberations. If we allow every reporter and speaker the option of taking as much time for his remarks as he needs to express all his thoughts, the duration of the Congress would have to be extended by three weeks. We have to take this into account. The Congress is stretching out, and it has so far completed less than half of its business. Who is to blame for this situation? This is not the time to settle that. Come what may, we must complete the entire programme of work laid down in the congress agenda, and, of course, do so as rapidly as possible.

The question of the East was sufficiently examined in the Commission, considering all its aspects. Most of the delegations immediately concerned took part in this Commission and had the opportunity to express themselves fully. Therefore, I don't think the Congress will suffer any harm if it limits the speaking time granted to all the reporters and all comrades who wish to take the floor in all these debates.

If the Congress is determined to extend its work by another three weeks, it can certainly lay claim to the hospitality of the Russian comrades and grant the request of Comrade Ravesteyn, along with all similar requests that will surely not be lacking.

Overstraeten (Belgium): Comrades, Comrade Zinoviev emphasised in his report on the Executive's activity that in its future work the International must take two main questions into account: first, organisation and class struggle in the West and, second, support for the freedom struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples in the coming years. I believe that the comrades taking part in this congress have shown repeatedly that they have insufficient understanding and feel for the Eastern question. We should give this question increased attention.

So far, every other question has been discussed fully and at length. I consider it essential and of fundamental importance that the comrades who will

be reporting on the Eastern question should be granted a speaking time of corresponding length. I propose that the first two reporters, Roy and van Ravesteyn, each be granted ninety minutes.

Chair: We now come to the vote. Those in favour of the presidium proposal, please raise your hands. (*Adopted*)

The Presidium has made a further proposal that comrades from Britain, China, and Egypt should speak in the discussion, and that Comrade Radek should deliver the summary. Is there any opposition? That is not the case.

Friedländer (Austria): But the summary should be limited to half an hour.

Chair: That is the case regardless. Comrade Ravesteyn now has the floor.

Ravesteyn:¹ Comrades, it was during the Mudanya Conference that a telegram arrived from New York reporting what had been said there, at a banquet of the American association of bank directors, by Morgenthau, who was, for a time, the United States ambassador in Constantinople. He made the following comment regarding Britain's actions in the Near East crisis.² Morgenthau paid homage to Britain for its conduct and declared that, during the previous two weeks, Britain had saved civilisation. He added that no one who had not cast a glance behind the scenes would have known of the brilliant work that Britain once again carried out. So, this spokesman of American banking capital said that Britain had again rescued civilisation, once again playing the role of saviour.

At just about the same moment, 6 October, Bonar Law, who, at that time, was still only a former minister and leader of the Unionists in the British House of Commons, stated in a letter to the *Times* that he approved in the main of the government's conduct in the Near Eastern question. He said: 'If we had not

1. The text of Ravesteyn's speech, as reproduced in the proceedings, would take about two hours to deliver, rather than the forty-five minutes he was allocated. Based on internal evidence, it was composed before the beginning of November. It seems likely that Ravesteyn succeeded in inserting his entire prepared text into the minutes, rather than just the portion he had been able to deliver. One of the congress rules of order barred such insertions; it was explained by Radek and accepted by the Congress in Session 18, p. 633.

2. After Turkish nationalist forces completed the reconquest of Anatolia in September 1922 (see p. 122, n. 7), they advanced into the Allied-occupied region of the Straits, approaching the British garrison at Chanak (Çanakkale) on the south shore of the Dardanelles. French and Italian contingents withdrew, but the British held firm and made preparations for war, declaring that Turkish forces would not be permitted to cross the Straits and re-enter Constantinople (Istanbul). British resolve soon weakened, and, on 3 October, they began negotiations with Turkish representatives in Mudanya, on the south shore of the Sea of Marmara. On 11 October, the British signed an armistice that conceded the essence of Turkish demands, including Turkish occupation of Constantinople.

handed the Turks such a firm warning, they, drunk with victory, would have tried to penetrate into Constantinople and Thrace.³ He said that this had prevented large-scale massacres in Constantinople and the Balkans, thus serving not merely specifically British interests but those of all humanity.

Bonar Law even threatened French imperialism that he would not be able to support them any further in their efforts to obtain the enormous sums of money that according to the Treaty of Versailles are to be extorted from the German people. And Bonar Law, who served during the Lloyd George government as his faithful collaborator and assistant, is here only repeating the claims sung in every key by Morgenthau, spokesman of the American moneybags, and of Lloyd George himself: Britain is fighting, as it has during recent weeks, not just for its own interests but for those of all humanity.

Comrades, what a deep pit of hypocrisy we see here, the moment we take a couple of snapshots of the present and most recent Near East crisis. After the experiences of eight years of world war and world chaos, statesmen like Lloyd George, a carnival barker and hypocrite, and Bonar Law, an authentic spokesman of British middle-class narrow-mindedness, still have the gall to present the British government's stand and its misdeeds, which have once again brought Europe to the edge of a horrific mass slaughter, as a struggle for order, law, culture, and civilisation. It would be incredible if we were not familiar with the Anglo-Saxon Puritan hypocrisy that possesses these gentlemen, so peculiarly bourgeois and, at the same time, the most hateful and disgusting that has ever existed.

Izvestiya – which is your newspaper, comrades, our proletarian herald of truth – once wrote, on the occasion of the Genoa Conference:⁴

Britain is the land of Shakespeare and Lloyd George. The first wrote comedies, and so too did the second. The first was the creator of world-renowned historical dramas, and the second would have well liked to do that too. The first created *Much Ado About Nothing*, and the second one did the same. The first asked the question, 'to be or not to be'. The second stands before the same question. The only difference between the one and the other is that the first won his place in history through his genius, in a peaceful manner, while the second won this place through violence.

3. Constantinople was the historic capital of Ottoman Turkey and, like Eastern Thrace, was mostly Turkish in population. Under the Treaty of Sèvres (1920), one of the Paris treaties ending World War I, Constantinople was to remain Turkish, but the rest of Turkish territory in Europe was assigned to Greece, and the entire region of the Straits – linking the Black and Mediterranean seas, was to be demilitarised, effectively internationalising these waters.

4. For the Genoa Conference, see p. 120, n. 4.

The proletarian newspaper was also right in a deeper sense. When Shakespeare and his spirit are compared with current bourgeois hypocrisy, as expressed in a Bonar Law or Lloyd George, we see the profound difference between the rising bourgeois culture of the renaissance in its highest West European manifestations, before even the earliest light of dawn of proletarian culture, and the depths of bourgeois culture in the epoch of imperialist decline. It is like a descent from powerful mountain peaks to a stinking pit of corruption.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: perhaps no historical example is more striking than the Eastern question in showing the way imperialism acts as a destroyer of culture.⁵ For a hundred years, the Eastern question concerned the future of the former Turkish Empire. It is also the question of the future conditions of the countries and peoples that form a bridge between Southern Europe and Asia. No sooner had modern imperialism appeared than the status of these countries became an imperialist issue of the first rank, a focus and centre of imperialist conflicts.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: permit me to look back briefly at history in order to grasp, from the heights of a historical survey, the great question of the Near East in which the world and especially the Russian proletariat is so keenly interested.

A hundred years ago, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Napoleon could say with some justification that whoever rules Constantinople rules the world – that is, the world of his day, one of pre-imperialist capitalism. Broadly speaking, that was true, because Constantinople then had strategic command of the ties with India.

The entire eighteenth century was dominated by the struggle of French and British mercantile capitalism for a commanding commercial position in America and India. In the Seven Years War [1756–63], it seemed that the struggle had already been settled in the interests of British capitalism. Nonetheless, the rebellion of the American colonies once again destabilised British domination. The great and decisive battle began only in 1793, in Britain's struggle against the French bourgeois revolution and for absolute mastery of the oceans. It was a struggle that accompanied the great bourgeois revolution. Napoleon was nothing but a condottiere of French eighteenth-century commercial capital, which managed through war to attain mastery of all western and central Europe.

5. Ravesteyn uses the term 'Eastern question' here in the fashion of European diplomacy of the epoch, referring to the issues raised by the decline and fall of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Elsewhere in the Fourth Congress, the term usually refers to the liberation struggle of colonial and semi-colonial peoples, especially in Asia.

The advance on Moscow – you could have celebrated the 110th anniversary of this event not long ago, comrades; Moscow burned on 15 and 16 September [1812], and the retreat of the Napoleonic armies began on 19 October – was simply the final move in this immense drama of world history, a move whose purpose was to harness the still young tsarist despotism to Napoleon's plans, which encompassed the world. Napoleon wanted, through Moscow, to conquer Constantinople, and through this city of the East to fatally wound Britain in the approaches to India, the true East. The entire Near East was only a pawn in this immense chess game. The colossal plans of the world conqueror, the greatest plans conceived in a human brain since Alexander, shattered against the endless spaces of the still young Russia.

Britain had won its century-long struggle. British commercial capital had achieved its victory on all the world's oceans, and, from that moment, it could confidently pursue its development to a higher stage, that of modern industrial capitalism. The ground was ready and the foundation laid for the greatest world power yet seen on earth, the British world empire, which embraced the world's five sectors, reaching from the North to the South Pole and embracing all its oceans. Thus was Oceania truly born.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: no longer is it true, as it was in those days, that now seem endlessly distant from us, that he who rules Istanbul rules the world. The capitalist world has grown larger and the problems of world politics more immense and extended, just as with modern capitalism. A hundred years ago, the Far East was not yet the centre of the world's problems. Africa was, in large measure, not yet even known. However, it is helpful to review briefly the different stages that the Eastern question went through during the nineteenth century.

About a hundred years ago, in 1822, a new stage began with the uprising of the Greek population in the Aegean Sea region. The rebellion revealed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, a process that had begun in the eighteenth century but became blatant and threatening only in the nineteenth. At the same time, the power of tsarist despotism cast an ever more threatening shadow over the Near Eastern region.

In the eighteenth century, tsarism was still only a half-European power, which abstained or only barely took part in European affairs, and was not recognised by the great Western capitalist powers of the eighteenth century as their equal. Now, the dialectic of history drew it into all European and world affairs. Napoleon's advance on Moscow was of world-historic importance, particularly since its consequence was the advance of Moscow on Paris. The countries along the North Sea that had never seen an Eastern European conqueror now witnessed for the first time the sons of the Urals and from beyond

the Caspian, who, in the service of British capitalism, had defeated French commercial capitalism.

From 1812, Russia was not merely a world power but one of the great powers, indeed, the greatest power after Britain.

And, after 1815, the Eastern question was above all a *Russian* question. This was true in two senses. For Russia itself, it was a question of its expansion into the open, to the Mediterranean Sea, a dominant factor in its foreign policy in the same way as was, in the days of Peter the Great, the winning of 'windows' and 'doors' to the Baltic Sea. The question was posed whether, over time, Russia would win the heritage of the Byzantines and the sultans; whether the Hagia Sophia would once again become a major shrine of the Greek-Russian church; and whether Russia would, as a result, become a Mediterranean power. For the Western great powers, this was an overriding political question. The Greeks' rebellion and war of liberation received support from Russia, even though it aimed to overturn the legitimate authority of the sultan, and although it enjoyed the support of all those in Europe of the time who were considered 'liberal' – that is, revolutionary. This rebellion represented the embryo of a new stage of the Eastern question in the nineteenth century – indeed, its imperialist phase that preceded the World War. Why was this? Because, through this rebellion, Russia was indeed claiming the rank of a Mediterranean power. This Russian demand, indeed the demand for free passage through the Straits [of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles], contained within it, in world-historical terms, the conflict with the British Empire, which had been striving since the beginning of the nineteenth century to convert the Mediterranean into a strategically occupied water route to India.

Following the Crimean War [1853–6], for the rest of the nineteenth century, the conflict no longer found expression in wars. It remained hidden beneath the surface of political events. During the last quarter of the century, the conflict was thrust into the background by the fact that, after the Congress of Berlin, Prussia-Germany quickly became a dominant factor in Turkish affairs.⁶

As soon as German power had disappeared from this mighty interplay of forces, however, the Russian-British contradiction inevitably came to the fore in full force.

Tsarism had fought on the side of British imperialism in the hope of obtaining Constantinople as booty, just as it had fought on the British side in 1812 in the hopes of defeating France. When German imperialism was defeated in the

6. The Congress of Berlin in 1878 imposed a settlement in the Balkans following on the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8. It was presided over by the German Chancellor, Bismarck, a development that marked Germany's emergence as a power in Balkan diplomacy.

World War, the contradiction between British imperialist and Russian interests once again came into the open. However, now Russian interests, those of proletarian Russia, have become those of genuine freedom of the Straits. Proletarian Russia's interest in the freedom of the Straits is also in the world interests of the proletariat. Freedom of the Straits means simply that this focus of world transport should not be controlled by British imperialism.

And the interests of today's proletarian Russia corresponds in this regard not only with those of all other peoples who live on the coasts of the Black Sea but also with those of the proletariat in the Western countries.

Comrades, the Eastern question, an interplay of rivalries that has become more and more a cross borne by West European diplomats and politicians and a danger for the peoples, is rooted in the world-historical fact that, at the outset of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire began to collapse, and suddenly seemed to be no longer viable.

Let us review briefly the phases of this collapse. Already, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was in reality no longer unified. The great pashas in its provinces had, in fact, evolved into independent satraps.⁷ Nonetheless, after the loss to the Greeks, a period of reform set in. The Empire was reorganised by Reşid Pasha. Under him, as under Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha, a strong bureaucracy was constructed that utilised the new means provided by a still-young capitalism – particularly the telegraph – to subdue the satraps. The governors in the provinces were now no longer independent princes but creatures of the Porte, usually of low social origin.

This system led ultimately to the despotism of Abdul Hamid, a system based solely on spying and control by parasites of the court. In 1909, this system collapsed. The bureaucracy – which had made despotism possible once again, on a higher level – had become a victim of the despotism and destroyed it, in the year of the so-called Turkish Revolution.⁸ Brailsford, one of the bourgeois historians, provides a compact and powerful portrayal of this period as one of bankrupt anarchy.⁹ But European capitalism was able to utilise this anarchy as a solid source of handsome profits.

Comrades, our unforgettable pioneer and theoretician, Rosa Luxemburg, provided proof in her greatest and best theoretical work that the process of

7. Pashas were officers of high rank in the Ottoman Empire. Satrap is a title for a provincial governor.

8. In July 1908, a revolt of Turkish army contingents led by officers of the Committee of Union and Progress ('Young Turks') resulted in a constitutional revolution. The Sultan Abdul Hamid II was deposed (April 1909) and a constitutional régime established.

9. See Brailsford 1906. As Ravesteyn later notes, Brailsford was a radical historian; during the 1920s, he wrote in defence of the Soviet Republic.

capital accumulation cannot take place without a surrounding non-capitalist territory, on which it acts destructively.¹⁰ In other words, not without older, precapitalist forms of production that it destroys.

But quite apart from all theoretical demonstration, it is an obvious fact that capitalist accumulation in all its historical stages, including its most recent, does not and cannot proceed without a surrounding non-capitalist territory. Beside the brilliant examples provided by Rosa Luxemburg in her book, we have one of the clearest historical examples in the history of the Ottoman Empire as a whole. Rosa Luxemburg also showed that accumulation in all its historical stages cannot be understood and cannot take place historically without the use of naked force. Capitalism's entire colonial policy from the fifteenth to the twentieth century – and I need say little of this – is history of an uninterrupted series of applications of force. And this force takes many forms.

One of its chief expressions is the destruction of natural economies and of all precapitalist economic forms. Capitalism uses many different means to this end, of which a steadily increasing weight of taxes is always one of the most important. This phenomenon is seen in the British Indies, the Dutch Indies, France's North African possessions, and all new colonial territories and also, in the Turkish Empire. Comrades, the well-known radical British author Brailsford, whom I cited previously, came to the same conclusion as the Marxists on this point many years ago in his outstanding book, *Macedonia*, which described the struggles of revolutionary Slavic nationalities in Turkey under Abdul Hamid. In this book he wrote:

To the extent that European influences since the Crimean War have succeeded in imposing on Turkey an illusory appearance of civilisation, it has only promoted weakness and collapse.

And he adds:

Perhaps an even more important influence is the so-called capitulations, which created a state within a state for subjects of the so-called civilised nations.

Comrades, the historical origin of the capitulations lay in the strength of Ottoman rule and the weakness of foreign, capitalist merchants from the West. But through historical development the capitulations became one of the main causes of the weakness of the East and of Turkey in particular.¹¹

10. See Luxemburg 1964. For a compact review of the critical debate among Marxists on Luxemburg's work, see Luxemburg 2004, pp. 19–20, 398 n. 30.

11. Capitulations by the Ottoman Empire permitted foreign states to exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction over their nationals travelling within Ottoman territory. Such

Comrades, the legal and economic position of foreign capitalists in Turkey reflected precisely the relationship of capitalism to powerless and weak Eastern peoples, which it viewed as objects of exploitation, to be taxed and subjected to forced labour at its pleasure. The status of these foreign capitalists was the spitting image of the aristocracy's privileged status in the old estates system in monarchies before the bourgeois revolution. The aristocrats also paid absolutely no taxes and had every prerogative, including that of crushing the rabble. The difference is merely that this modern capitalist aristocracy in Turkey and other countries of the East consisted of elements foreign to the country. These are the conditions that West European capitalism would have introduced in Russia after the War, if it had succeeded in subduing the proletarian revolution with dagger and poison. In brief, the capitulations represent, so to speak, the core of the East's subjugation by foreign capitalism, which not only pumps it for profit but degrades it.

Comrades, it is obvious that, in the peace negotiations, today's new Turkey, which has conquered the mercenaries of European capitalism with the help of its peasant masses, will demand the end of the capitulations as a *sine qua non* for an agreement.

Comrades, these few historical remarks make it clear that the abolition of the capitulations is a fundamental question for Turkey and all Eastern peoples. As long as they remain, so too does the status of degradation with respect to European capitalism.

The results of the Ottoman Empire's collapse are also evident simply from reviewing the geographical, ethnographical, and historical conditions on the Balkan peninsula. These are important because they enable us to draw an important conclusion, namely that, both in ancient times and in modern history, the Balkans and Anatolia represented a political whole. The deepest source of all the historical problems of the Balkan peninsula lies in their peculiar geographic character, as the great Serbian geographer Cvijić, among others, has demonstrated. The two other south European peninsulas have evolved a mostly uniform nationality and culture. But this has never been the case in the Balkan peninsula.

This has spawned a highly divisive dynamic for the peoples and nationalities living in this region. The Aegean Sea, however, still represents not a divisive but a unifying force, just as it did in the days of ancient Hellas.

measures originated at the height of Ottoman power, when they were granted with condescension to visiting merchants. As Turkish power declined, capitulations became a humiliating surrender of sovereignty, extracted by military pressure. European powers extended the practice to other Asian states and Egypt. The Russian Soviet Republic renounced such rights in 1921. See Marx, 'Declaration of War – On the History of the Eastern Question', in Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 13, pp. 100–8.

Geographic relationships have led to the enormous heterogeneity of ethnographic, anthropological-geographical and cultural relationships on the peninsula. Geographers such as Cvijić distinguish no fewer than four cultures and at least six languages. As our teachers Marx and Engels showed in the case of Russia, in their celebrated studies of the Crimean War,¹² these geographical facts are ultimately decisive for the fate of peoples. Therefore, even before the Balkan Wars, we had reached the conclusion that the only satisfactory solution to the Balkan problems was the unity of the Balkans and the Near East, and above all of the Balkans themselves. That was the framework within which the Balkan socialists, before the Balkan Wars, established their programme.¹³

It was tsarism, with its infamous policy of duplicity vis-à-vis the other imperialist great powers, that did everything possible to block such unity. What were the conditions in the Balkans at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century? Brailsford, for example, noted as early as 1903 that there is no place on earth where nationalist conceptions have caused such great destruction or have evolved to such an excessive and insane degree as in Macedonia. But, at the same time, he condemned the misdeeds of British diplomacy in 1877, when it refused to grant Macedonia its freedom, for fear that it would join in a Greater Bulgaria and that this state would become a mighty ally of Russia.¹⁴

Macedonia was the portion of the peninsula where wars of nationalities took on more and more horrendous forms following the end of the nineteenth century. Macedonia faced the fact that there was no solution to the question of how its population could be joined to one or another of the Balkan states. All the cruel deeds, countless deaths, violent actions, and atrocities of the terrible years of the Macedonian uprising must be laid to the bloody account of the capitalist governments in the period before the Turkish Revolution.¹⁵ All the atrocities that still fill our age with horror are the responsibility of capitalism, like all the blood that has flowed in world wars, revolutions, and now

12. See Marx and Engels 1975–2004, vols. 12–14.

13. The First Balkan Socialist Conference, held in Belgrade 7–9 January 1910 (Gregorian calendar), adopted the goal of a league of Balkan Social-Democratic parties, working for a Balkan federation of independent democratic republics.

14. After winning the Russian-Turkish War of 1877–8, Russia compelled Turkey to grant independence to Bulgaria, whose borders were drawn to include almost all of Macedonia. Britain and other European powers rapidly intervened, forced the return of Macedonia to Turkey, and imposed other concessions on Bulgaria.

15. In the early years of the twentieth century, Macedonia was ruled by Ottoman Turkey, but coveted by neighbouring Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia. Resistance to Ottoman rule was disrupted by a fratricidal conflict among subject peoples, promoted by outside sponsors.

again in the Turkish-Greek War. There is one single chain of responsibility for bloodshed.

Already in 1903, Brailsford had to point not only to the regrettable role of the Great Powers but to another factor in the destruction and devastation, which fully exercises its fatal influence even today: the power of the Christian priests. Brailsford gained his knowledge of them on the spot. After he had come to understand the enormous power over the humble peasants held by the bishops, who were rightly called despots, he wrote:

They are peddlers of intolerance, and their business is propaganda. In the East, the cross has become the symbol of war to the degree that it is hard to speak of Orthodox Christianity in anything other than negative terms.

He noted that this Orthodox priesthood was no longer capable of any trace of humanitarian feelings. He fully demonstrated that the Greek church had sunk into barbarism. The various servants of Christ were fighting one another at knifepoint or were constantly urging their believers onward to murder and manslaughter, even though they were servants not only of the same belief but the same church – for the schismatic Bulgarian church differs from the Greek-Orthodox church only in having a separate administration. These people were constantly inciting to murder, with no more noble motivation than that of one merchant trying to break the neck of another. And this historical fact is very important in examining today's conditions and considering the role that the Greek priesthood in Phanar [Fener] played in the recent Greek-Turkish conflict – namely the same horrendous and bestial role.¹⁶ Since the Middle Ages, the Orthodox church in the Near East has been a purely secular instrument of power without spiritual or higher goals, a machine to exploit ignorance, poverty, superstition, and fear of the poor and terrorised peasant population.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: the epoch of imperialist wars, that is wars caused by imperialism, was definitively opened for the Ottoman Empire by the Italian adventure in Tripolitania [Libya] in 1911. We can confidently say that never did imperialism act more brazenly. When Austria absorbed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, it at least offered its apologies, pointing to the fact that its occupation had endured for some time already and had brought tangible results. But the murderous onslaught of Italy lacked any trace of apology other than that offered by a carnivorous beast to its prey. Those who recall the details of this affair will remember that this act of piracy was forced on Italy, always a poor country, by a few great banks, who revealed their petty business interests with cynical candour. Italy went to war because the Banca di

16. Phanar (Fener) was a district of Istanbul traditionally inhabited by Greeks.

Roma wanted it to. This war of conquest is a classical example of imperialism, stark in its brazenness.

As you know, the Italian-Turkish War did not become generalised but remained local in character. This was partly because Italy prudently did not dare to attack its 'natural' field for expansion, Albania, which would have led it into immediate struggle with its supposed ally, the Danubian monarchy [Austria-Hungary].

Thus the settlement of the Italian-Turkish War through the peace of Lausanne in October 1912 was a symptom of the desire of the great piratical states not to wind up the Near Eastern question, because this would have meant a world conflagration. But it was the direct cause of the second and greater stage of the imperialist conflicts in the Balkans. For it made it possible for the four Balkan states jointly to present their demands to the Ottoman Porte. It thus became the prologue to the dreadful trilogy that then followed and ended with world conflagration – if you will, with the twilight of the gods.¹⁷ The War revealed clearly, for the first time, the strengths and weaknesses of the new Turkey that sought, after the revolution of 1908 and the deposition of Abdul Hamid, to escape from the claws of a fateful past.

The Turkish-Italian War was, however, of particular importance because it delivered a heavy blow to awakening Islam. That is what gives this war world-historical importance. *For the first time, in this fateful year of 1911, which was also the year of the Morocco crisis,¹⁸ Islam in all its breadth and depth became aware of awaking new forces within it. A tremor passed through the Muslim ranks from the Pillars of Hercules to the mouth of the Huang Ho in faraway China.*

Why was this the case? It resulted, of course, from an entire complex of causes, of which we can only mention a few here. In this framework, it offered new proof for the saying that imperialism, in its blindness, conjures up the forces that will break its neck. One of the major factors was the origin of the Tripolitanian adventure itself. There is little doubt that it was the French colonial imperialists, who then had the upper hand in the government of the French Republic, who provided the impulse for the Tripolitanian adventure. And one of their major motivations was the fear of a re-assertion or extension of Turkish influence via Tripoli and its hinterland, the Fezzan, over the

17. The Italo-Turkish War (1911–12) served as a prologue to the three Balkan Wars of 1912–13, 1913, and 1914, the last of which escalated into the First World War. Ravesteyn is comparing this sequence to that of Richard Wagner's operatic tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, composed of a prologue, *Das Rheingold*, and a trilogy ending with *Götterdämmerung* [*The Twilight of the Gods*].

18. In 1911 the Kingdom of Morocco faced threats of intervention by France, Spain, and Germany. A dispute between France and Germany (the 'Morocco crisis') was resolved in a fashion that enabled France to establish a protectorate in 1912, ending Moroccan independence.

essentially independent inhabitants of the desert, especially in the Tibesti region, which links Tripoli and the Mediterranean coast with the Bled-es-Sudan, the land of the blacks – in short, with central Africa. The Young Turks had recently affirmed their rule in Tibesti. Their ambitions included restoring Istanbul's historic influence in the heart of the black continent, where Islam is still a religion of conquest and conversion. France and Britain had attempted, in their accord of 1899, to restrict Tripolitania to the desert and permanently deny it access to the inhabited and tilled lands south of the great sand ocean.

The French were still busy after 1911 in extending their rule over the independent Islamic states in the region. As late as the beginning of 1910, they absorbed a serious defeat in battle against the sultan of Ouaddaï. They were unable to take Ouaddaï so long as Tibesti and Borkou, with their untamed tribes of robbers and warriors, were supported by regular Turkish troops. The French colonial politicians regarded the Young Turks' policies with great alarm. These policies struck them in their heart, that is with regard to the consolidation of the enormous French colonial empire, which was to extend over the entire northwest of the black continent. Already in 1911, they had been ready to wage war over this with Germany – and that would have been a world war. That determined France's conduct of the time toward Turkey. So long as Turkey still had a foothold on the African continent, it was dangerous, and the colonialist politicians of the Quai d'Orsay, the French foreign ministry, utilised the Italian peasants and workers as cannon fodder in order to defeat the Young Turks.

The Italian war of conquest resisted the extension of Turkey's political influence, or, better said, the re-establishment of a part of the influence that it had lost in the 1880s as a result of Britain's occupation of Egypt, the loss of Sudan and the equatorial province. Thus, Italy's actions awakened intense Islamist feelings. The Italian attack directly caused a flaring up of what the capitalist papers then called Islamist fanaticism in Egypt and Tunisia, and across all French North Africa, where the rule of the unbelievers was felt by the Muslim population to be an unbearable burden. Such an outstanding student of Islam as Professor Le Chatelier, publisher of the *Revue du monde musulman*, warned France against the immense effects on results for Europe of the unification of Islam in any realm, including the economic realm. It was the Italian assault that made pan-Islamism a political factor of the first importance for the first time. Only the short duration of the Italian war prevented it from awakening a deep response in the Islamic countries around the Mediterranean. This would have given Abyssinia [Ethiopia], which was then and remains the only African empire that is still fully independent, an opportunity to establish again

a link to the sea, which had been cut off by the earlier and just as miserably conducted Italian adventure of 1896.¹⁹

Comrades, the Turkish-Italian War was followed as its immediate result by the so-called war of allies, the actual Balkan War.²⁰ War leads to war. The violence of imperialism leads to new and worse violence.

The temporary reconciliation of the main rivals, the Serbs, the Bulgars, and the Greeks, took place under tsarist sponsorship. Yet this war [1912–13] brought none of the Balkan problems a single step closer to a solution. On the contrary: it sharpened the contradictions, augmented the hatred of the national bourgeoisies, heightened nationalism to a true paroxysm, and ultimately delivered over all the peoples of the Balkans even more fully to the might of European imperialism and subordinated them even further to high finance. In this respect it is the true prelude to the World War, which reproduced all its effects on a giant scale. And all of these effects could even then be clearly demonstrated.

These problems were exemplified with particular clarity in the question of the future of the Aegean islands,²¹ whose strategic and political importance had been clear to all European governments since the battle of Chesma [Çeşme] in 1770, when a Russian fleet annihilated that of Turkey. Stampalia [Astypalaia], for example, the most westerly of the islands close to the Anatolian coast, had long been known to the British admiralty as an outstanding maritime base. The islands located to the east of Stampalia could not be Greek because they geographically belong to Asia Minor.

The only satisfactory solution regarding the islands' future, as with all parts of the Balkans, lay in the greatest possible autonomy of each part and the federation of these parts. This was just as true for the Asiatic part of Turkey as for the rest of the European part of the Ottoman Empire. The war of 1912 had taught the doctrinaire Young Turks that an empire like the Ottoman, with so many different nationalities, with regions so divergent culturally, with such

19. Italy seized the Ethiopian coastal province of Eritrea in 1890, but its efforts to conquer the interior were defeated in 1896. Ethiopia remained independent but lost access to the sea.

20. Ravesteyn here telescopes two Balkan wars into one. In the first war (1912–13), Ottoman Turkey fought Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria. In the second (1913), Bulgaria fought its previous allies plus Turkey and Romania.

21. Ravesteyn is referring to the Dodecanese islands in the southeast Aegean, a formerly Ottoman Turkish territory, mainly Greek in population. All but two of the twelve islands were occupied by Italy from 1912. The islands were awarded to Italy by the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 and transferred to Greece in 1947.

uneven levels of development, could be ruled in centralised fashion only by an absolutism such as that of the bloody [Abdul] Hamid.

Their attempts to heighten this centralisation failed fully, and had to fail. Their parliamentary régime was a caricature that was utterly senseless in an empire that included even Kurds and Albanians who still lived in their original tribal associations. Even the revolutionary Macedonian committee of 1903 placed in the foreground the idea of federation and autonomy of the Empire's segments as the only road to peaceful cultural development.

But the Young Turks – doctrinaires as they were – did not come up with this idea. In their defence, it must be said that every attempt at reform shattered against the exploitation by European capitalism. The latter possessed a true suction pump in the form of the Ottoman debt, a pump with the peculiarity that the longer it operated, the faster and harder it sucked.²² The Ottoman debt had developed into an entirely independent state administration within the Turkish state structure. As early as 1911, it had revenue of more than five million Turkish pounds, that is about 5.5 million pounds sterling, compared with a Turkish state budget that amounted to 26 million in revenues and 33 million in expenses. This deficit, of course, constantly required more loans, and the Ottoman debt claimed a very significant part of the oppressive taxes. Thus the poor Turkish peasants had to pay – through the sheep tax, the tithe, the salt tax – enormous annual sums to European finance.

This tithe amounted, in reality, to at least 12.5 per cent of the harvest, and every Turkish peasant cultivated the land for a month or longer every year for the sake of this part of the debt. On taking office, the Young Turks found state finances in a hopeless confusion. Almost immediately, they faced the attack of the Danubian monarchy,²³ and then the Italian one or two years later, which imposed heavy military expenditures. They were compelled to levy new and oppressive taxes. Yet it was still impossible to bring revenues and expenses into balance. That could not continue. The tribute had to be increased. The financiers provided new loans, through which they were able to pull in new and enormous profits.

22. The Ottoman Empire contracted its first foreign debt in 1854, on disadvantageous terms, to help cover the costs of the Crimean War. The debt mounted swiftly, and, in 1875, the Ottoman government announced it was unable to pay interest in cash. In 1881, the European powers forced the government to accept a separate administration to secure payment of the debt, with control over a large part of national revenue. By 1911, this administration, governed by foreign bondholders, had a staff fifty per cent larger than that of the Imperial Ministry of Finance. Lewis 1961, pp. 168, 446–7.

23. Austria-Hungary responded to the Turkish constitutional revolution in October 1908 by annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, which since 1878 had been Ottoman territory under Austro-Hungarian administration.

The Balkan Wars served at least this purpose. The warring states were burdened with more than 1.6 billion francs in new debts.²⁴ Despite everything, the Young Turks were forced during the Balkan Wars to take measures that, if carried through correctly, would have given the Wars a revolutionary character.

After the early and decisive first defeats in the autumn, peace negotiations began, and an armistice was declared. The former creatures of Hamid had power back in their hands and wanted to grant everything demanded by the victors, who were protected by European diplomacy. At this point, on 23 January 1913, the Young Turks carried out a coup, under Enver's leadership. They seized power once again and broke off negotiations.

This coup posed at least the possibility of a rebellion against European imperialism. The revolt of Enver and his colleagues was a very clear manifestation of the increasing anger across the entire Islamic world aroused by the brutal violence of European, Christian capitalism. Even then, protests poured in from all parts of the Islamic world against the policy of driving Turkey out of Europe. The congress of British Indian Muslims in Lucknow [March 1913] protested against the policies of the British government. In Egypt, too, sympathy grew and grew for threatened Turkey and expressed itself more and more distinctly. Even in the European press, there was a dawning of awareness of how dangerous the Young Turks' coup could be for European high finance, if the Young Turks shifted the focus of national defence to Anatolia and, without concerning themselves for European finance, employed all the money resources available to them to defend the threatened fatherland.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: should this not be a historical lesson for today's Turks, which they should take to heart? Unfortunately, payment of interest on the Turkish debt has begun once again. A new partial payment took place in France in April 1921. A second payment followed on 17 July 1922. It seems that the intention of the financiers regarding the Ottoman debt is not only that interest payments again take place regularly but also that the European debt holders receive the full amount of the debt certificates on which Turkey defaulted during the War and in the years the young Turkey was fighting for survival. The European and imperialist Shylocks want to have their full pound. And the French owners, in particular, are surely so exceptionally friendly to the new Turkey because they nurture hopes – more hopes than in the case of Russia – to be reimbursed for the defaulted loans.

Comrades, there is surely no need to repeat that so long as Turkey does not escape from this debt slavery, as Russia has done, it cannot genuinely

24. At the time of the Balkan Wars, a French franc was worth approximately US\$0.20.

free itself from the yoke of European imperialism. If the Angora [Ankara] government rejects this option, the Turkish peasant masses and proletarians must not rest until they have carried through a most energetic struggle for this demand. These peasants and workers have not shed their blood for eight long years in order now to dedicate their exertion, suffering, and hard labour to assuring the fat profits of European capitalism.

Comrades, as we said, the Balkan War of 1912–13 revealed both the strength and the weakness of Turkey's position. The Young Turks' weakness at that moment lay above all in their fear of employing revolutionary methods against imperialism, particularly regarding the cancellation of the Ottoman debt. Their strength was revealed brilliantly in the military struggle. Yes, their situation was even stronger than in 1878. Bulgaria's strength collapsed along the Chatalya [Çatalca] line,²⁵ and, soon thereafter, the furious allies seized each other by the throat. The Turks readily regained control of eastern Thrace and Adrianople [Edirne]. The Christian states of the Balkans were so blinded that they could not drive Turkey out of Europe.

However, there is a deeper historical and geographical cause. Constantinople is a point of unification, not division, reaching out a hand to the west and a hand to the east. The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles are not a mountain range with impossible passes, like for example the Pindus range [in Greece], but a unifying path of transportation. And in this regard, the wind-up of the Balkan struggle, which was the immediate prologue to the World War, is exemplary and prophetic regarding what we are now witnessing. The attempt has been made again now with immensely greater forces, and now as well it failed.

The murderous, fratricidal dispute of the summer of 1913, which concluded the Balkan struggle that had begun in such unity, is symptomatic and historically exemplary. Bulgaria had displayed the greatest energy in the struggle of nationalities against Turkish despotism in the first years of the twentieth century. It had extended its national demands the furthest – far beyond the ethnographical boundaries that should have provided a national limit to Bulgarian influence. And, in its victory, the Bulgarian conqueror, in its zeal and lust for power, had riled the other victors. They, the Bulgarians, had been the most merciless in suppressing their national opponents, and now Bulgaria had to humble itself to such a degree that this act held within it the seed of a new war.

25. The Chatalya line was a system of fortifications running across the Çatalca district west of Istanbul.

After two years of exhausting struggle, the Treaty of Bucharest was dictated to Bulgaria on 28 July 1913, without the involvement of the great powers.²⁶ But, clearly, the only victor was European imperialism. A full year of the most horrific mass murder that Europe had experienced since 1870 had brought the world not a single step closer to an enduring solution of the Balkan question. The Bucharest Treaty also created conditions for each of the major allies that resulted in equally great discontent and fatal consequences. Bulgaria, in particular, was now in a situation that was strikingly similar to that of France in 1871, after the amputation of Alsace-Lorraine. Bulgaria's revenge now became the determining impulse for the bourgeois classes. This terrible lust for revenge became a new source of tensions in the relationship of the three allies. Albania won its independence and has, from that day, remained on a war footing with Serbia. It was almost certain that the war of the allies would have led in short order to a new Balkan struggle if a much vaster catastrophe had not broken out on 1 August 1914.

And, now, eight years after the onset of the world conflagration, after the Balkan peninsula has had to experience again all the horrors of war from 1914 to 1918, the situation may not be much different from that of 1913. Once again the fortunes of war have had their say. The Turks, whom the British prime minister Asquith had said were banished forever from Europe, from the European paradise, have returned. The national rivalries in the Balkans are just as bloody and fearsome as before. Once again, Bulgaria stands crushed and humbled, a slave of European capitalism. And, when we regard the condition of the other Balkan peoples, the only difference from 1913 is that their condition is now much more dismal and desperate. The new war of Greece against the Turks, imposed on it by its bourgeoisie, has brought it for a second time to the edge of the abyss.

Comrade Radek recently described the present financial and economic condition of Greece, which provides insight into its present misery. In historical terms, you get an overview of the situation by comparing present conditions in Greece and those before the Balkan Wars with the gradual rise during the era before the imperialist wars. In 1890, the country borrowed 570 million francs, and received, in reality, 413 million. Every inhabitant of this poor and small country was burdened with a debt of 260 francs, payable in gold. In 1893, this debt demanded payments in gold of 58 million a year. This was more than the entire governmental revenues, making bankruptcy inevitable. A new war, the unfortunate war of Greece against Turkey in 1897, imposed new burdens.

26. By the Treaty of Bucharest, Bulgaria ceded most of Macedonia, as well as other territories, to Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Romania. Two months later, Bulgaria turned over eastern Thrace to Turkey.

This offered international finance the opportunity to tighten more firmly the financial noose that this poor country had placed around its neck.

An international financial commission was set up to take full control over the collection and use of the taxes needed to pay the national debt as well as to provide a war indemnity to Turkey. The Greek people were thus thrown again into utter debt slavery. In this respect, its condition was no different from that of the Turkish or other oriental peoples. The financial commission of international capitalism came up with new loans which naturally brought impressive profits for high finance. The yield of various monopolies and of some of the most important taxes was turned over to this commission. Greece had to produce forty million gold francs a year to pay interest and amortisation. The poor paid through salt, petroleum, match, and other monopolies.

Through this rigorous financial management, international capitalism succeeded in extorting so much from this still impoverished country that its national debt was reduced to 824 million francs. Given the improvement in the economic situation and the enrichment of the bourgeoisie, it proved possible to balance state revenues and expenditures. True, this was possible only through an extremely oppressive tax system, which enormously increased the cost of living of all urban consumers and especially the workers. This resulted in constantly rising emigration, even though the country was still only thinly populated, a fact that restricted any progress in agriculture in the countryside. But, with great efforts, the country was able, on the eve of the Balkan Wars, to actually escape the control of international financial commission and resume some degree of self-government.

However, the Balkan Wars immediately destroyed the equilibrium attained with such effort and deprivation. In 1904, the army and navy together absorbed an expenditure of 20¼ million francs. In the year from 1912 to 1913, this figure was driven up by the War to 450 million. In 1914, the regular budget for military expenses was 130 million. The country definitively took the path of imperialist expansion in service of European imperialism. The conquests achieved through the Balkan Wars increased territory of Greece by 56,000 square kilometres and its population by two million. But the burdens placed on the old and new Greece were much higher.

The new provinces, and especially the second great commercial city, Salonika [Thessaloniki], were subjected to the worst imaginable economic conditions, cut off from their natural hinterland and ruined by war and economic misgovernment. In short, the Balkan Wars threw Greece back to a condition that, in many respects, was even more pathetic than it had been at the turn of the century. Since then, the World War and the war against the Turks have carried this process further. Today, the economy of Greece is devastated, its

financial situation is hopeless, its debt is enormous, and its population is swollen by destitute refugees from Anatolia and Thrace. Greece finds itself again in a situation much worse than that experienced by this unhappy land before its war for independence.

Those are the results of imperialism and imperialist wars for one of the victors of 1912–13. And, for the Greek people, just as for the Turkish, only one thing can help – a mighty uprising against Western imperialism and its accomplices within the country. Above all, the unsustainable burdens that financial capitalism have heaped on this poor country must be removed. The public debt of Greece must be cancelled, just like the Ottoman debt.

The condition of the so greatly expanded Serbian kingdom, which ironically terms itself 'Kingdom of the Serbs and Croats', is no better in the slightest, and may indeed be worse than that of Greece.²⁷ The economic disaster is just as great as in Greece. Serbia has now subjected itself to a tribute to American capitalism as well. But, beyond that, the Serbo-Croatian kingdom is torn by a raging political struggle. The Serbian unitary state is not able to maintain itself against the workers and also the Croats merely through terrorism and violations of the constitution. The mill of history has ground this unhappy land for eight years, and it seems that nothing emerged from the mill but straw. The mill ground on, and devastation spread, and one can say that nothing has improved, save the rising strength and will to struggle of the Communist working class. Even bourgeois commentators are agreed that the Serbo-Croatian state has no solid coherence and will one day fall apart again, unless the rulers in Belgrade are not fully blind and can be forced in time to put an end to their centralism and grant the nationalities far-reaching autonomy.

Comrades, the parallels with conditions before the World War can be taken further. Then, it was Italian imperialism that launched the first attack, in 1911, launching the bloody festival in the Near East that continues to the present day. Now, it is Italian imperialism – supposedly among the victors – that is rendered so powerless through its exhaustion and the growing strength of the Italian revolution that it does not dare meddle in the Near East question. It still holds the Dodecanese, and this poses a danger that it might intervene in the affairs of the Balkans and the Near East. But it seems to have abandoned its claims in Anatolia. Italy's bourgeois statesmen are even playing a pacifist tune. Facta and Nitti both denounce the imperialism of the other, while presenting themselves as innocent lambs.

27. Yugoslavia was officially styled the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' for the first eleven years of its existence, 1918–29.

But, meanwhile, out of the ruins of prewar imperialism, a new power has arisen, already armed and threatening – Fascism, which raises nationalism to an insane level, just as was the case in the Balkans. The Fascists are now the power that holds Italy's fate in its hands, and Mussolini is already saying: 'Once we take Italy, it will begin to expand.' Expansion! Where else can Italy expand than across the Adriatic, which the Italian nationalists now regard as their sea! The adventure of the poet D'Annunzio has shown,²⁸ just like the history of the World War, where such expansion leads: to a clash with the Serbs. That will, once again, ignite fire and flames across the peninsula. The Albanians, for example, would immediately become allies of Italy in its expansion against the Serbs.

Comrades, the increasing strength of the Fascists in Italy and the revival that it represents of imperialist ideas in new forms stand as a new and terrible danger not only for Italy but for the Balkans as a whole and thus for the Near East. The international proletariat has the duty to do everything possible to enable our Italian comrades to break the teeth of this new danger.

Comrades, the only Balkan country, the only Near East state that took part in the tremendous struggle of 1911–22 and emerged stronger and with new life is Turkey, an Islamic state.

After these terrible events and Turkey's enormous losses, first in the Italian-Turkish Wars and then the Balkan Wars, the World War, and finally the Greek-Turkish Wars, the resurrection of Turkey looks to bourgeois Western-European eyes like a miracle.

What the Anatolian peasants achieved militarily in these eleven years seems truly unbelievable. Not long ago, a Dutch expert had the following to say on this topic in the *Handelsblatt*:

The surprising turnabout in the Near East came unexpected even to the best experts and the most fanatical friends of Turkey. How was it possible for Turkey, apparently moribund and condemned to death, with its last material and moral power completely depleted by four years of World War – a war in which Turkey had not displayed any particular competence or other positive characteristics – to now suddenly astonish the world? This country that seemed condemned to a breakdown now demonstrates, despite its total isolation, the highest organisational capacities and intense enthusiasm.

28. In 1919, D'Annunzio led an Italian nationalist detachment in the seizure of Fiume (Rijeka), a port on the northeast Adriatic coast then in dispute between Yugoslavia (led by the rulers of prewar Serbia) and Italy. See p. 387, n. 10.

This verdict is typical of the impact on Europe of the Turkish victories in recent months. The writer continues:

Ordinary Turkish generals and politicians have understood the psychology of Asiatic peoples much better than all the Islamic departments of government in Downing Street and other great Western powers. In London it was proven conclusively that Mustafa [Kemal] and his entire nationalist movement was at the end of its strength, and that its isolation in the midst of the Anatolian highlands must sooner or later lead his entire movement to a fiasco. It was said that Anatolia had already been bled white during the World War – truly a land of widows and orphans. The land is not cultivated; they lack seeds, agricultural equipment, and a labour force. The country would soon lose its patience and turn against the nationalist leaders. That is what was being said in London.

They were quite right that Anatolia is truly the land of widows and orphans. Four years of uninterrupted war led to the loss of millions of people. And yet this land was able to deal out such blows with its mailed fist that it could drive Britain's hireling into the sea. All this was possible only because of belief in the national idea.

A wait-and-see approach is no longer adequate. From our European heights, or rather our darkness, we must place ourselves in the framework of Islamic ideas, not only in order to know more, but simply out of healthy egotism and concern for our future. Otherwise we may discover one fine day that the mighty gates of Asia are to our astonishment locked forever against us.

Comrades, that shows the impact of the Turkish victories on a perceptive observer. The impact on Islam as a whole is much greater. From the Pillars of Hercules to the Pacific islands, the Muslims are gathering to praise the Anatolian soldiers and their hero, the *ghazi* [warrior] Kemal. Just listen to a man standing in intimate contact with the European rulers: the grand vizier of Morocco. In an interview in Geneva, he said:

The Turkish victory brought me great joy and awakened much enthusiasm in Morocco. Our country has no special relationship with Turkey. Yet even so, our hearts are with them. It is very perceptive of France to be attentive to Turkish interests in the East. We must all be very grateful to France for that.

In the entire vast world of Islam that now stands under French rule, with its millions of yellow, white, brown, and black Muslims of every race and every language, the French rulers can only hold their own by accommodating the Islamic ruling classes and flattering them.

They omit nothing in this regard, to the degree consistent with their supreme power. A policy of assimilation is pursued to the extent possible. France also holds booty from the Turkish Empire. It has established itself in Syria, where it previously had 'rights', as the diplomatists put it, but no real hope of ever getting a firm foothold.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: it is not difficult to find convincing reasons for the conciliatory role that the militaristic and imperialist France of Poincaré played in the recent Eastern crisis. This flows from the overall world political situation, and also from direct economic and financial factors that we will speak of later on. However, the role of Britain under the leadership of Lloyd George since the Turkish advance is harder to understand. It could even be said that this policy, at first glance, is almost incomprehensible.

Lloyd George has taken a position toward the Turks and Islam that appears to stand in contradiction with the true interests of British imperialism. One wing of the major imperialist press in Britain published a quite straightforward declaration in favour of the revival of Turkish power, which was revealed in September to the world, sealed and delivered. The declaration consisted of a kind of magic charm, as if discovered in the Arabian tales of a thousand and one nights. It bore the title, 'The Hand of Moscow'. Here is what the *Times* wrote on 6 October:

A strange combination of historical forces is gathering round the fateful city of Constantinople. In the foreground are the Turks and in the background is the power that controls Russia, strange and sinister, with a purpose having little in common with Turkish national aspirations, definitely and violently opposed to all that the Allies fought for in the War.

The newspaper then continues:

The Kemalists...are bound to the Bolsheviks by a number of treaties and agreements, public and secret. The long period during which they were cut off from the West by the War with Greece left them with no other resource but to ally themselves with the Bolsheviks, who assiduously supplied them with money and munitions and penetrated into all the secrets of their policy. Turkey was galvanised into new life with the help of Soviet Moscow, not in order that Turkey might live, but that Western civilisation might be attacked afresh at its weakest point in the Balkans, and that amid fresh commotions revolutionary activity might be renewed in exhausted Europe.

It continues:

The Bolsheviks are taking advantage of Turkish national aspirations in order to secure an entrance into the disturbed areas of South-Eastern Europe.²⁹

29. The text of the quotation has been taken from the *Times*, 7 October 1922.

The *Times* refers to the possibility that Bolshevism may now establish itself in the Balkan countries. The Allies' duty, it says, is to prevent the Bolsheviks from achieving these goals.

This line of thinking also played a role with Lloyd George. Another segment of the capitalist press, somewhat more far-sighted, has branded Lloyd George as what he really is: a war provoker and warmonger. A columnist in the Liberal weekly paper *Nation* pointed out that, if peace was not broken in the first days of October, this was only thanks to the intervention of a moderate general, Harrington. He named Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, and Lord Birkenhead as the warmongers. In addition, the *New Statesman* denounced the war party in the cabinet, which included Lloyd George and Churchill, who decided on their own to use armed force to drive Turkey out of the so-called demilitarised zone.³⁰

The most distinctive and characteristic evidence was the manner in which Garvin, previously an admirer and follower of Lloyd George, provided evidence in the *Observer* of the true policy of Lloyd George's cabinet in the recent Eastern crisis. He wrote:

We must look the brutal truth in the eye. After four years, the British government has irrevocably and dismally lost the great war in the east. The diplomatic Sèvres porcelain lies shattered in pieces.³¹ Ultimately the government did not succeed, like Gladstone, in basing itself on Russia in the East, or, like Beaconsfield [Disraeli], on Turkey. The ministers were capable only of combining the errors of all previous political policies. Now it is necessary to stop once and for all throwing out the baby with the bathwater and converting an evil into a greater evil. Instead of provoking Turkey and Russia simultaneously, while pushing away France and Italy and, in the bargain, shaking the foundations of our empire by converting all Islam into our enemy, we must close this entire tragic book of blindness and blunder. We must not merely bid goodbye to the entire spirit and method that imbued this policy, but we must abandon the road on which we were engaged. For if we were to go further down this path, the Empire would soon run enormous and deadly dangers as never before.

30. The demilitarised zone, which the Entente powers attempted to impose through the Treaty of Sèvres, included the coastal region around Constantinople, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles.

31. The Treaty of Sèvres, signed 10 August 1920, provided for the partition of the Ottoman Empire among the Allied powers. Syria was given to France; Palestine and Iraq to Britain; Constantinople and the Straits were internationalised; most of Anatolia was to be annexed or controlled by Greece, France, Italy, Britain, and a proposed Armenian state; and the Ottoman government was subjected to sweeping Allied controls. Turkey's victory in its war for independence in 1922 forced the Allies to abandon the Treaty; it was replaced the following year by the Treaty of Lausanne.

Some of the most sensible bourgeois politicians also came to the conclusion that, from the standpoint of the British world empire, Lloyd George's policy toward Turkey was downright insane, indeed one could say wicked.

And if we let the objective facts speak for themselves, we must also come to this conclusion.

There are quite simple material reasons for the anti-Turkish and pro-Greek stance of this man, as for example Comrade Rosenberg has explained in an article in *Inprekorr*.³² Lloyd George has long belonged to a certain clique of great financiers whose affairs are tightly linked to Greek businessmen. These Greek-Jewish financiers have doubtless had a great influence on him. This plutocratic influence has been identified from another side by the well-known Catholic writer Chesterton. Doubtless, ideological influences played their role with Lloyd George. His cramped and bigoted Christianity leads him to see every Christian, whether Greek or Byzantine, as a chosen being by contrast to the accursed Turks.

Nonetheless it is indisputable that Lloyd George's policy has led the British Empire in the Near East to a dreadful defeat. The setback was already clear when the Mudanya Conference led to the return of the Turks to Thrace and thus to Turkey's full sovereignty over the Straits.

A great Dutch capitalist newspaper wrote the following on 11 October as the main results of the conference became known:

All that Britain has left is the satisfaction that they will remain for a time in Chanak [Çanakkale] in order to secure the freedom of the Straits. But the question is what freedom of the Straits means. The fourth article of the National Pact in Angora reads:³³ Securing the city of Constantinople, the residence of the Caliph, and the Sea of Marmara against any attack. Despite this principle, the Straits and the Bosphorus are to be made entirely open to the trade and sea traffic of all countries. That is the Turkish position on freedom of the Straits, and it certainly does not mean that when the shores on both sides of the Straits are given back to the Turks, British ships of war will always be able to enter and leave freely.

Lloyd George's understanding of this freedom can be deduced from his solemn declaration that, in case of war, the Straits should not be closed as they were in 1914, when Russia remained isolated in the Black Sea and the Allied fleets were not able to make contact with their allies, and Romania was occupied by the enemy right up to the Black Sea. Lloyd George also desires that no cannon should ever again be fired against a British warship,

32. See Arthur Rosenberg, 'The New Battle for Constantinople', in *Inprekorr*, 2, 80 (19 September 1922), p. 603.

33. For the National Pact, see p. 614, n. 35.

and that no mine should flow down the swift current to the outlet of the Dardanelles, there to strike the rump of a British warship.

That goal is impossible. It is conceivable that the League of Nations might establish some sort of supervision over a demilitarised zone in the territory surrounding the Straits. But if war were to break out, Russia and Turkey would take action, whether fortifications existed or not, against any enemy sailing up the channel. Defensive works can be thrown up very quickly. Minefields can be laid very fast. In case of war, the Straits will be closed once more, because the Allies themselves have permitted the Turks to occupy both sides of the channel. And, with that, the entire freedom of the Straits, for which the British Empire wanted to fight, is now nothing more than a formal turn of phrase without any practical meaning.

Thus is it explained, briefly and distinctly, from a neutral capitalist point of view, that Lloyd George tried in September to fight for a position that he had already surrendered. The programme of the new Turkey, as Mustafa Kemal formulated it again in Smyrna [Izmir], was, to a great extent, achieved in Mudanya. He said on that occasion: 'We demand Asia Minor, Thrace up to the Maritsa, and Constantinople. We are prepared to give every form of guarantee for free passage through the Dardanelles, and we commit ourselves not to fortify them. But it is merely right that the great powers permit us to establish defensive works on the shore of the Sea of Marmara, so that Constantinople is protected against a surprise attack.'

From this follows, as you see, exactly what the Dutch newspaper wrote: once Turkey again has full possession of the two shores, the freedom of the Straits is nothing but a formal slogan without practical meaning. Even if the so-called League of Nations were to guarantee this freedom and Turkey were to join the League, the formula would still apply only in times of peace. And, whether or not there will be peace in the Balkans depends on European imperialism and on whether the Balkan peoples can free themselves from the yoke of this imperialism – and its accomplices in their own lands – and find their way to unity.

In the very same interview, Kemal cited further conditions for peace: (1) Abolition of the capitulations, which he rightly termed an infringement of Turkish independence. (2) The handing over [to Turkey] of the Greek fleet, which otherwise could threaten the Anatolian coast. (3) Payments to compensate for the devastation caused by the Greeks.

There is little need at this point to say a great deal about the meaning of these demands, except to note one point that is missing: cancellation of the Ottoman debt. If the Turkish people really want freedom, they must push through this demand.

Kemal referred in an interview to an important factor that makes the new Turkey much stronger than the old. It is now almost a national entity. It no longer includes the Arab portions of the old empire, whose retention demanded so much effort from the despotism under [Abdul] Hamid, forcing the Turkish soldier to act as a gendarme. The new Turkey is now in a position where it no longer needs, as before, to sacrifice a large portion of its strength in the exhausting struggle of nationalities. These provinces are now separated from the body of the Turkish state and have been snatched up by Western imperialism. Syria is for now ruled by France; Palestine and Mesopotamia [Iraq], while formally League of Nations mandates, are, in fact, ruled by Britain. But one cannot say that imperialism, particularly that of Britain, has so far got much satisfaction from its new conquests.

The history of the Palestinian and Mesopotamian mandates is a long story of suffering, and conditions are still highly unstable.

In Palestine, the two dominant forces, Jewish and Arab, are both discontented. I will not try to portray even the main features of this country's complex history in recent years. But this can be said: British rule has not been capable of achieving even a limited degree of peaceful collaboration between the nationalities in the new Palestine. The country is now on the eve of elections for a sort of representative body. But the Arabs have announced a boycott of these elections. The pan-Islamist movement, of which we will speak in a moment, is still growing.

In Iraq, the situation is, if anything, more complex and more unfavourable for British imperialism. A permanent occupation would cost immense sums of money, which stands in absolute contradiction to the drive to reduce expenditures that is at present a central problem of the bourgeois crisis in all capitalist countries.

The occupation of Mesopotamia, which resulted from the War, has brought the British Empire into the situation of which Brailsford warned during the War in his book, *A League of Nations*, when he wrote that this occupation would weaken rather than strengthen Britain strategically and politically.

Britain now favours some form of self-government for Iraq and for other portions of the Arabian continent that are subject to British influence. Indeed, such self-government under British rule is necessary for Britain itself. But, as we see in Egypt, self-government leads directly to the strengthening of efforts to destroy the hated rule of Britain.

According to recent reports, the high commissioner of Britain in Baghdad, Sir Percy Cox, signed a sort of treaty of alliance in the first half of October with the prime minister of Iraq. The treaty specifies Britain's relationship to Iraq as mandatory power and is viewed as the first important step toward eventually granting Iraq self-government.

Britain assumes responsibility to secure Iraq's admission to the League of Nations, at which point the British mandate would automatically end.

At the same time, we receive news that the British government will do all in its power to determine Iraq's borders. When the treaty is properly ratified, a stable government is established in accordance with the basic law, and the borders are determined, at that point – we are told – the British government confidently expects the government of Iraq to seek admission to the League of Nations.

Comrades, the hypocritical policies of British imperialism are once again expressed here with particular clarity. Just as with the supposedly independent kingdom of Faisal,³⁴ Britain seeks here to create a supposedly independent Arabian state as its ally. This ally is even permitted to join the League of Nations. But Egypt, a Muslim state that is also called independent, is not permitted to join the League, which is a tool of the great powers. It seems at present that Britain is using all available means in an effort to assert its supremacy over the Arab continent.

A well-known traveller and British government employee, Mrs. Rosita Forbes, recently set out through the Arab desert with a secret assignment. This was no doubt to ply the Bedouin chiefs with gold and gifts and thus shackle them once more to Britain. What is at stake for Britain in the coming years on the Arab continent is actually nothing less than its connection with India.³⁵ If the Arab tribes, and the Arabs in general, break free in the coming years from British domination, the entire strategic bridge on which Britain has relied for two hundred years will collapse.

These are the enormous stakes now in play in the Near East. We can say that the orientation of the Arabs in the coming months and years will determine world history in the Near East.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: Britain is bending every effort to maintain its supremacy in these countries – using cunning or violence, whatever works.

The interests of the world proletariat as well as of the Eastern peoples both demand that this supremacy be broken.

Iraq is surely the weakest and strategically most vulnerable segment of the British Empire's bridge-like connection. Strategically, Iraq is much less

34. In March 1920, Faisal was chosen by the Syrian National Congress to head an independent kingdom of Syria. Later that year, his régime was overthrown by French forces. The British government, which ruled Iraq under a League of Nations mandate, named Faisal king of the country in 1921, under continuing British control.

35. Britain's sea passage to India, then part of the British Empire, ran through the Suez Canal in Egypt, then a British protectorate, and along the coasts of Arabia, much of which were occupied by Britain or subject to its influence.

favourably placed than Palestine or Egypt. Its people are still overwhelmingly nomads, who are not inclined to submit to the British yoke. There is no way to delimit the country from the open desert. The only way to gain some degree of influence over the free Bedouin tribes is through bribery.

Comrades, the difficulty of British imperialism's position in the Near East becomes evident when we consider the context of the enormously vast strategic dimension of the Near Eastern world. The entire Near East, from the borders of Baluchistan to the Mediterranean, is, from the standpoint of British imperialism, nothing but an immense buffer zone for its Indian fortress, cut through by a trench that is supposed to assure free communication between the two great expanses of water where the oceanic empire is and must remain mistress: the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

As late as 1918–19, British imperialism was on the offensive across this immense territory.

This British offensive took shape in the final phase of the World War on an immense front reaching thousands of miles from Central Asia to the Black Sea. It is portrayed with exceptional clarity in a book of a British soldier, who speaks of these matters with perhaps a greater frankness than was appropriate. Comrades, brothers and sisters: I am referring to the book of Captain L.V.S. Blacker of the guide corps, entitled *On Secret Patrol in High Asia*.

In the foreword to this most interesting work, the well-known British imperialist politician and strategist Sir George Younghusband writes that a small number of British, Indian, and Muslim troops killed ten thousand Bolsheviks and inspired the fear of God and of Indian soldiers under British leadership thousands of kilometres inside Asia.³⁶

It is hardly possible to illuminate more vividly the world-historic fact, loudly proclaimed by these soldiers, that in 1918, across a massive landscape reading from the Pamir and Chinese Turkestan highlands to the Black Sea, the World War became a struggle *between proletarian Russia and British imperialism*.

The two irreconcilable foes collided in these immense mountains, stretched across thousands of miles, and these vast deserts, at the moment when the proletarian republic was born and the British Empire had attained the height of its power.

Since that time, British imperialism has been in rapid decline, even as the power of the proletarian republic grows. And now, four years later, the proud

36. Blacker's book chronicles the exploits of British troops secretly fighting the Red Army in Turkestan in 1918–20. Ravesteyn exaggerates the claims of Younghusband's introduction, which refers to a defeat of 10,000 Bolsheviks and the conquest of several thousand square miles of territory.

British world empire has already been compelled to negotiate on an equal basis with the new proletarian government, so feared and despised.

And, just as distressing, it has had to strike its sails before an Islamic government that it thought it had already destroyed.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: these events are reminiscent of the massive twists of fate that Shakespeare, the greatest of British dramatists, portrayed so effectively in his historical plays, especially in *Henry V*.

But here is the most important aspect. Captain Blacker takes pride that Muslims from British India and Punjabis under British command carried out the dirty work assigned to them – indeed that they, if only London had desired it, could have defeated the young red armies and strangled the red republic.

I will leave it to the military experts to judge the extent to which this judgement is correct. But we know that British officers and British militarism can no longer call on Muslims of British India as they could then and during the World War. Britain's policies themselves have now aroused the feelings of Muslims in India to such a degree that they can no longer be employed against the Soviet Republic. Or, at least, this is only possible to very limited extent. But our duty, comrades, is to ensure that it becomes impossible in short order to use any Islamic soldier as a mercenary against proletarian freedom.

This brings us once again to the fundamental importance of events in the Near East for the struggle of the world proletariat, for our Communist International, and for the collapse of capitalism.

These events represent a new phase in the mighty struggle that is more and more developing, in which the Eastern world as a whole, and especially the world of Islam as its most militant sector, is rising against the rule of European capitalism.

The world-historical importance of this uprising is so great that the proletarian International must more than ever turn to it with full attention and support it in every way possible. At stake here is the independence of the Eastern world as a whole, of all Asia, of all the Islamic peoples, who make up a large part of the population not only in Asia and the Near East but are also a steadily increasing force in the black sector of the world, where they have already advanced past the Zambezi. This independence would in itself signify the end of British, first of all, and then Western imperialism.

Without political domination of the Asiatic peoples, without the exploitation of the Islamic peoples alongside the Hindu and Chinese and other Far Eastern peoples, imperialism's continued existence is impossible. Why is this so? Because the liberation of the Islamic and other Eastern peoples signifies that their tribute to European capitalism immediately ceases. The accumulation of capital cannot proceed without this tribute.

But, if accumulation stagnates, that represents a deadly blow to capitalism, cutting its vital artery. Developments in the last two years have made that clear.

The Near East and the East as a whole is gripped by a movement, a revolution, that will inevitably bring it complete political independence.

The Islamic peoples are striving for an emancipation that is not only political but also economic. And in that is the doom of Western capitalism.

There is a mighty movement that has been seen in the Islamic world for several decades and that bridges and disposes of national and racial divisions, if only temporarily. This is the pan-Islamic movement.

Stoddard, one of the most recent historians of Islam, refers to the awakening and reinforcement of strong feelings of solidarity and hatred toward the Europeans during the years before the Great War.³⁷ An influential Islamic politician wrote the following just before the Great War in the *Revue du monde musulman*:

Events of the last ten years and the blows that have fallen on the Muslim world have aroused in the hearts of all Muslims feelings of warmth and devotion that were previously unknown, along with a general hatred of all oppressors.

Stoddard stresses that these feelings of hatred toward the West are not restricted to journalists and politicians but are shared by all classes. Every class has its specific reasons to hate European political rule. This hatred is however shared by them all, and that gives them something in common that can under circumstances override all other feelings. The World War was greeted by the broad mass of Muslims as a well-earned retribution for Western greed and Western arrogance. In the [Turkish newspaper] *Tanin* of 24 October 1914, we find:

They did not want to recognise the evil in their own countries or elsewhere, and yet the slightest occurrence prompted them to interfere in our affairs. Each day they nibbled at some aspect of our rights or our sovereignty. They carried out vivisection on our quivering flesh and amputated entire portions. And as we violently suppressed the rebellious feelings in our hearts and impotently clenched our fists, silent and dejected, while the fire burned within us, we cried out, 'If only they would attack each other and

37. T. Lothrop Stoddard was a prominent US theorist of racism, who stressed the dangers of militant Islam in order to prove the need for action to repulse the claims of non-white peoples. He wrote *The New World of Islam*, published in 1921. His racist views colour the quotations provided by Ravesteyn, as for example in his offensive and unsubstantiated reference to Asians and blacks raping white women (p. 682).

tear each other.' And see, now they are tearing each other to pieces, just as the Turks desired.

For many farsighted Muslims, the World War thus arrived as a gratifying event.

And Stoddard also holds that, if the Great War was not immediately followed by a powerful movement of Islamic rebellion, this is due merely to the fact that the most influential leaders of Islam did not consider the time to be ripe for such a rebellion and generally condemned the intervention of the Young Turks on the side of one of the contending imperialist camps. The true spiritual leaders of pan-Islamism – that is, the men at the head of the great Islamic brotherhoods, especially the Senussi,³⁸ did not consider that the time was propitious. Preparations had not been made. They had not achieved firm agreements. And, above all, the Caliph's call for holy war bore all too clearly the stamp, 'Made in Germany'. These farsighted Muslims had no desire to jump into the world struggle on the side of one of the contending imperialist camps. And, although there were uprisings everywhere in the Islamic countries under British and French rule, these were spontaneous rather than the result of support by these great leaders.

The leaders had judged correctly. Everything that transpired during and after the War was of a sort to enormously strengthen the pan-Islamist movement. First of all, it became clear that the capitalist powers had learned nothing from the War. We are familiar with the way they continued their policy of annexation and conquest during the War through secret treaties. And, when peace came – well, let us give the floor to Stoddard, who is truly no revolutionary, in his portrayal of the impact of the Versailles peace conference on the Islamic peoples. He tells us that the deeds of the European imperialist powers, their secret treaties further dividing up the Islamic world, filled them with anger and feelings of injured justice as never before. There was a spring tide of passionate determination, and this is surely only the prelude to a much mightier storm.

The high tide of this passionate determination – which the historian of Islam tells us is still rising – this groundswell that foretells a greater tempest has risen even higher since 1919.

According to Stoddard, we must not be misled by the fact that the uprisings of Islamic peoples of the Near East since 1918 were primarily national in character. For Islamic nationalism and pan-Islamism, different as they are,

38. The Senussi (Sanussi, Sanusiyah) were a militant Islamic brotherhood, founded in 1837, which sought social and religious reform and resisted incursions of European powers. In the twentieth century, the Senussi led Libya's struggle for independence.

are ultimately united in their striving for complete liberation of Islam from any European political control.

Islam, in contrast to the capitalist world, is capable of some degree of unification because the bonds linking all Muslims are more than religious in character. Islam is more than a belief; it is a complete social system, a civilisation, with its own philosophy, culture, and art, and in its centuries-long struggle with the rival Christian civilisation it has become a self-aware organic unity.

Even before the War, the following words of a British expert on Islam, Morison, expressed opinions that were shared by such an outstanding Islamic scholar as Professor Le Chatelier and such a famous, perhaps the most famous, expert on Islam as Vámbéry. Morison wrote before the Italian attack on Tripoli:

The more the power and authority of the West increases in the Old World, the stronger become the bonds of unity and common interests among the different sectors of the Asiatic population, along with their fanatical hatred of Europe.

Stoddard describes the results of the World War for the East in general and Islam in particular in the following terms:

War destroyed the prestige of Europe in the East and opened the eyes of Orientals to the weaknesses of the West. For the East, the War was a powerful educational experience. Let us take only one point. Millions of Orientals and blacks were torn from the most distant woods of Asia and Africa so they could serve as soldiers and workers in the white man's war. Although most of these auxiliary troops served in campaigns in the colonies, nonetheless more than a million were transported to Europe. There they killed the white man, raped white women, enjoyed white delicacies, learned to understand the white man's weaknesses, and returned home to tell the whole story to their people.

Today, Asia and Africa understand Europe as never before, and we can be certain that they will utilise this knowledge. Today, we have a situation where the East, torn by the conflict between new and old, confronts a West that is fissured by deep animosities and sickened by its own mad frenzy. Never before did the relationships between the two worlds conceal so many unpredictable and cataclysmic possibilities as now.

This bourgeois commentator on Islam comes to the same conclusion as the best-known Islamic scholars, namely: the Islamic world has been engaged for a century now in a period of renaissance, which began in the early nineteenth century in Arabia. Meanwhile, the capitalist world is exhausted and also undermined by an excessive exertion and the resulting deep wounds. It

is also deeply divided and contains an enemy in its own bosom, the revolutionary proletariat. Meanwhile, every aspect of the Islamic world, religious, cultural, political, and economic, is reviving from the depth of decay into which it sank in the eighteenth century. The relationship between these two worlds is now as tense as during the time of the Crusades, when the Turkish invasion of the Christian world in the eleventh century was followed by a hundred years' war between East and West.

During this mediaeval hundred years of struggle, the West was victorious and gained strength in battle, even though the contest of world civilisations left deep and almost incurable wounds.

Now the relationship is inverted. The decadent and decaying capitalism of the West is confronted with the threatening rise of the young and constantly stronger world of the East and of Islam. Their untold millions were so profoundly humiliated, mistreated, and plundered by imperialism over the decades, that they are now rising up more and more in their indignation.

And the West of today has far fewer resources of strength and greatness. It also has an enemy in its own house, the revolutionary working class, which would have sealed its doom some time ago if the socialist betrayers had not thrown a life preserver to the system that was going under. And, here too, the contrast with the prewar years is striking. Before 1914, tsarism was just as dangerous an enemy of the freedom of Eastern and Islamic peoples as Western imperialism. But tsarism has been destroyed, and proletarian Russia has taken its place, the friend of genuine self-determination and freedom for the Eastern peoples.

Before 1914, Germany appeared to be a friend of the Islamic peoples. In reality, however, it was just as violent and perfidious enemy. Germany has now disappeared as an imperialist power. The Danubian monarchy, its ally, has been destroyed. Before 1914, Italy was an enemy of the independence of the Islamic states. Italian imperialism has emerged from the War so weakened that it appears to have abandoned all claims in the Balkans and Anatolia, and in Libya to be capable of maintaining only the appearance of power, which will doubtless be destroyed. The Italian proletariat need take only one step forward, after its many steps backward since 1920, to rob the Italian imperialists of their desire to rule Libya.

Of the six greatest enemies of Islam, only two are left, plus a smaller one, Dutch capitalism, which grew fat during the War and now sails like an auxiliary vessel beside the British warship. Instead of six, only two: British and French imperialism. And, of the two, at least one of them, French imperialism, appears more compliant – perhaps one could say more sensible toward the Islamic world. It did not seem so immediately after the War. In the Near East, the brutal conduct of the French troops commanded by the butcher,

Gouraud, has certainly not been forgotten.³⁹ Stoddard's book written at the end of 1921, follows a description of the gravity of the Near East situation with the following:

The most hopeful sign in recent times has been that the British government appears to have awakened to an understanding of the constantly growing peril of this situation. On the other hand, the most negative sign in the Near East is the continuing irreconcilability of France. It appears that French policy, still imprisoned in its old traditions, cannot look reality in the eye. If it comes to an explosion – and so it must, if France does not alter its conduct – the dark day will come when twenty to thirty French battalions will be caught in a whirlwind of Arabian fury, rising from the depths of the desert, and destroyed in a new Adowa.⁴⁰ That is the regretful verdict of all those who are familiar with Eastern questions. French policy has fashioned this disaster for itself.

You can see how extremely dangerous the situation of the French occupiers in Syria seemed to this well-informed writer only a short time ago. He perceived the tornado of the Arabian Bedouins spreading itself over the French troops and suddenly sweeping them away. Since then, French policy toward Islam has changed. How has it been influenced? Apart from the causes rooted in the overall situation of the French Empire, about which we previously commented, we must assume that capitalist interests, especially those with a stake in petroleum, played a role here. That is a story in itself, to which I can here make only a reference.

But a more important factor is that the hope still entertained by Stoddard, for example, in 1921, that British policies toward Islam would change, has clearly been dashed. The efforts of Lord Milner to achieve reconciliation in Egypt came to nothing. All observers who have recently visited Egypt agree that the Egyptian masses are in open revolt against British capitalism and the fake constitutionalism that has been installed there under the protection of British bayonets.

As for Mesopotamia, the most recent reports show clearly how perilous is Britain's situation there. We can confidently say that Britain's whole supremacy in the territories bordering on Arabia, as well as in Palestine, the Sinai peninsula, Iraq, and Oman, is dependent on a factor that is entirely unknown

39. As commander of French forces in Syria and Lebanon from 1919 to 1923, Henri Gouraud led the brutal suppression of a national uprising in Syria in 1920.

40. Adowa or Adwa is a town in Ethiopia near the Eritrean border where Ethiopian troops in 1896 decisively defeated Italian forces, preserving their country's independence.

in Europe, namely the attitude of Bedouin sheikhs in free Arabia. Certainly, it is clear that the imperialist powers of the West, whose interests have recently been in such sharp conflict in the matter of German reparations, are also totally at odds in their policies toward the East. Far from being friends, they are intransigent opponents.

However, pan-Islamism encompasses politicians, like the head of the Senussi, whose spiritual influence on millions of Muslims is still on the increase and who will surely not fail to make good use of the frictions between the two remaining great enemies that still confront Islam. These spiritual chieftains of Islam are not in a rush. They can and will wait for a favourable moment, and then we can be sure that they will strike all possible blows against one or the other of their enemies.

In this world-historic struggle for the political liberation of Islam, the revolutionary proletariat has the duty to devote its full attention and provide all possible moral support.

The world proletariat has only one enemy, imperialism. But this imperialism is neither a unified whole, nor does it face in the proletariat its only irreconcilable opponent. The greatest enemy of the proletariat and the Eastern peoples, and especially the Islamic peoples, is the British Empire, an imperialism that spans the world, based on its rule over India and its naval control of the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean. The Islamic peoples have it in their power to destroy the bridge that sustains British imperialism. If this bridge falls, than this imperialism will also collapse. Its fall would have such a mighty echo in the entire world of Islam and the East that the French Empire too would not survive this blow. The liberation of the Islamic world from every form of European political domination, particularly as regards the countries of the Near East, is in the interests not only of the peoples there, the peasants and workers in the Eastern territories not yet in the grip of capitalism. It represents also a fundamental interest of the West European and world proletariat.

This liberation would lead unavoidably to the fall of Western imperialism, the destruction of the criminal imperialist peace treaties, the triumph of revolution in Europe, the affiliation of the West European soviet republics to the Central and East-European states, the liberation of the Balkan nationalities, and their fusion into a great federation of liberated Balkan republics.

The world proletariat greets the strivings of the Islamic peoples for full economic, financial, and political liberation from the influence and domination of the imperialist states. Although these efforts do not aim for the ending of wage slavery and private property of the means of production in the Islamic countries, they nonetheless threaten the roots of European capitalism's domination.

Roy (India): Comrades, the Eastern question should have been dealt with many times already. It should have been taken up in connection with the capitalist offensive, for when you speak of this offensive, you should not ignore the reserves on which capitalism is based and which it can call on in the future. But this was not the case. And now that this question finally is posed for debate, the time allowed is so limited that it is in practice simply not possible to handle the question in anything like a clear manner. Therefore I am rather pessimistic regarding the possibility of portraying for you in a fundamental and detailed manner conditions in the Eastern countries, which, in my opinion, are quite important for the prospects of a decisive victory for the movement in the Western countries. But I will do my best, despite the shortness of the time at my disposal.

The Second Congress of the Communist International settled on the main principles regarding national-liberation struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.⁴¹ It expressed the main principles that govern the relationships of the proletarian revolution and the proletarian movement in economically advanced countries with the national struggle of backward peoples. The experiences that we had gained by 1920, at the time of the Second Congress, did not enable us to develop these principles very fully. However, since those days the movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries has experienced a long period of development. And despite everything that the Communist International and the Communist parties of the West have left undone and ought to have done in order to establish closer relations with these movements and develop them, despite everything, we are now in a position to discuss these movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries with more knowledge, experience, and understanding.

The theses adopted by the Communist International's Second Congress confirmed that, fundamentally, the national movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is objectively revolutionary, and thus forms part of the worldwide revolutionary struggle. It was therefore decided that the Communist parties of the Western countries, and especially of the imperialist countries, should do all in their power to assist these movements. But, at that time, we did not know how these instructions and this resolution of the Second Congress could be carried out. Only a few then understood that the inclusive term 'colonial and semi-colonial countries' embraced quite different regions and peoples. Furthermore, these regions and peoples included every form of social development and of political and industrial backwardness.

41. See 'Resolution on the National and Colonial Questions', Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 283–90.

Our view was that simply because they were all politically, economically, and socially backward, they could all be tossed into a sack, and that the problem on a general level would be resolved. But that viewpoint was incorrect. Today, we know that the Eastern countries cannot be treated as a politically, economically, or socially homogeneous entity. Assuming the Communist International takes it seriously, the Eastern question is therefore more complex than that of the struggle in the West. The social character of the movement in the Western countries is uniform. In the East that is not the case.

The countries of the East can be divided into three categories. Firstly, the countries in which capitalism has reached a rather high level of development. In these countries, not only has industry developed due to the inflow of capital from the great centres of capitalism, but also a native capitalism has gained strength. This has promoted the emergence of a bourgeoisie with a developed class consciousness and its counterpart, a proletariat, which also has class consciousness and is engaged in economic struggles that gradually become political in character.

Secondly, there are countries where capitalist development has begun but is still at an elementary level, and feudalism still constitutes the backbone of society.

There is also a third level, where primitive conditions still prevail, and the social order is dominated by patriarchal feudalism.

Given that the lands termed 'colonial and semi-colonial countries' can be divided into such dissimilar categories, how is it possible to develop a general programme or broad policy guidelines for them all, in order to promote the development of a revolutionary movement?

Our present task at the Fourth Congress is now to thoroughly elaborate the basic principles that were adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International. Today, we face the concrete problem of how to promote the movement's development in these countries. For, despite all the differences just mentioned, in all of these countries we are dealing with a revolutionary movement. Yet, since their social structures are dissimilar, so too is the nature of their revolutionary movements. To the degree that their social character differs, so too must these movements' programme vary, and so too must their tactics.

Taking this into account, all the Eastern delegations present at this congress, working jointly with the Eastern division of the Communist International, have prepared theses that have been submitted to the Congress.⁴² These theses present the overall situation in the East and the movement's development

42. See pp. 1180–90.

since the Second Congress. They also indicate the guidelines for the movement's development in these countries.

At the Second Congress, that is, immediately following the imperialist war, we noted a generalised uprising among the colonial peoples, resulting from intensive economic exploitation during the War.

This great revolutionary uprising created a sensation around the world. There was a rebellion in Egypt in 1919, and one in Korea that same year. In the countries lying between these far-distant points we noted a more-or-less intensive and extended upsurge. But, at that time, these movements were nothing more than great spontaneous risings. Since then, the various forces and social factors that comprised these movements have become more distinct, even as their economic foundations have developed.

As a result, forces that two years ago were active participants in these movements are now seen to have gradually withdrawn from them, or even to have quit them entirely. Thus, in the countries with more capitalist development, for example, the highest layer of the bourgeoisie, that is, the layer that already owns what one might call a stake in the country and has invested significant capital and built up industry, now considers it more advantageous for them to shelter under imperialist protection. For when the great social uprising took place at the end of the War and developed into a revolutionary tempest, it was not only foreign imperialists but also the native bourgeoisie that took fright at the potential of this movement.

In none of these countries is the bourgeoisie sufficiently developed to be confident in its capacity to replace foreign imperialism and then maintain 'law and order'. In reality, they now fear that, if foreign rule is overthrown, this revolutionary uprising could lead to a period of anarchy, chaos, and the disorders of civil war, which would be damaging for their interests. In other words, the industrial development of the bourgeoisie requires law and order, which, in most of these countries, was introduced by foreign imperialism. Given the threat posed to this law and order and the possibility of disturbances and revolutionary uprisings, it now seems more appropriate to the native bourgeoisie to conclude a compromise with the imperialist authorities.

This, of course, weakened the movement in some countries. Nonetheless, this temporary compromise cannot shake the foundations of these movements. In order to maintain its rule in these countries, imperialism must seek points of support locally. It must have a social foundation and assure itself of the support of one or another of the classes of native society. Today, it has found it necessary to reject the old methods of exploitation, and it has made certain political and economic concessions to a sector of the native bourgeoisie. These concessions have appeased the native bourgeoisie for the moment, while also opening up broader perspectives for this class. They have led it to

acquire a taste for economic development, while creating capitalist competition. For, the moment that industry begins to grow in the colonial countries, it undermines the foundations of imperialist capitalism's monopoly.

That is why the temporary compromise between the native and imperialist bourgeoisies cannot be of long duration. In this compromise lie the seeds of future conflicts.

This imperialist policy of compromise has also been introduced in the second group of countries, where usury, commercial capital, feudal bureaucracy, and feudal militarism are the dominant social forces and the leaders of the national movement. But the results of this policy have been less satisfactory than in the [more developed] countries. The interests of the feudal bureaucracy and the colonial feudal lords cannot be as readily appeased as is possible between the imperialist and native bourgeoisies. We therefore see that, in the course of recent years, the nationalist struggle in Turkey has taken first place among all the colonial struggles.

But the recent developments in Turkey show us equally the weak side of this situation. For we know that a national struggle and national political awareness cannot develop so long as the social economy of the people in question is still dominated by feudal patriarchy. So long as there is no bourgeoisie that assumes leadership of the society, no national struggle can arise in all its revolutionary potential. Although we know that it is dangerous for the colonial bourgeoisie to continually make compromises with the imperialist bourgeoisie, in principle we must be in favour, for a bourgeois-national movement in the colonial countries is objectively revolutionary and must therefore be supported. But we must not overlook the fact that this objective factor must not be accepted unconditionally, and that specific historical factors must also be considered. The bourgeoisie becomes a revolutionary force when it directs the rebellion against the backward and outworn social forms, that is, when the struggle is directed fundamentally against feudalism, and the bourgeoisie leads the people. In such conditions the bourgeoisie is the vanguard of revolution.

But this cannot be said of the new bourgeoisie in the Eastern countries, or at least of its main components. Although the bourgeoisie leads the struggle there, it directs it not against feudalism but against foreign capitalism. It leads the struggle of the weak and undeveloped and oppressed bourgeoisie against a strong and developed bourgeoisie. Instead of a class struggle, this is, so to speak, a conflict within a single class, and as such, it presents a basis for compromise.

Therefore, the nationalist struggle in the colonies and the revolutionary struggle for national development there cannot be founded exclusively and simply on a movement inspired by bourgeois ideology and led by the

bourgeoisie. We now see that, in every country, all these leading forces – the liberal bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and the feudal-military cliques in the second group of countries – are gradually making attempts to reach compromise agreements with the imperialist rulers and imperialist capitalism.

This reality raises the question whether another social factor can possibly intervene in this struggle and wrest leadership out of the hands that have to this point directed the struggle.

We note that, in the countries where capitalism is sufficiently developed, such a social factor is already beginning to appear. A proletarian class is coming into being in these countries. And, where capitalism has begun to oppress the peasantry, this has created a large mass of poor and landless farm workers. These masses are gradually being drawn into the struggle, which, therefore, is no longer merely economic but is taking each day a more political character. In the countries where feudalism and the feudal-military cliques still hold the leadership in their hands, we also see the emergence of a growing agrarian movement. In every conflict and struggle, we see the interests of imperialist capitalism coinciding with those of the native landowners and the native feudal class. When the popular masses arise and the national movement becomes revolutionary in scope, it will threaten not only imperialist capitalism and the foreign domination. In addition, the native upper classes will join with the foreign exploiters.

We see a dual struggle in the colonial countries, directed simultaneously against foreign imperialism and the native privileged classes, which indirectly or directly reinforce and support foreign imperialism.

That forms the basis for the question that we have to investigate. How can the native bourgeoisie and the native privileged classes, whose interests run counter to those of imperialism, or whose economic development is blocked by imperialism, be encouraged and supported in taking up the struggle? We must discover how the objective revolutionary significance of these factors can be utilised. At the same time, we must bear in mind that these forces can be effective only up to a given point and no further. We must be aware that they will go only so far and no further, and then they will seek to halt the revolution. We have already had such experiences in every country. An overview of the movement in all the Eastern countries during recent years would have helped us in developing our programmatic points, but this is not possible in the available time. Nonetheless, I believe that most of you are rather well acquainted with the movement's development in these countries. You know that the movements in Egypt and India have been brought to a halt by the fearfulness and vacillation of the bourgeoisie. And a great revolutionary movement that embraced the broad masses of peasants and the working class

and seriously threatened imperialism was unable to cause it serious damage for the simple reason that its leadership lay in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

This bourgeoisie is divided into two groups. The upper layer is industrially developed and presides over major industrial and commercial interests, which are linked with imperialist capitalism. This layer saw the danger posed by this movement and therefore went over to the imperialist side. It thus became a positive obstacle for the revolutionary-national movement with its weak social foundations. It did not have the determination and courage to place itself at the head of the great revolutionary movement in order to lead it forward. As a result the movement, betrayed and misled by these forces, landed in its present condition of decline.

On the other hand, we have the example of the Turkish struggle, which is taking place at this moment. You are aware that the significant victory of the Turkish people has not been carried through to its logical conclusion thanks to the feudal-military clique that, at present, heads the movement. Whether the Turkish people can achieve a complete victory and the full political and economic liberation of the Turkish nation has been put in question, in order to serve the interests of a small feudal-military clique who consider it more advantageous to sell out to a group of imperialists. This clique preferred to link up with one group of imperialists against another. That could lead to the enrichment of this group and to Mustafa Kemal Pasha ascending the throne in place of the sultan, who was mainly a tool of British imperialism. But that does not in any way resolve the Turkish national question.

And we know that, during the two or three months that revolutionary forces around the world were celebrating the victories of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, they received word that in free Turkey, liberated by the revolutionary power of workers and peasants, Kemal is now brutally persecuting all those who strive for the welfare of workers and peasants.

That is proof of the fact that, although the bourgeoisie and the feudal-military clique may take the leadership of the national-revolutionary struggle in this or that country, the time will come when these people will surely betray the movement and become a counter-revolutionary force. We must educate the other social force, which is objectively more revolutionary, in such a way that it can shove aside the others and take the leadership. Until that is done, a decisive victory of the nationalist struggle at the present time remains in question.

Although we did not perceive this problem so clearly two years ago, there was already an objective tendency in this direction, and, as a result, we have Communist parties, political mass parties, in almost all the Eastern countries. We know that the Communist parties in most of these countries cannot

actually be called Communist parties in the Western sense of the word. But their existence shows that social factors in these countries are calling forth political parties – not bourgeois parties but parties that express and reflect the demands, interests, and hopes of the popular masses, of the peasants and workers. They are replacing the type of nationalism that fights only to economically develop and politically reinforce the native bourgeoisie.

The existence of Communist parties in these Eastern countries assumes even more significance if we view the matter from another point of view. The bourgeoisie in the colonial and semi-colonial countries unfortunately arrived too late on the scene, 150 years too late, and is in no way ready to play the role of liberator. It neither can nor will go further than a given point. For that reason, the nationalist-revolutionary movement in these countries, where millions and millions crave national liberation and must free themselves economically and politically from imperialism before they can make further progress, will enjoy no success under the leadership of the bourgeoisie.

Thus we see that Communist parties are necessary, even if for the moment they are no more than cells. These parties are destined to play a great role and to take over the leadership in the national-revolutionary struggle, when it is abandoned and betrayed by the bourgeoisie. They will be capable of carrying forward the struggle for freedom from imperialism. They, alone, will be in a position to assist the oppressed nationalities in winning full political and economic independence.

These parties are historically destined and socially enabled to take up this task because they are based on the objectively most revolutionary factors, namely the workers and peasants. These factors share no common interest with imperialism, and their social status and economic conditions cannot improve so long as these countries remain under capitalist-imperialist rule.

That is why the national-revolutionary struggle in these countries can achieve ultimate victory only under the leadership of the workers and peasants, that is, of a political party that represents them.

Comrades, the need to organise Communist parties in these countries brings us to the question of their programme and tactics. I must point out that when the Communist International debates its programme, it must take into consideration the fact that developing the International's programme in the countries of the East is very complicated. It is all the more complicated given that – and this must unfortunately be conceded – our comrades of the Communist International have so far devoted very little time to studying this question.

Before we write a programme and develop policies to be adopted by the Communist parties in the East, it is important that the International's different sections devote a bit more attention to these questions and study them more

carefully. This would not be wasted labour, because the power of the bourgeoisie in its own countries is at present very tightly linked to the situation in the colonial countries. Imperialism is right now making the attempt to save itself through the development of industry in the colonial countries.

During the War, imperialism – and especially British imperialism – considered it necessary to apply more flexibility in its monopoly of control over the industrial and economic life of the backward colonial countries. Thus India, for example, which had for 150 years served as an agricultural preserve and source of raw materials for British industry, was during the War permitted adequate industrial development. The shattering of capitalist equilibrium in Europe forces imperialism to search for new markets, in order to bring world capitalism back into equilibrium. They hope to find this in the colonial countries through the industrial development of countries like India and China. That is the way they are trying to resolve this problem.

By relying on the raw materials of the colonial countries, imperialism seeks to guide its offensive against the European proletariat to a devastating victory. We must not lose sight of this tendency. Of course, we can raise the objection that this cannot happen, because it is in imperialism's interests to keep the colonial countries backward in order to absorb all the goods produced in the dominant countries. Well and good, but that is a very mechanical way to view the question. We must not forget that, if we lengthen the skirts of the Chinese by a couple of inches, world textile production has to be doubled. Industrial development makes it possible to raise the living standards of 400 million Chinese and thereby double the world's textile production. The industrial development of China does not necessarily lead to a reduction in production in the main capitalist countries. If these countries develop industrially, they need machines, and so on, which they cannot produce themselves. The colonial market will be reduced and limited for some types of products, but where machines are concerned, it must be expanded.

In addition, a portion of the production of Britain and other countries that was previously marketed in Central and Western Europe must now find new buyers, and that can happen only if the capacity of colonial countries to consume increases.

As you see, the unification of imperialist and native capital in the colonial and semi-colonial countries will play a major role in the overall plans for the capitalist offensive. In order to be capable of resisting the capitalist offensive in the European countries, we must bring our striking force into alignment with the movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The experiences we have gained during the last two years in coordinating our strength with that of the bourgeois-nationalist parties in these countries

teach us that making this link is not always practicable. It is necessary for us to have our own parties in these countries, and we must have them. Through the agency of these parties we can utilise the bourgeois-revolutionary parties to the greatest possible extent.

That brings us to the question of the anti-imperialist united front. Shoulder to shoulder with the united front of the working class in the Western countries, we must organise an anti-imperialist united front in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Its goal is to organise all available revolutionary forces into a great united front against imperialism. The experience of the last two years has proven that this front cannot be achieved under the leadership of the bourgeois parties. We must develop our parties in these countries, in order to take over the leadership and organisation of this front.

In the Western countries, the proletarian united-front tactic promotes an accumulation of organisational strength, exposes the betrayal and compromising policy of the Social-Democratic parties, and leads to struggles. In the same way, the campaign for an anti-imperialist united front in the colonial countries will free the movement from the fearful and wavering bourgeoisie and bring the masses more actively into the vanguard, so that the revolutionary social forces can constitute the movement's foundation and thus secure its final victory.

Katayama (Japan): Comrades, I am here to talk about the question of Japan and the Far East. Japan holds a very important position in the coming socialist revolution. Japan is the only country of the Far East that is genuinely independent, both economically and politically. Japan has great importance for the world's revolutionary movement, because Japanese workers may rise up against the capitalist class in the near future. I would therefore like to ask you to listen attentively.

We all know – and there is hardly need to say this here – that we must defend the Russian Revolution. Soviet Russia is threatened by Japanese imperialism. For this reason alone, the Fourth Congress and Communists around the world should devote more attention to this factor than has been the case in the past. Japan is represented at this congress in order to help promote world social revolution. I therefore ask you, comrades, to read my report on Japan and the situation there.

I would like to enumerate a few facts in order to inform you regarding the situation in Japan.

Population: 56 million

National wealth: 87 billion yen⁴³

1917 production: 8.372 billion yen

1918 production: 5.608 billion yen

Japan is the most industrially developed country in the Far East. For example, consider the following figures (in thousands):

Profession	Men	Youth	Women	Total
Civil servants	133	—	43	176
Factories with 10 workers or more	706	—	314	1,520
Miners	353	—	112	465
Forest worker	564	—	147	716
Fisher	617	20	170	808
Railway worker	2,373	20	1,186	3,860
Farm worker	1,856	55	1,402	3,293
Teacher	173	—	53	226

For a total of 7,364,000 workers.

All these are wage workers, who, in some cases, are immensely exploited. In the spinning factories, the working day lasts eleven or twelve hours, plus overtime. Women and young girls work in these factories. In addition, there are 4.16 million families of poor peasants and tenant farmers.

A portion of the industrial proletariat among these workers is organised. In 1920, there were 838 trade unions with a membership of 269,000. In 1921, there were 671 unions with a membership of 246,000, and also 229 associations of tenant farmers with 24,000 members. Since then, these figures have, of course, grown. The association of landowners, which with the exception of 225 large landowners is an organisation of small peasants, has a membership of 1,422,000. There are also mutual-aid societies, 685 of them in 1920, with a membership of two million. These latter associations assisted 3,169,000 people with a sum of 1,551,000 yen.

Comrades, these unvarnished facts are taken from governmental reports. As regards the trade unions, the government has obviously tried to scale down their number; in reality, there are more. The Japanese workers are oppressed and exploited by the militarist government. Every attempt to found a liberation movement is ruthlessly suppressed. But the Japanese workers are awakening. They have had to learn European technology and methods

43. By one estimate, the Japanese yen was worth about US\$0.50 in 1922. See: <www.measuringworth.com>.

of industrial management. It took forty to fifty years, and, in this time, they learned everything. I well recall that, when I was thirteen or fourteen years old, there were no factories of any account. In the entire country were only twenty-five miles of railroads, and we had never heard of coal and kerosene. All we had for illumination was candles. There were no machines in Japan but the waterwheel and the spinning wheel.

Today, we have six thousand miles of railroads, a merchant navy with a total displacement of four million tons, and, I am ashamed to say, a war fleet with seven hundred thousand tons displacement. In forty to fifty years, the Japanese have learned to build steamships, locomotives, and complicated machinery, while the workers are more and more oppressed. The Japanese have also been forced to learn the art of war. Japan waged war against China in 1894 and against Russia in 1904. The Japanese workers sacrificed themselves as cannon fodder, but they recognised that they were fighting only for Japan's capitalists.

This was a true revelation for the Japanese workers. They have not only learned complex modern industrial technology, but have also organised a workers' movement. Our trade unions are still quite weak, but I must tell you that there is no Henderson or Gompers in Japan. The workers do not concern themselves with bank balances or union properties, but fight for the Japanese revolution. In addition to wage increases, they demand reduction of the working time and control of industry, and they are determined to carry through their struggle for a new social system. Our trade-union leaders understand the conditions of capitalism and show the workers that the capitalist system cannot abolish unemployment from the world, and that this will occur only when capitalism is abolished.

Comrades, our workers are still backward with respect to the workers' movement, but I must tell you that we have no traditions holding us back and no reactionary worker aristocracy. For this reason, the movement has developed more quickly in Japan than in other countries. Most of the unions were founded quite recently, that is, in the last couple of years, but one trade union has already existed for eleven years. I would like to show you how the Japanese workers' movement has progressed. The Yuai Kai (the Japanese workers' federation) was founded eleven years ago in order to educate the workers. Its founder was Suzuki, a student who boasted of being a close friend of the Tokyo chief of police. Yet, although this movement was founded for educational purposes, it caused a great sensation. Thanks to Suzuki's friendship with the chief of detectives, of which he was so proud, he received permission to found a workers' movement. The police even helped him distribute the publication of the American Federation of Labor. But the workers were not satisfied with a purely educational association.

Nonetheless, it grew astonishingly quickly. Tens of thousands of workers united in the Japanese Federation of Labour, which then formed industrial unions. Despite its bourgeois founder, the movement gradually grew strong and radical. At first they were socialist. But, last October, at their annual assembly, the tone was outspokenly Bolshevik.

Sixty-three unions belong to the federation; their membership is 120,000 workers in all. At the yearly assembly in October, which I mentioned, it was decided among other things to prepare for a 24-hour general strike on May 1st. The delegates voted for immediate recognition of Soviet Russia and for closing down the League of Nations' labour office. They also voted to press for more radical textbooks in the schools. In Japan, as also in the United States, children in the schools are supplied with textbooks that poison their minds in favour of the imperialist and capitalist classes. We have to carry out anti-militarist and anti-chauvinist propaganda.

We see then that this trade union, founded ten years ago under police protection, has since grown strong and revolutionary. Its left wing sent a delegation with the goal of affiliating to the Red International of Labour Unions. That shows that the Japanese labour movement is making headway. Comrades, I have unshakable faith in the Japanese workers' movement. In one and a half generations, the Japanese workers have mastered industrial technology and modern industry – a task that took a century for European workers. Given that the workers have built up Japanese industry in so short a time, I maintain that they will also learn to conduct a revolutionary struggle, not only in Japan but across the entire Far East.

As you know, Japanese and Korean workers, and, in particular, the independent revolutionaries in Korea, have joined together to pursue revolutionary work in the Far East. I know that, in many countries of the world, the Japanese worker is decried as cheap labour, and that this is an issue that must be dealt with in North America, Canada, and Australia.⁴⁴ But comrades, the Japanese revolutionary workers, indeed the entire trade-union membership do not lament the anti-Japanese movement in these countries. They have more important things to do than concerning themselves with the anti-Japanese movement, and they have found that they can carry out these tasks. The Japanese workers struggle and protest against the exclusion of Chinese workers.

44. Revolutionary socialists had long opposed discriminatory measures against immigrants from Japan and other Asian countries. The 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the Second International greeted with enthusiastic applause the comments of Japanese delegate Kato Tokijiro, who explained, 'The founders of socialism, above all Karl Marx, did not address themselves to individual countries but to all humanity.... It would be a slap in the face to socialism if you were to exclude the poor, exploited Japanese'. A resolution to this effect was adopted. Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 15–20.

The Japanese trade unions combat the capitalists that so brutally exploit the Korean working class. The Korean workers' association in Japan is affiliated to the Japanese Federation of Labour. They are awaiting the day of full liberation of the working class, with the Russian Revolution as their example.

For this reason, I would like to assure my comrades of all countries where there is an anti-Japanese movement that the Japanese workers, the advanced revolutionary workers and radical trade unions, are not preoccupied by this movement. They are expecting you to establish a united front against imperialism and capitalism around the world. I am happy to be able to say that the Japanese workers have already begun working for the united front in the Far East. With the support of Soviet Russia and the Communist International, in February and March this year, we held a conference of the Far East, which established a united front.⁴⁵ The Japanese, Chinese, and Korean Communists are advancing in the establishment of a united front against Japanese imperialism. Comrades from the West, I would like to say that although you possibly have low esteem for the Japanese workers in your countries, you will certainly agree with me that an attempt must be made to smash Japanese imperialism. Is that not correct? We have organised under the banner of combating Japanese imperialism in the Far East.

I would now like to say a few words about the women's movement. The Fourth Congress has somewhat neglected this point. Japanese working women are highly exploited. They are kept prisoner in the dormitories of the employers and work twelve hours daily in day and night shifts. In earlier times Japanese women were forbidden from taking part in political meetings and forming political associations. However, these prohibitions have now been lifted.

The Japanese women attend the country's best educational institutions and use their education to improve their status. They do not only participate in the country's political life, but many have already joined the trade unions. The Japanese Federation of Labour has many thousands of female members. Women take part actively in every strike and help the strikers in many ways. They hold their own public meetings and deliver speeches that are so effective and gripping that they are sometimes mentioned even in the capitalist newspapers. Thus even the Japanese working women have finally awakened. In the primary schools, the girls now receive the same education as the boys.

Now, comrades, as for the Far East, there is a nationalist movement in Korea. This independence movement has grown ever stronger, and – this has not previously been widely known – the national revolutionaries are now

45. For proceedings of the Congress of Toilers of the Far East, held February–March 1922, see Comintern 1970.

organising to achieve their final tasks. They have discovered that a successful struggle for Korean independence requires the collaboration of Japanese workers.

Japanese imperialism has become quite unpopular among the Japanese workers. Nonetheless, it remains very strong. Let me give you a relevant example. In earlier times, a mother who wanted to frighten her child would say that she would stick the child in prison. Now, she says she will hand him over to the soldiers.

The imperialists are preparing for the next war. For this reason, we propose, together with the Chinese delegation, that the Fourth Congress of the Communist International adopt a resolution against Japan's occupation of the northern part of Sakhalin Island.⁴⁶ This will spur on Japanese revolutionary workers in their struggle against imperialism and for the coming socialist revolution in Japan.

Chair: Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I will read the resolution that has been introduced by the Japanese and Chinese delegations.

Call for Japan's Withdrawal from Russian Sakhalin

The Japanese and Chinese delegations to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International propose the following resolution on the occupation of Russian Sakhalin by the Japanese imperialists:

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International sends its greetings to the working people of the Russian half of Sakhalin and of the Far East and to the working class of Japan. We condemn Japanese imperialism, which tormented the workers and peasants of Siberia during four years.

The imperialists' withdrawal from the coastal and Amur territory and, finally, from Vladivostok, resulted from the heroic resistance of the working people of the Russian Far East, and above all the proletariat of the coastal region. It also resulted from the increasing resentment of the broad working masses of Japan against the intervention and the government of the mikado.

Nonetheless, the Japanese imperialists, who have been compelled to evacuate Siberia and the coastal territory, still occupy Russian Sakhalin, still subjugate Russian working people, and from this base threaten the new Soviet order in the Far Eastern territories just freed from intervention.

46. Japanese forces had occupied the northern half of Sakhalin Island during the Russian Civil War, and they retained this territory after their withdrawal from Vladivostok in October 1922.

The international proletariat is convinced that the time is not distant when the militaristic clique that presently rules over Japanese workers and peasants will appear in the court of the victorious Japanese proletariat and will answer there for its many crimes. Among them are the crimes committed in the Russian Far East.⁴⁷

Tahar Boudengha (Tunisia):⁴⁸ Comrades, I believe it is superfluous for me to read my report, a copy of which has been distributed to each of the language groups. I will limit myself to examining a few of the points in this report.

French imperialism holds colonies that are close to the mother country, which enables it to draw as many troops and as much food from these colonies as it wants. It does this in part in expectation of future wars and in part to suppress the proletarian revolution in France.

Meanwhile, in North Africa, there is a stirring of discontent. The Communist cells formed in Tunisia after the Tours Congress [1920] have not failed to make good use of this fact. Given the grave conditions that would follow from a proletarian revolution, they undertook to combat the danger linked to French capitalism's subjugation of the native population of North Africa. To carry out these tasks, we turned to the working class and peasantry, both through our daily papers in Arabic and our public meetings. Our success was so significant that the government took alarm and carried out persecution and arrests. It declared that our party was banned, which forced us underground.

I must admit that the banning of both our party and our newspapers caused us great harm because our activity was not limited to Tunisia but embraced all North Africa. However, I must tell you that Comrade Louzon of the French Party took repeated steps to obtain a subsidy for our press. Thanks to the influence of some comrades, he was ultimately able to obtain a loan of ten thousand francs from *L'Humanité*. In addition, Comrade Vaillant-Couturier came to Algeria and Tunisia and was able to become acquainted with the prevailing mood among the indigenous population. He conceded that forces were available both in the city and in the countryside that were eminently suitable for a pure proletarian Communist movement.

47. There is no record that the congress voted on this appeal of the Japanese and Chinese delegations. However, the appeal appears in the Comintern's published collection of congress resolutions; see Comintern 1923g, p. 122.

48. Little is known of the speaker, whose name is more properly transcribed as Tahar Boudemgha. No record is available of his activity after the Fourth Congress. Records of an activist named Boudemgha in the dockers' union in 1924 refers to Bechir Boudemgha.

What did the Central Committee do after the trip by Vaillant-Couturier? It was not just a matter of carrying out propaganda. An ongoing campaign was required, not just in Tunisia but in all colonies where discontent is prevalent.

The Party must therefore have a clear, definite action programme for the colonies. The colonial policy of French capitalism consists of inciting the peoples under its rule against one another. Thus, in response to the conduct of Tunisian riflemen in the events of 5 April this year, French militarism stationed two brigades of black troops there.⁴⁹

The Communist Party of France has still not grasped how useful it is for it to have a genuine and effective colonial policy. Rather, it allowed itself to be influenced by the pseudo-Communists of Algeria. At its Paris Congress, it postponed discussion of the colonial question out of concern for electoral considerations.

I must read you the letter sent on the eve of the Congress by the Central Committee to the Colonial Study Group. The letter reads as follows:

The Central Committee maintains its decision to postpone examination of the colonial question until the next national congress, which will follow the Fourth World Congress. The Central Committee considers that the departmental elections in Algiers have an importance for the comrades of the overseas sections far beyond anything the Colonial Study Group seems to grasp; that these elections will take place not only on 8 October but also on 15 October; that the most respected comrades of these sections will have to take part in these elections; and that in such circumstances, it is absolutely out of the question to determine the Party's colonial policy in their absence.

Comrades, there is every indication that the Party's colonial policy depends on the Algerian citizens alone. The same citizens who carry such weight for the Party in its colonial policy have written theses that are utterly opposed to Moscow's eighth condition.⁵⁰ I must read you some portions of the questionable theses composed in Sidi-Bel-Abbès:

49. From 1919, Tunisia was shaken by nationalist ferment led by the Destour Party, which demanded constitutional rule, equal rights for native Tunisians, defence of native rights to the land, and other reforms. On 3 April 1922, the Bey or governor of Tunis, the territory's traditional ruler, threatened to resign if such reforms were not implemented. On 5 April, the French authorities reasserted control and forced the Bey to withdraw his threat.

50. Point 8 of the Twenty-One Conditions obligated all Communist parties to 'support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds' and 'to demand that the imperialists of its country be driven out of these colonies'. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 768.

The section of the French CP in Sidi-Bel-Abbès, a city in northwest Algeria, was influential among both local European residents (it held seven seats on the municipal

For this reason, the Communist section of Sidi-Bel-Abbès is of the opinion that the native proletariat of North Africa can only be liberated as a result of the revolution in the motherland. Relinquishing this control – as specified in Point 8 of the Twenty-One Conditions for affiliation to the Communist International – is not the best way to promote any kind of liberation movement in our colony. On the contrary, the task of the Communist Party remains increasing propaganda, building the trade-union movement and communism....It is not possible sincerely to follow Moscow's call.

This makes the International seem insincere. Look at the thinking of these so-called Communists, whom the Communist Party of France still tolerates in their ranks. The theses from Algeria continue:

The first two series of articles correspond well to propaganda needs in Algeria. They were unanimously approved, and we want nothing more than the continued publication of many articles of this type.

As for the third series, we have nothing against the essence of these articles, which are dictated by purely Communist motivations and deal with the ways that the eighth condition should be applied. But we would have preferred that they had appeared in the *Bulletin communiste* rather than in *L'Humanité*, because the first is addressed only to a limited number of party activists who are well-informed and capable of correctly understanding ideology and immediate possibilities.

Since the visit of Vaillant-Couturier, *L'Humanité* is circulated much more widely. It is read both by Europeans and by natives who have not yet assimilated Communist ideas, but display some sympathy toward us and whom we hope to win over. The imperialist-bourgeois press has adroitly utilised these articles against us. They were very shocked by what they

council) and CP members across Algeria. Its theses were written in response to a survey on work among the indigenous population sent out by the French CP's delegate in North Africa. The Sidi-Bel-Abbès section replied, in part, 'The emancipation of the indigenous population of Algeria can result only from revolution in France. Direct Communist propaganda among indigenous people is currently useless and dangerous. It is useless because indigenous people have not yet reached an intellectual and moral level that enables them to attain a Communist understanding'.

Following the Comintern's 20 May 1922 call for liberation of Algeria and Tunis, the Sidi-Bel-Abbès section restated their position in the resolution quoted by Boudengha. On 24 September, this resolution was adopted unanimously by a conference of Communists in North Africa. For more on this document, see remarks by Safarov on p. 719.

The Communist group in Tunisia, which had not been represented at the North African conference and which included indigenous members such as Boudengha, denounced the resolution and appealed to the International to take action.

In December 1922, most Sidi-Bel-Abbès CP members rejected the Fourth Congress decisions and left the Party. Maitron 1964–97, 31, pp. 116–17.

judged to be our propaganda plans in Algeria and turned their back on us. Given the inadequacy of our local press and organisation, we were not able to carry the polemic with them.

So, for them, it is dangerous when outspokenly Communist articles appear in the press, even though they claim to want to carry out propaganda among the native masses. That is the mentality of these so-called Communists.

They say, further:

The native population of Algeria can only be liberated as the result of the revolution in France.

The native masses have been subjugated for centuries in a status of half-slavery. They are fanatical and fatalistic, patient and resigned, oppressed and imbued with religious prejudices. At this time, they still cannot imagine their liberation. They are content to seek a better life, which they believe can be achieved through reforms and the achievement of certain political rights....

Achieving these results does not require us to carry out open Communist propaganda in Algeria at this time. It is entirely unnecessary to publish calls to rebellion in our press or distribute Arabic-language leaflets, as many have recommended.

The publication of the call of the Communist International for the liberation of Algeria and Tunisia was a mistake.⁵¹ We see evidence of this in the fact that the bourgeois colonial press itself published this call in order to turn public opinion against us. And, to some degree, they achieved this goal.

These comrades are thus competing for the high regard of the bourgeoisie.

Lauridan: Who wrote this?

Tahar Boudengha: This is the thesis of a Communist section of Algeria.

I will not dwell further on this point, but I do believe that the Communist Party of France should not tolerate gentlemen of this sort, and I believe that these gentlemen must be expelled.

I hope that immediately following the World Congress, the French comrades, regardless of their tendency, will set about launching a Communist campaign in the colonies by creating an official publication and involving comrades from the colonies in the work of the central committee.

The French comrades must take note, once and for all, that the proletarian revolution in France is doomed to sure failure so long as the French bourgeoisie holds the colonial population under its rule. And the liberation of the

51. For the Comintern call, see *Inprecorr*, 2, 53 (23 June 1922), p. 394.

colonial peoples will only be possible if there is a party in France that is committed to revolutionary action, not to opportunism.

The Communist International must take the matter in hand by appointing a permanent representative of the French colonies.

In my opinion, the British Party has also not done everything that it should have done. What has the British Party done to support the revolutionary movement in India and Egypt? The Egyptian commission was looking here yesterday for any party that could take the Egyptian Party under its wing, and was considering the Italian Party for this task, even though it is solely the responsibility of the Communist Party of Britain.

Communists should not limit their activity exclusively to the national territory without concerning themselves with the thousands of peoples who groan under bourgeois oppression and suffer the yoke of their own imperialism. I believe it is cowardly to abandon peoples whose liberation and future depends on the Communist party alone – as is the case with the British Party.

In addition, Comrade Malaka was recently in an awkward situation over the question of whether he could support pan-Islamism. There is no cause for awkwardness here. Pan-Islamism means nothing other than the unification of all Muslims against their oppressors. It must therefore be supported.

Questions of a religious nature have posed barriers to the development of communism. We have experienced the same difficulties in Tunisia that you have in Java. Whenever people argue with us that communism is incompatible with Islam, we point out to these smart alecks in public meetings that the Islamic religion does not recognise wage labour, which is a most noble foundation of this religion. In addition, we point out that our opponents, if they truly wish to be religious, must begin the application of their religious principles by giving each year a tenth of their property, capital and profits included, to those who are unable to work. I can tell you that, each time they try to argue with us by pointing to religious principles, they burn their fingers.

I believe that the concerns of Comrade Malaka are groundless. Our ideas have made greater gains among the Muslims than we foresaw. From every corner of the Muslim world, we received numerous good wishes because of the manner in which we wished to apply communism in the Muslim countries. This was especially true when we still had our Arabic publications.

In light of the presence of the revolutionary movement in North Africa and other colonies, it is necessary for the Communist Party of France, in agreement with the International and the responsible comrades from the colonies, to carry out an effective, ongoing campaign in these countries and to lead the movement there in our direction.

I hope that the Congress will adopt the conclusions of my report, which will contribute to the victory of Communist ideas among the oppressed peoples.

In North and West Africa, it is superfluous to make provision for a period of transition. I am certain that we will go over from the feudal system directly to communism without first having to go through a period of indigenous capitalism.

In Tunisia and Algeria, there are already fields that are cultivated collectively. Granted, this is a patriarchal communism. But we can nonetheless develop it, reform it, and replace it by fully developed communism.

I will close by presenting my greetings to this congress of the International.
(*Applause*)

Chair: Before we adjourn this session, there are some important announcements.

Béron: The Presidium proposes that the Congress send the following telegram to the congress of factory councils in Neue Welt, Berlin-Neukölln.

Greetings to the Berlin Congress of Factory Councils

Dear comrades,

We are following your movement with lively sympathy. You are meeting at a difficult time to show the German working class the path of struggle it must follow to free itself from poverty and misery. The capitalist offensive grows more fierce with every day. The main attack is against the eight-hour day. The Social-Democratic leaders and their trade-union bureaucracy provide active and passive assistance. They sabotage every proletarian defence action; indeed they are setting about to split the trade unions in the interests of the capitalists.

What is called for now is to form a united proletarian front of struggle to defend the eight-hour day, demand adequate food for the workers and workers' control of production, and resist German fascism through the formation of workers' defence contingents.

In obedience to this requirement, the Fourth Congress of the Communist International and the Second World Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions are sending an open letter to the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and the Amsterdam trade-union International, as well as all their affiliated parties and trade unions, calling on them to join in united action for the above-mentioned demands.⁵²

Carry through the work you have begun unwaveringly and energetically. The factory-council movement must be the central point around which all workers gather for the struggle to defend themselves. It must organise and

52. For the Open Letter, see pp. 1174–9.

lead this defensive struggle on the broadest level. If you succeed in establishing the united front, despite all resistance, this will assure the most important precondition for successful defence and indeed for the transition to an attack.

We, the gathered representatives of revolutionary workers of the entire world, wish you total success and send you our revolutionary fraternal greetings.

Moscow, 22 November 1922

Fourth World Congress of the Communist International

Second World Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions

(Loud applause)

Chair: Is there any opposition to sending this telegram? No one.

The discussion among women attending this congress, that is, the expanded women's commission, has already been convened by a circular, and will take place tomorrow morning at exactly 11 a.m. in one of the smaller rooms in the Kremlin. The International Women's Secretariat asks all delegations to send their representatives.

Adjournment: 4 p.m.

Session 20 – Thursday, 23 November 1922

The Eastern Question (Continued)

The Eastern question. Protest against terror in South Africa

Speakers: Webb, Liu Renjing, Husni el-Arabi, Earsman, Safarov, Orhan, Nikbin, Radek, Bunting

Convened: 12:15 p.m.

Chairperson: Carr

Chair: The agenda for today is the discussion of the Eastern question.

The following protest has been submitted.

The delegations of the following countries hereby protest the fact that the Presidium and the Congress, by reducing speaking time at the last moment, has not devoted appropriate attention to the question of the East and the colonies.

This protest is signed by Japan, Britain, Turkey, Angora, Poland, Belgium, Australia, India, Java, Egypt, Persia [Iran], Tunisia, Morocco, and Switzerland.

The Eastern commission has officially made the request for two additions to the speakers' list, namely Comrades Earsman (Australia) and Safarov (Russia). The Presidium proposes that both these comrades be included in the speakers' list adopted yesterday, with a speaking time of 15 minutes. Is there any objection? The proposal is adopted.

Before I give the floor to the first speaker, I would like to make a brief comment on the need for all speakers to limit themselves to the agreed speaking

time. Here is the agenda drafted by the Presidium. The only point to which it devotes more than one day is the Eastern question, which is allocated two days. From now, until 3 December, we can devote only one day to each point on the agenda. In order to conclude, we must abide by the agenda.

The comrades in the Eastern Commission will understand that no exception has been made in their regard and that they have been permitted just as much speaking time as all the others.

From now on, we must waste no more time. The chair will permit each speaker only 15 minutes speaking time, unless an extension is decided by this gathering. The time available to us is limited. To conclude our work, we must reduce the speaking time. Every speaker must either structure his speech so that he says the most important things in the time permitted to him, or live with the consequences.

Webb (Britain): Comrades, at the risk of coming under fire from Comrade Radek for discussing the Twenty-One Points under this important question, that of the East, I wish to refer again to the Twenty-One Points adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International, or, rather, to the eighth of these points.

In his speech to this congress, Comrade Lenin warned the parties affiliated to the Communist International against coming to the Congress, or sending delegates, and voting for various principles set down in the theses and statutes of the International, without fully understanding the consequences of the principles they are approving. When the Twenty-One Points were adopted by the Second Congress, so too were the theses on the nationalities question and the colonies.¹ Since that time, there has been an enormous evolution in the international workers' movement. And we can state confidently, without fear of objection from Comrade Radek or any other comrade of the Communist International, that the Communist parties around the world have not understood the consequences of the theses on the nationalities question adopted by the Second Congress of the International.

Point 8 of the Twenty-One Points reads as follows:

In countries whose bourgeoisies possess colonies and oppress other nations, it is necessary that the parties have an especially clear and well-defined position on the question of colonies and oppressed nations. Every party wishing to belong to the Communist International is obligated to expose the tricks of 'its own' imperialists in the colonies, to support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds, to demand that the imperialists of its country be driven out of these colonies, to instil in

1. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 283–90, and 2, 765–71.

the hearts of the workers of its country a truly fraternal attitude toward the labouring people in the colonies and toward the oppressed nations, and to conduct systematic agitation among its country's troops against all oppression of colonial peoples.

That was the decision of the Second Congress of the Communist International. Since that time we have seen the rise in the national-revolutionary movement in Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia [Iraq], and Turkey. And, still, we can be confident in saying that not even the most mature Communist parties – I am not referring to little parties or revolutionary groups that are on the path to development toward becoming a Communist party, but the developed Communist parties that belong to the Communist International – not even these parties have been aware of the responsibilities toward the national movement that I have just read out.

In the draft theses on the national and colonial question, Comrade Lenin pointed out to the Second Congress of the Communist International the importance, on the one hand, of a group of advanced revolutionary movements in the advanced capitalist countries, and, on the other hand, of the array of revolutionary-nationalist forces around Russia. In this preliminary draft, Comrade Lenin establishes that we cannot be content with simply recognising in the programme that we must link up with these revolutionary-nationalist movements and the colonies. We cannot restrict ourselves to a simple declaration. We must work out a policy defined by the level of development of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries.

It is true that the party that I am speaking for has been criticised for its stand on the question of the colonies and the national movements. In the territories of the Britain's world empire, we have freedom movements in Ireland, Egypt and elsewhere in Africa, and India, as well as in the other colonies that make up this empire. But our sins of omission can mostly be put down to the fact that our party is still very small and also very new. Countless internal difficulties must be overcome before it can devote appropriate attention to the problems of national movements.

In a book written before the Russian Revolution, Comrade Trotsky criticised the strongest section of the Second International, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, showing that it had developed to a social-imperialist party.²

I would like to particularly stress today that we must do all we can to exclude from the Communist International all forces that seek to turn it into

2. See Trotsky's *The War and the International*, first published in the Paris daily *Golos* in late 1914. An English translation was published in 1918 under the title *The Bolsheviks and World Peace*; the text can be found under that title at: <www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1914/war/warintl.pdf>.

an International of communist imperialism, similar to the socialist imperialism characteristic of Social Democracy.

There is quite an important article in one of the recent issues of *Fortnightly Review*, a magazine that is very well known in the capitalist and English-speaking world. This article is a clear indication that the capitalist class, the bourgeoisie, grasps the importance of these revolutionary-national movements and is striving to turn these movements against Soviet Russia – in order to counter the attempts of the Communist International to utilise these forces as allies.

In an article on the national-revolutionary movement in Turkey, entitled ‘Kemal, the Man and the Movement’, this magazine states:

It is beyond any doubt that, while the Kemalists pursue purely nationalist goals, the Bolsheviks utilise Turkish national aspirations in order to attack Western civilisation at its weakest point. These new disruptions can result in a renewed outbreak by the revolutionary movement in an exhausted Europe.

After taking up the relations between the Soviet government and the government in Angora, the magazine continues, ‘There is also a British link that is far from insignificant.’ It then quotes a passage from a declaration of the executive of the Communist Party of Great Britain that demands the unconditional return of Constantinople to the Turkish people. The magazine then comments:

The American bankers’ association is quite right in saying that when Britain refused to withdraw from Chanak – confronting one thousand Kemalist cavalry with thirty Lanarkshire infantrymen until reinforcements could arrive – it served for two weeks as the defence of European civilisation.³

The article closes with the thought that perhaps Britain and the allies should hand over Constantinople to the Turkish nationalist Kemal Pasha, but the world must first be shown that Kemal is no longer a pawn of Soviet Russia.

Such a declaration from an authoritative capitalist magazine like the *Fortnightly Review* shows that the bourgeoisie is very well aware of the dangers that the revolutionary-national movement will be reorganised into a revolutionary-proletarian movement directed against it. That is why we should give close attention to the points in the theses of which Comrade Roy has spoken. He stressed the need to unite the proletarian forces in these countries and organise them separately from the bourgeois liberation movements. This

3. For the Chanak crisis, see p. 651, n. 2.

is important not only for the revolutionary-proletarian forces in the colonial countries but also for the Communist parties in countries where measures are undertaken to suppress these movements.

I am surprised to see the small number of delegates that have come here to witness the continuation of discussion on a question as important as this one. Contrary to what the Presidium chairman said this morning, I believe that it would be better for the Congress to continue for a few days in December rather than to rush through in this way a question as important as that of the East.

Finally, I would like to say that the strongest blow yet struck against the Versailles Peace Treaty – and, when we discuss that treaty, we will see all important members of the Communist International speaking from this platform – the one decisive blow struck so far against the treaty is the victory of the revolutionary Turkish movement that shattered the Sèvres Peace Treaty.⁴ And that is the reason why this question is particularly important. That is why I would like to tell the Fourth Congress.

Liu Renjing (China): Comrades, since my speaking time is limited, I can give you only a general overview of the present situation in China – although I could have told you much more.⁵

I must speak first of the present political situation in China. From May until June this year, two governments fell in China. This overturn had enormous importance for the country's revolutionary movement.

First came the overthrow of the southern government, the revolutionary government of Sun Yat-sen. It was ousted by a subordinate military member of the nationalist party.⁶ This resulted from a difference of opinion between Sun Yat-sen, as leader, and this subordinate figure, as regards plans for the military expedition against the North.

What does this signify? It means that the military plans for the revolution have absolutely miscarried. The Kuomintang [Guomindang] Party, the national-revolutionary party in China, has for years cherished plans for a military revolution. It hoped to introduce democracy in China by a military conquest of its provinces. It did not carry out any propaganda in the country on a mass scale. It did not organise the masses. Its efforts were limited to utilising military forces to achieve its goals. Even before it conquered Guangdong in 1920, it established a government. It wanted to exhaust all the resources

4. For the Sèvres treaty, see p. 673, n. 31.

5. In the German text, the speaker's name is given as Lin Yen-Chin.

6. In June 1921, Sun Yat-sen established a revolutionary Kuomintang government in Guangdong. He was expelled from the province in June 1922 by its military governor, Chen Jiongming. Sun's government was re-established early in 1923.

available in Guangdong to equip an expedition against the northern government, that of the feudal militarists and the agents of world imperialism.

At first, this plan seemed practicable, for all party members appeared to agree with it. But, once Guangdong province had been conquered, the military governor, a member of the Party, abandoned all plans against the North. He became more and more conservative and more and more inclined to content himself with one province, paying no heed to any events outside the province.

Many members of this party are like this. Before they take power, they are revolutionary; afterwards, they become conservative. This general who overthrew the southern government is only one example of many within this party. The majority of the Party is made up of people who are essentially reactionary. The moment they take power in other provinces, they will oppose the plan for military conquest, just as this governor did. That shows that the plan for military conquest is a failure, and that the revolutionary movement must pursue a new course. That means that a revolution that seeks success must organise the masses and conduct propaganda among them. It must not rely on military means alone. That method is finished in China.

In the North, during the months of April and May, there was a civil war between two factions of feudal militarists. One faction was for the Japanese, and the other for the Americans. This struggle ended with the victory of the pro-American group, the military faction under Wu Peifu. This outcome is also enormously important for the revolutionary movement in China.

The government of northern China had been under Japanese influence for about five years. Japanese imperialism secured this influence through loans granted to the Northern government to pursue the civil war. The Japanese government bribed officials of this régime to obtain a share in Chinese mines, the right to build railways in Shandong, and so on. All these rights were obtained through bribery. For this reason, the Chinese population had a hostile attitude to Japanese imperialism and the Japanese agents of the Northern government.

Given the bitter hatred of Japanese imperialism in China, the population was increasingly inclined to support American imperialism. In view of the very reactionary character of the Northern government under Zhang Zuolin, the population is more sympathetic to the military group led by Wu Peifu, who is more progressive and favours a reduction in the size of the army and abolition of the *tuchun* [warlord] system (the feudal apportionment of provinces) and enjoys support from the Americans.

The recent conquest of power by Wu Peifu and American imperialism in China will show that Wu Peifu cannot resolve China's political dilemma and,

in addition, that he differs little from Zhang Zuolin. Although he favours a democratic programme, he will not be able to carry out his plan to reduce the size of the army and abolish the *tuchun* system. This will disappoint the masses and turn them against American imperialism, which will lead to their radicalisation. The population will become aware of the fact that it is the only force that can carry through democracy and that it cannot rely on any of the militarist groups. The masses will see that the Wu Peifu will not carry out the enticing promises he made when he did not yet have command of power. The pacifist petty bourgeoisie tends to sympathise with Wu Peifu because he promises to improve their economic condition. This will dwindle more and more, and ultimately dissolve because of such political shifts.

Let's take the case of Wu Peifu. He claimed he would not borrow any money from the great powers, thus winning popular sympathy. But, once he had achieved power, he organised his cabinet with the aid of a group of pro-American intellectuals, who immediately set about organising an American loan. This and much else will disappoint the masses. Thus, the situation will grow more and more favourable for the revolutionary movement in China.

Second, I must touch on the workers' movement. It made great progress this year. Early in the year, we experienced the strike of seamen in Hong Kong, which lasted fifty days. At first, it was limited to economic demands, but then it took on a nationalist character against British imperialism. Limited at first to the mariners, the strike grew into a general strike against British imperialism, first in Hong Kong and then spreading to the north.

We also had the strike on the Beijing-Hankou railway, which spread to mid-China. Other strikes took place in the iron- and steelworks in Hong Kong, in the textile and tobacco industries in Shanghai, and in the mines. These strikes took place in rapid succession. The expansion of this revolt against the capitalist class came close to awakening the working masses. This shows that the mass movement in China exists not merely in the socialists' dreams but is an obvious reality. In addition, it shows that the Communist Party can gain success through propaganda among the masses. All this indicates that the Communist Party will progress rapidly, in contrast to earlier years when it was no more than a sect and an educational circle. During the past year, we can track the increasing influence of our Communist Party among the masses.

Now I come to the recent political activity of the Communist Party of China. Starting from the principle that an anti-imperialist united front should be established to drive imperialism out of China, our party decided to achieve a united front with the national-revolutionary Kuomintang Party. This united front took the form that we joined this party, in our name and as individuals. We have two goals in view. First, we want to carry out propaganda among

the many organised workers in the national-revolutionary party and win them to our ranks. Second, we can only combat imperialism if we unify our forces – those of the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

We aim to enter into competition with this party in winning the masses through propaganda and organising them. If we do not join this party, we will remain isolated, preaching a communism that certainly represents a great and noble goal but that the masses will not follow. The masses would then rather follow the petty-bourgeois party, which would use them for its purposes. If we join the Party, we are in a position to show the masses that we too are for revolutionary democracy, but that for us it is a means to an end. We will also then be in a position to show that while committing ourselves to this distant goal, we do not overlook the masses' immediate demands. We can gather the masses around us and split the Kuomintang Party.

Husni el-Arabi (Egypt) (*speaks in Arabic, translated into English by Comrade Paul*) I have been asked to say that we in Egypt believe the day is no longer distant when the red flag will wave over the pyramids, greeting the red flag over the Kremlin.

That is the greeting that I bring you from the workers and fellahin of Egypt. Now I would like to add some personal comments.

The Egyptian workers suffer from the burden of capitulations,⁷ the yoke of British imperialism, foreign capitalists, and its own bourgeoisie. The fertility of Egypt's soil; its geographical position as a bridge for British imperialism's expansion toward the Far East; the construction of the Palestine railway linking Africa through Egypt with Asia Minor; the prospect of a railway from Cairo to South Africa – all this inspires hope among the imperialist exploiters and increases the suffering of Egyptian workers.

Egypt is ripe for socialist ideas. This is shown by the growth of the Egyptian Socialist Party. Its legal foundation took place in August, and, during its brief existence, it has already recruited one thousand members. Since Egypt is ripe for socialist ideas, we do everything to prevent barriers from being placed in the path of the steady penetration of Communist propaganda and an evolution toward communism. We consider that if Egypt is not accorded a place in the Communist International family, and if we let the zeal of Egypt dissipate without effect, its backwardness will be harmful to the revolution in the East and will delay it in the West.

The admirable uprisings in 1919 and 1920 shook the power of British imperialism and provided Egyptian capitalists with a basic lesson. Startled by these events, the British government, in alliance with the Egyptian capitalists, has

7. Regarding capitulations, see p. 657, n. 11.

made the grand gesture of granting Egypt its independence.⁸ But the people did not let themselves be fooled by these empty promises. What actual content did they have, after all? They included, first, conceding [British] protection of transport connections, since Britain insisted on defending its route to India. Second, in conceding joint sovereignty over Sudan, in order for Britain to secure a new source of raw materials to feed its Manchester cotton mills. Third, the protection of national minorities. Fourth, ending the capitulations. These last two demands were included in order to give Great Britain a right to interfere in Egyptian affairs.

The Egyptian capitalists have now formed a Liberal Party to defend the new constitution and to ratify the agreement between Britain and Egypt.⁹ They have adopted a programme and chosen candidates to represent this current in parliament. The elections are set for next January.

The Egyptian Socialist Party was pleased that the enemy was now showing its face openly. There is an Arabic proverb, 'Beauty is seen to more advantage when counterposed to ugliness.'

The struggle between us and the Liberal Party promises to become intense. But we do not fear this clash, because we feel the strength and influence of the Egyptian Socialist Party growing from day to day. We can maintain our position in the economic and political arena. We have not let one shameless deed of the government pass without exposing it in the press. We go to the workers and expound socialist ideas and the class struggle, both orally and through the publication of leaflets and pamphlets. We have also not failed to utilise the opportunity for propaganda during the international May Day celebration. Despite the fact that the government forbade all public propaganda, and our party was then still illegal and the country was under a state of siege, we gathered the proletarian forces around our banner and held imposing demonstrations in three cities.

We intend to make use of the upcoming elections to the first Egyptian parliament. During the weeks preceding the elections, we will do all possible to enable the workers to be represented in the new assembly by some comrades. If we succeed in winning a seat or two, we will enhance the prestige of communism in the East and reinforce the foundations of our party in Egypt.

8. Egypt's revolution of 1919 included mass demonstrations, strikes, and civil disobedience in favour of national independence. Although this uprising was suppressed, mass pressure continued, leading Britain to grant formal independence to Egypt in February 1922, subject to conditions that perpetuated British domination.

9. 'Liberal Party' refers to the Wafd, a pro-independence movement that led Egypt's 1919 revolution. When Egypt gained restricted 'independence' in 1922, the Wafd became Egypt's dominant political party.

As for the question of industry, Egypt is chiefly an agricultural country and faces an acute agrarian problem. The party is now discussing this question and hopes to be able to draw up an agrarian programme in the near future.

Industrial workers are rather well organised, in one hundred trade unions. Since the Party achieved legality, it has organised two trade unions and brought three already existing unions into the Red International of Labour Unions. However, the total count of the workers organised in these unions is only 2,750. We hope at the next congress to be able to add just as many zeros to this total as Comrade Lenin tells us will be crossed off the new rouble.¹⁰ We have well organised Communist cells in these five unions, and we also have party members in other unions. Much work awaits us before we can establish cells in these other unions as well.

Now I would like to mention something else. The Communist International has established a sub-committee to study the Egyptian question. At the last meeting of this committee, not all its members were present. The participants adopted a resolution reproaching the Egyptian Party for various errors. This seems to me to be testimony to good behaviour, because those that are inactive never have the occasion to commit errors. Even if the Egyptian Party has committed errors in the past, I am convinced that it will make every effort to make this good in the future. In the session where this resolution was adopted, only three members of the committee were present, and one of these three opposed the resolution. I am convinced that during the next year the Communist International will gain a better understanding of the Egyptian Socialist Party and will revise its resolution at the Fifth Congress.

Long live the Communist International!

Earsman (Australia): Comrades, I would like to speak about two points in the theses presented to the Congress.

The first concerns the formation and development of the revolutionary movement in the colonial countries, especially those oppressed by imperialism in the Near and Far East.

The second, which is of special interest to us, concerns the challenges created by the developing clash in the Pacific Ocean.

If we examine the situation in detail, we find that there are still many difficulties and misunderstandings between the workers of different countries, especially the countries in the south and the north of the Pacific Ocean as regards white and coloured workers. The main difficulty we must overcome is the prejudices aroused among white workers by the fear of cheap coloured labour. Most of the countries involved – Australia, the United States, and

10. See Lenin's comment on the rouble, p. 297.

Canada – have laws banning the immigration of coloured workers, because the workers believe that such immigrants will be utilised to reduce the standard and conditions of living achieved in these countries.

It is not enough to say that workers in these countries are reactionary, that they do not understand the economic factors underlying the situation and their own special tasks. As the vanguard of the working class, we must tell these workers clearly and distinctly how to handle this situation. So far, this has been done only to a limited extent, and never from an international point of view.

At present, thousands of coloured workers from India and China are being brought to the countries of the southern Pacific to work in the sugar-fields, under the worst conditions of contractual labour. These workers were transported especially to the Fiji islands and other island groups close to Australia. So far, the capitalists have not succeeded in introducing this system in Australia and New Zealand. But they are making great efforts in that direction, and their attempt to introduce this system in Australia makes the work of Communist parties in these countries very difficult. Under the pressure of these attempts, workers are uniting in defence of the laws aimed at preventing coloured immigration.

The Communist Party has considered this question. At this year's trade-union congress in Melbourne, it succeeded in explaining to the trade-union leaders the full meaning of these laws and why their effects are harmful to the interests of the working class. These laws defend the interests of Australian workers at the expense of those of Japan, China, and other countries in the southern Pacific. That is the problem that we must solve, and in my opinion can solve, if we enjoy the support of the Communist International and do not lose sight in the coming years of the full importance of this question.

All those who have paid even fleeting attention to the Pacific question will understand that the danger of a new world war is rising there. And this awareness will lead you to the conclusion that the slogans the capitalists would utilise in the eventuality of war are more effective than those that the working class could disseminate against such a bloody conflict. If the capitalist class would reinforce existing fears of the 'yellow peril' in Australia by the fear of a 'yellow invasion', it could rally the support of numbers never seen in the past. It is, therefore, our special task in the coming months to counter these slogans and make workers aware of their true meaning and significance.

A proposal is made in the theses that, in our opinion, could be very advantageous for our work against the capitalists in these countries. The trade-union congress in Melbourne this year adopted a resolution calling for a pan-Pacific congress as the best means of achieving agreement among the workers in the

countries of the North and South Pacific. Such a congress would unite workers of Japan, China, the Malay islands, India, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It would enable them to discuss their problems and come to agreement on the best means and methods of explaining to workers the reactionary character of their earlier stand against the coloured working class.

They would understand that they need have no fear of a Japanese invasion or of the arrival of Japanese, Indian, and other coloured workers in the United States or Australia with the intention of driving down the standard of living of the native-born workers. They would recognise that the workers of the North Pacific are organised. Once they grasp the danger posed by capitalism, the first step will have been taken toward unifying the ranks of the working class in the countries of the entire Pacific region.

In making this proposal regarding the theses, we hope that the workers in these countries will be granted every form of support, and that this congress will succeed in producing a resolution and theses that affirm that such a congress can actually be held.¹¹ We consider it our duty, however, to say that the Congress must take place, must draft a clearly defined programme, and must then translate it into practical form.

We also understand that the trade unions in Australia must devote attention to this problem. For this to succeed, the unions must first learn to recognise the problem. The trade-union movement is very strong in Australia, with eighty per cent of all workers organised, and we can therefore force every coloured worker who comes to the country to join our unions.

Next January, the last relic of racial prejudice remaining in the statutes of the revolutionary trade unions will disappear. Then the way will be clear for the unions that dominate the key industries. They will take into their ranks every coloured worker who is in Australia already or who comes to Australia. It is true that these unions refused in the past to recruit coloured workers. If we fully understand the historical meaning of this situation, we cannot reproach them for this stand. But, today, there is no justification for such a barrier in the unions, and the attempt of the Communist Party to eliminate this barrier has been successful.

However, to consolidate this situation and apply the theses to practical politics and bring workers to be aware of it in their daily struggles, we must convene the proposed conference as quickly as possible, with the support of the Communist International. We need now to have the support of the Executive. The Executive must devote more attention to colonial questions than we have done in previous years. It must grasp that the colonial problem is just as

11. See 'Theses on the Eastern Question', Point 7, pp. 1188–9.

important as any problem in Europe. If this is truly the case, we in Australia are convinced that we will successfully carry through to completion the task that we are proposing for adoption in these theses.

Safarov (Russia): Despite the decisions of the Second Congress of the Communist International, the Communist parties in the imperialist countries have done very little to tackle the national and colonial questions.

Only quite recently did the British Communist Party turn its attention to the revolutionary-colonial movements in India and Egypt.

Despite the significant revolutionary movement in the French colonies, the French Party does not have a properly organised centre to lead this very important branch of its activity, but rather only a colonial study group.

What is more: hidden under the banner of Communism, we find conceptions of sovereignty that are alien and hostile to proletarian internationalism.

The Sidi-Bel-Abbès section provides striking evidence of this.¹² These comrades – if we can even call them comrades, for they are not comrades but petty bourgeois – these citizens say in a protest against an appeal of the Communist International regarding the French colonies:

The colonial question is characterised by a complete lack of the necessary unity. There are peoples in trusteeship that are now capable of self-rule, and others who are not capable. And if the duty of Communists is to grant the first category their freedom, this duty demands even more insistently that the second category not be left to their wretched fate. Sovereignty for Egypt is essential, but sovereignty for cannibals is not desirable.¹³

That is the point of view of these so-called Communists. These people are imbued with the conviction that the Communist International and its Executive want to serve up these good little people of Sidi-Bel-Abbès to the cannibals.

We are not so harsh, and we do not have a terrorist mentality, and the good little people of Sidi-Bel-Abbès can rest reassured. The topic here is not cannibalism, it is just the national and colonial question.

12. See also comments by Boudengha, pp. 700–4.

13. The reference to cannibalism in the Sidi-Bel-Abbès resolution continues a line of argument within the prewar Second International, expressed by Dutch delegate Hendrick Van Kol's remarks in support of colonialism at its 1907 Stuttgart Congress. He dismissed thoughts of fraternal assistance to colonial peoples: 'Perhaps [the natives] will kill us or even eat us... Therefore we must go there with weapons in hand, even if Kautsky calls that imperialism'. Riddell (ed.) 1984, p. 14; congress delegates defeated Van Kol's position, but only narrowly. See Lenin's comment, Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 38–9 or Lenin 1960–71, 13, pp. 75–7.

It must be said, once and for all, that the prewar attitudes of the Second International are unacceptable in the Communist International. We must be aware that certain theses on this question, like this one from Algeria, and some statements of our comrades in different countries, represent points of view in the style of Hildenbrand and Noske. And we therefore protest the passivity manifested by a considerable sector of the Fourth World Congress. (*Applause*)

The fate of the proletarian revolution against world imperialism in the advanced imperialist countries is bound together with that of the colonial revolution in backward countries. World capitalism strives to renew its forces through more intensive exploitation of the colonies. Because capitalism is experiencing greater difficulties at this time, it heightens exploitation of China, India, and other countries.

Observe all the conflicts now developing in international politics. The programme of Bonar Law's Conservative cabinet in Britain aims at re-establishing British imperialism's strength with the aid of the colonies. The interests of the United States, Britain, and Japan clash in China and the Pacific.

In Asia Minor, northern Iran, and southern Iran, British, American, and French interests conflict with each other. In France, black troops play an overriding role in the plans of Millerand, Poincaré, and company. Millerand and Poincaré understand the colonial question better than some Communists, because they know very well that all these backward countries, so long as they have not been touched by a revolutionary spirit – all these 'cannibals' can be used to the benefit of imperialism.¹⁴ All this is very simple and easily understood.

So far, with a few rare exceptions, what we find in our papers are ringing declarations about the colonial question that say, 'We must free the oppressed peoples and support them', and so on. But no one says *what must be done now*.

Since the Second Congress, the colonial movement in the backward countries, in India, China, and elsewhere, has developed rather quickly. During the war years, thanks to a slackening in imperialist oversight of the colonies, native capitalism made giant steps forward. In some countries, such as India,

14. More than 100,000 African troops fought in Europe during World War I. After the war, 20,000–30,000 troops recruited in the colonies were stationed in France and also utilised against the Red Army in Russia (1919) and German workers in the Ruhr region (1923–4). The Third Comintern Congress pointed to the need for Communists to fraternise with these troops and rally them in the struggle against colonialism. See Adler 1918, p. 295. French generals complained of the insubordination of colonial troops, and there were recorded cases of defiance of orders. For a fuller discussion, see Riddell (ed.) 1987, pp. 342–4.

industrial production actually doubled. The development of native capitalism in these countries provides a foundation for the national-revolutionary movement.

Foreign imperialism in the colonies is today playing the same role as feudalism played with regard to the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The colonial and national revolution in the backward countries is a bourgeois-democratic revolution, and we know that the international situation at this time is revolutionary. We know that we are living in a time of a great upsurge in the class struggle. We know that the day is near when the proletarian revolution will achieve complete victory. A bourgeois-democratic government in the backward countries provides support and great reassurance for our proletarian movement. We must therefore not underestimate this movement. That is why the Communist parties must do all in their power to support this movement and to organise the best forces in the backward countries.

The different countries of the East – China, India – are rather backward. Agrarian feudalism and military bureaucratism provide the main supports for foreign imperialism. The nomad chiefs in Iran, for example, have aided and abetted Britain's plans for conquest. In China it is the military governors, the *tuchuns*, who obstruct the unity of China.

Our first task is to unify all the efforts of the colonial-revolutionary movement into an anti-imperialist united front.

In these backward countries, the forces of petty-bourgeois development have not separated out from the feudal forces, which are supporters of foreign imperialism. A struggle must be waged against the feudal-agrarian order. In Iran, this struggle is under way, and it is also directed against foreign imperialism.

At the time of the Second Congress, we did not yet have Communist parties in these countries. The first evidence of the workers' movement in China came in 1920, with the boycott of foreign goods. In India, this movement began to develop in 1919.

We can cite many similar examples. The development of native capitalism during the War and the postwar crisis led to an upswing of the workers' movement. The Communist parties of these countries remain very weak. Their members number in the hundreds, sometimes only in the dozens. Nonetheless we know well the history of the workers' movement. In 1883, the Bolshevik Party was a small group of five members; forty years later, it took state power. And, in our times, history is striding forward even more quickly. A similar upswing awaits the small Communist parties.

The working class that has just developed, during the War, is still bound to handicrafts, to the petty bourgeoisie. In India, there are two million workers organised in various trade unions. The movement is led by bourgeois lawyers. Only in 1920 did the first revolutionary group appear in India. A socialist newspaper appears in Bombay [Mumbai], edited by Comrade Dange, who now intends to found a workers' party in India. We are convinced that the moment is very close when this independent party will be founded in India.

The workers' movement develops in different ways in each country, and yet its overall features can be generalised. We can say with justification that the working class in the colonial countries is becoming an independent political force, and that is a great advance toward the final victory of proletarian revolution.

I have here a report by the head of the Beijing police-force. The Chinese police are afraid of Lenin. Their chief writes:

The experience with Lenin is living proof that the realisation of perverse ideas is a thousand times more dangerous than the dangers menacing us from floods and wild animals. (*Laughter*)

Even the Chinese police are concerned by the progress of Bolshevik ideas.

We cannot immediately pose the task of Soviet revolution in these countries. Our first duty here is the struggle to free the working class and for its organisation in the economic and political arenas. The working class must also take part in the common struggle against foreign imperialism. But it must not be a small-scale reproduction of the national movement.

The Second Congress of the Communist International declared that we must support all forms of the independent workers' movement in the backward countries. We have followed this guideline. The Communist parties have already become a political force, and they are capable of organising the national-revolutionary movement and driving it forward. The first stages of the nationalist movement are still bound by obsolete prejudices. The masses, oppressed for long centuries, believe that passive resistance will bring them to victory. We must criticise these methods, for they are not suitable for achieving our goal.

On the other hand, we must turn our attention in all countries to the colonial question. So far, what we have in the International is merely colonial study groups. That is not enough. We must organise the working class of these backward countries, because this working class, and these colonial and semi-colonial peoples, are of crucial importance for the victory of world proletarian revolution. (*Applause*)

Orhan (Sadrettin Celal Antel, Turkey): Comrades, the Communist International has taken the position that the independence movement of colonial peoples is of great importance for the world-revolution. We therefore find it completely inexplicable that the Communist parties of the West do not ascribe to the Eastern and colonial question the importance that it deserves.

We can point to a striking example of this in the fact that, to our great regret, the Communist Party of Italy has still not included a special section in its action programme on the tasks of Communist parties in the colonies.

Unfortunately, we see that, with regard to discussion of the Eastern question, the Fourth Congress is following the example of the Third Congress.¹⁵ We fully join in the protests of our comrades.

In our view, the anti-imperialist united front is a sort of coalition of the most advanced classes in struggle against imperialism on the basis of satisfying the minimum demands of the working masses.

The proletarian united front against the offensive of capitalism, which has set the goal of exposing the traitorous policies of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, has come into existence on the basis of the workers' minimum-demands (eight-hour day, wages, freedom of assembly, and so on). In exactly the same way, the anti-imperialist united front has the goal of disorganising the imperialist forces, winning the masses, and exposing the foreign policy of the ruling classes that seek a reconciliation with the imperialists.

In order to teach the masses to understand the anti-imperialist united front, this policy must be concretised in a way that grounds its positive content in the masses' demands for agrarian, administrative, tax, and electoral reforms.

Given that the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals now also feel compelled to make at least a verbal stand against imperialism in West and East, we

15. The Eastern question was included in the proposed Third Congress agenda, and several leading Communists from Asia submitted draft resolutions. The Congress decided, however, not to adopt a resolution on this question. Debate was postponed until the second-last day of the Congress, and the Eastern commission met only briefly the previous day. During the session on this topic, the Congress decided to reduce speaking time to five minutes and dispense with translations, measures taken in no other congress session.

Indian delegate M.N. Roy protested to the Congress that its conduct on this question was 'purely opportunist and is better suited to a congress of the Second International'.

Charles-André Julien, head of the French CP's work in North Africa, also protested, stating that 'tonight we attended a session at which the cinematographer played the main role'.

The congress chair, Kolarov, responded by pointing to the extensive discussions of the Eastern question at the previous year's congresses in Moscow and Baku. See Comintern 1921b, pp. 1018, 1029, 1035.

must propose to the opportunist parties of Europe an anti-imperialist united front on the basis of independence for the Eastern and colonial peoples.

In the future we must propose that the Labour Party [of Britain] pressure the government along the following lines:

- a. Demand at the Lausanne Conference the conclusion of a peace treaty [with Turkey] in conformity with the terms of the National Pact.¹⁶
- b. Unconditionally evacuate Constantinople and all of Thrace.
- c. Resolve the question of the Straits in conformity with the Russian-Turkish treaty,¹⁷ with participation of the countries bordering on the Black Sea.
- d. Authorise publication of articles on this question in the workers' newspapers.
- e. Evacuate Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine. Recognition of the national independence of all colonies and semi-colonies.

In the interests of the national and workers' movements in the East and the liberation of all working people from the yoke of the intruding capitalist governments, and further in the interests of organising a unified alliance for struggle, we propose a conference of all delegations from Eastern countries plus the French and British delegations. This gathering should immediately call a congress, to which all revolutionary organisations engaged in an anti-imperialist struggle will be invited.

The recent victories achieved by the Turkish people over world imperialism have been greeted enthusiastically in the most remote countries of Asia and Africa. This is true even in Cochin China [southern Vietnam], a non-Muslim country; the demonstrations of joy there received special attention in the bourgeois press.

Based on these facts, we believe that a congress of all oppressed peoples called by the Communist Party of Turkey would have first-rank importance for the world-revolution.

All parties of the countries that have colonies or semi-colonies – and especially the French and British parties – must support every revolutionary inde-

16. The National Pact presented the Turkish people's claims for national unity and independence. See p. 614, n. 35.

17. The treaty between the Russian Soviet government and the Turkish Grand National Assembly, signed in Moscow on 16 March 1921, provided that the 'international status of the Black Sea and its straits' would be considered by a future committee of delegates from countries bordering the Black Sea (Turkey, four Soviet republics, Bulgaria, and Romania), subject to the condition that such a committee would not infringe on Turkish sovereignty or the security of Turkey and its capital, Constantinople. The reference to 'security' implied Turkey's right to build military fortifications along the Straits, a major point in dispute between Turkey and the Allied powers.

pendence movement and use every means to stand by the Communist parties of their colonies, just as they would toward branches of their own party. We insist particularly on this point because, so far, the Communist parties in the motherlands have neglected their duties toward the national-liberation movements and Communist parties in a manner that is incomprehensible. We demand that the Fourth Congress require that all national sections carry out Point 8 of the Twenty-One Conditions and urge them to regularly send the Communist parties of the East materials and literature that can help expose imperialist policies. We also urge them to send pamphlets, newspapers, leaflets, statements, and the like, written with the goal of disorganising and revolutionising the occupation troops.

The Communist parties of these countries will assume responsibilities for distributing these publications.

In the Eastern countries, the level of development of productive forces does not permit the young Communist parties to immediately realise their final goal in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat – although the build-up of industry in Turkey is much more extensive, and working-class consciousness has developed considerably in recent years. In these countries, the parties' greatest challenge is to consolidate their ranks and free themselves from all opportunist and individualist forces, to educate and organise the proletariat in both the economic and political arenas, and centralise the workers' movement through incessant and methodical work in the trade unions.

The precondition for these new Communist parties' inevitable victory is that they win influence among the semi-proletarian and peasant masses.

During this transitional period, the Communist parties of these countries must provide slogans that are suitable for uniting the broad masses of working people and weakening the power of the ruling class with respect to the people as a whole.

The main tasks of the new Communist parties of the Eastern countries are, in brief, the following:

- 1.) The national-liberation movements must be supported in every way possible. All forces should be united in an anti-imperialist united front. We must be vigilant that the ruling class does not sabotage this national-liberation movement.
- 2.) Efforts are needed to promote democratic institutions favourable to the broad working masses. This policy will win for the party the sympathy of the working classes and make the Communist party a great party of the people.

However, if its entire activity consisted only of supporting the independence movement and promoting reforms, it would cease being a Communist party.

One of its chief tasks is to educate and organise the working class, forming firm structures and testing them out, so that the moment will come when the party is capable, despite leaders who are nationalists and social traitors, of leading the proletariat and the semi-proletarian masses to final victory. (*Applause*)

Nikbin (Iran): Comrades, before I proceed to present the situation in Iran, I believe it is necessary to say that, until now, very little attention has been devoted to the colonial countries and the East. The resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International stated clearly that the liberation of the colonial countries requires the support of the Communist parties in the great-power countries that possess colonies, and that Communist parties can be created in these countries. But this resolution exists only on paper. Not only have we received no moral support from the Communist parties of the imperialist countries in the West; they have shown altogether very little interest in the Eastern question. Today's session of the Fourth Congress is evidence of that.

There is no doubt that the Eastern question plays an essential role in the abolition of the capitalist order. To do away with it, we must block all the arteries through which flow the nourishing fluids and nutrients that sustain capitalism. The power of capitalism must be undermined in the colonies.

As regards Iran, this country is at present going through a transition from patriarchal tribalism to capitalism. In Iran, there is not just one source of authority but two, three, and so on to infinity. The Communist Party must struggle there not only against the local feudal lords, but also against the imperialists. Chief among these are the British, who have united with the feudal lords, their most important allies, and who hold Iran back from a transition to a capitalist order. The world industrial crisis has become evident in Iran through the fact that the Iranian market has remained, to some extent, unutilised by the capitalists. As a result, local industry has begun to develop, and along with it, a working class. This and a number of other factors have led to the organisation of a Communist party in Iran, which, at present, has one thousand members in the country as a whole. In addition there are now trade unions, which have 15,000 members in Iran as a whole, of which 12,000 are in the capital, Tehran.

From a strictly party point of view, it would be incorrect to organise a mass Communist party in Iran. The organisation consists only of a nucleus – granted, a quite healthy nucleus, composed mainly of workers. In addition, there are trade-union organisations that are fully under the influence of the Communist

Party. The Party leads politically and influences the course of work in the unions.

A huge number of unions have arisen, so that the Party cannot completely encompass them all. The degree to which the Communist Party in Iran has gained strength is evident in the fact that during the year many strikes took place under its leadership, of which the majority, about ten, concluded in victory.

We must also not omit mention of the influence of our newspaper, our press. In Tehran, we have two publications, which are the most popular newspapers in Iran as a whole. They exceed all the others not only in popularity but even in their press run. The Party is trying to create a general anti-imperialist alliance against the imperialists. To this end, it has made an extensive proposal for a democratic bloc that is to include representatives of all the national and democratic groups. This bloc is led by the Communist Party of Iran.

It is significant that the Communist Party of Iran has proved to be even stronger than the bourgeois parties, which are themselves seeking a bloc with us – especially the so-called Social Democrats, who have a democratic programme. It can be said that the preconditions are in place for the Communist Party of Iran to achieve great success in the near future, for there are industrial districts in Iran with a numerous proletariat. Let me refer, for example, to the workers in the ports of northern and southern Iran, and also to the southern districts of Iran, where the British petroleum wells are located. Forty thousand Iranian workers are employed there. We must also note that May Day was celebrated in Iran this year for the first time in its history. Not only did rallies take place, but a May Day strike was also called. Not all categories of workers went on strike; rather, only the typesetters struck on May Day. All these facts show that the Communist Party of Iran has matured fully and has entered into the struggle for communism.

Radek: Comrades, we must examine the path we have trodden since the Second Congress with regard to our relationship to the movements in the East. You recall that, at the Second Congress, we advanced the thesis that the movement in the East had the greatest revolutionary importance, and that the Communist International had to support this movement. This position aroused a hullabaloo, not only in the capitalist world that had very good reason to fear our decision, but also in the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. You need only recall how Crispian and Hilferding told the Halle Congress that we ascribed greater importance to the mullahs

in Khiva than to any industrial proletariat or to a party like Independent German Social Democracy.¹⁸

Comrades, history has shown how right we were and how wrong were these gentlemen who talked with their West European arrogance about mulahs from Khiva. You recall how, after the Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, people abused us for allying with the 'Turks'. And what has been shown by experience, by history? The Peace of Versailles exists despite all of Hilferding's protests, and Hilferding and his colleagues are now ready to join the government in order to act as lackeys of the Entente. Powerless pawns of history, the Hilferdings can only bemoan their misfortunes to the world.

But the revolutionary movement in Turkey, the struggle of the Turkish masses, to which we pledged our support, has torn up the Treaty of Sèvres. And, while the entire Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals constitute a nullity compared to capitalism, this struggle in Turkey shook the entire West European balance of power. And thereby was the question answered whether these movements in the East are revolutionary in character, whether they are important in undermining capitalist power, or whether they are just a plaything of Soviet Russia's foreign policy, which the Communist International is going along with.

After the importance of the Eastern question had been made plain to all, even for the blind, these gentlemen come with a new song. This time it is one of the chairpersons at our Second Congress, Paul Levi, now deceased as a Communist, who gives the cue for this melody. Now it is no longer that the Eastern peoples and the revolution in the East are of no importance. Rather the story now is: Look! The victory of Kemal Pasha is a victory for Poincaré. And by supporting Kemal Pasha, Soviet Russia was also supporting Poincaré. And Paul Levi says: See how far they have gone!

This move by Levi shows better than all his articles over German internal politics how he has personally landed on a slippery slope, and also how completely rotten is international Social Democracy. It does not grasp that different forces are at work in a great world-historical development. It does not grasp that the revolutionary struggle of Eastern peoples may be exploited and utilised by the quarrelling cliques of international imperialism, but that does not alter the revolutionary character of its struggle or relieve the world proletariat of its obligation to support the revolutionary currents in the East.

18. At the Second Congress, attended by Crispian, Baba Akhunde Samilov presented greetings from working people of Khorezm (Khiva), an independent soviet republic recently formed in Central Asia. Social-Democratic opponents of the Comintern made much of its alliance with Islamic revolutionists, some of whom were clerics, in Khiva and elsewhere in Asia. The Comintern developed its views on this alliance at the Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku in 1920 (see Riddell (ed.) 1993).

These petty hagglers of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals do not understand that the fact that capitalist powers try to convert the Eastern peoples into tools of capitalism is simply one more reason why the international working class is obligated to do all in its power to help the Eastern peoples to unite with the European and world workers' movement in the struggle against world capitalism.

When Levi and company now say that the victory of Turkey is a victory for France, their prophecy comes two weeks too soon. The Lausanne Conference will portray how the awakening East is opposed by a united front of world capitalism.¹⁹ France wants to play the role in the East that Germany played before the War. France wants to confront Britain with a fairly large Turkish territory, but not in order to make this territory independent but rather to subject it to French expansion. That is why the French government, having helped Turkey defeat Greece, will now leave Turkey in the lurch.

France will take the same position as British imperialism regarding the capitulations and financial control over Turkey. Then we will see who was right: the revolutionary forces – the Communist International and Soviet Russia – who resolved to support the movement in the East through all the confusion, because in its core it is a revolutionary movement; or by contrast those whose fear and anxiety leads them at every point to lose perspective on what is coming next.

This brings me to my second point, which played a role in the reports of our Turkish comrades. Our thesis was that the exploited East must and will defend itself against international capital. That is why we support the exploited East. However, the Eastern peoples are now led by those who are not only not Communists but for the most part not even bourgeois revolutionaries. They are still headed by representatives of moribund feudal cliques, out of which the officer corps and bureaucracy in these countries has been constituted.

Our support for the Eastern peoples therefore raises the question of our relationship to these governing forces. The question is posed in practice by the persecution of Communists in Turkey and by the struggles waged in recent weeks by Wu Peifu in China against strikers. As Communists, we are able to express our position on these matters fully and with complete frankness. When we promised our support to the awakening East, we did not for a moment forget the class struggles that will take place there.

In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, Marx was writing not only for the German workers when he said: Support the bourgeoisie to the degree that its actions are revolutionary. He even called on the revolutionary forces in Poland to grant support to the wing of the Polish great landowners, the aristocracy,

19. For Lausanne Conference, see p. 615, n. 38.

who took a revolutionary position in the peasant question.²⁰ What does this tell us? He knew very well that a bourgeoisie remains a bourgeoisie, that the Polish aristocrats remain aristocrats. He knew that the young workers' movement will have to wage a class struggle against these alien and hostile classes. But he understood that the interests of this class struggle and of its future development at that historical moment demanded support for these classes, despite the class antagonisms.

Comrades, the persecution of Communists in Turkey is part of a class struggle that has just begun to develop in that country, not only between the working class and the young bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy, but also in the camp of these ruling layers.

It is no secret that the main responsibility for the persecution of Communists lies with ministers of the interior Rauf Orbay and Refet Pasha, who are both for a compromise with the Entente and were opponents of the sultan. It is no secret that the deposition of the sultan in Turkey unleashed a struggle.²¹ The question now is whether the revolutionary forces in the ruling class will capitulate to the reactionaries or not. If they capitulate, then the role of Kemal Pasha is finished, haggling over the fate of Turkey will resume, and the Turkish people will be sold for baksheesh. If they do not capitulate, they will have to counterpose the resistance of the masses to the impact of the clergy, the reactionary pashas, and all the corrupt forces.

It is not clear which side will win, but we do not regret for a moment that we told the Turkish Communists that their first task after organising themselves as a separate party is to support the national-liberation movement in Turkey. At stake here is the future of the Turkish people as a whole – whether the way for them will be cleared or whether they will become the slaves of world capitalism. If the pashas sell the Turkish people, if the entire burden of the capitulations, financial control, and all the rest on falls on the Turkish peasants, then they will understand that it is the Communists and the young working class who have fought for their interests, and they will unite around the Communist Party.

And, even in this moment of persecution, we tell the Turkish Communists: Do not in the present situation forget the immediate future. The task of defending Turkish sovereignty, which has great international revolutionary importance, is not over. You should defend yourself against your persecutors, you should return blow for blow, but you should understand that historically

20. See Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 6, p. 518.

21. On 1 November 1922 the Turkish Grand National Assembly declared the office of sultan abolished, and on 17 November, the deposed sultan Mehmed left Constantinople aboard a British warship and went into exile in Italy.

the moment for the liberation struggle has not arrived; you will still have to travel a considerable way with the revolutionary forces that are even now only beginning to crystallise out in Turkey.

Or take the situation in China. Remember the course of events, comrades. When Wu Peifu went into battle with Zhang Zuolin, he had behind him the line of the Yangtze River and its arsenals, but he did not control the northern railways, which were held by people in the pay of Japan. What did he do? He turned to the young Communist Party of China for support. They gave him commissars, who kept a firm hold on the railways for his troops, who were waging a revolutionary struggle there.

Anyone who fights in China against Japanese imperialism is fighting for China's revolutionary development. Because the Communists understood that, they created in the working class a sense of their independence and importance. Later, the workers made their demands on Wu Peifu and in part achieved them. Through this support and by carrying their historical obligations to the revolutionary-bourgeois forces, our comrades succeeded in establishing themselves among the working masses of North China.

The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals constantly tell us: You fools, don't you understand that the Enver Pashas and Wu Peifus will always betray you, again and again? To this we reply: Worthy gentlemen of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, so long as there is a petty bourgeoisie – and you are part of it – it will waver between capitalism and the working class. And you, who call yourselves socialists, have already betrayed the working class a thousand times. Still we come to you, after each betrayal, and try to win you to the united front, which you resist. And the joke of the story is that you are driven into it. Whether you want to or not, and despite your betrayals, you will be obliged to march with us once again and serve our cause.

Remember the events in Germany! Did not the German Social Democracy, who had brought the Lüttwitz people to power, then fight during the Kapp Putsch side by side with the Communist workers?²² True, at a later stage, they betrayed once again. But, nonetheless, this struggle, which they were compelled to fight together with us, was a service to the working class, for, obviously, a Kapp government would have been much worse than what we have now. All the more are betrayals and turnabouts possible in the East,

22. After the November 1918 revolution, the SPD-USPD government appointed the German general Walther von Lüttwitz to command army forces in Berlin. In this capacity, he organised the brutal suppression of a workers' uprising in January 1919, during which soldiers under his command murdered Liebknecht and Luxemburg. In March 1920, Lüttwitz joined with Wolfgang Kapp in a right-wing military coup that briefly overthrew the republican government that included the SPD. The coup was defeated by united workers' resistance encompassing both SPD and KPD.

where the government is in the hands not even of the petty bourgeoisie but of a moribund feudal class. They will try a thousand times to sell themselves to this or that faction of world capitalism; they will try a thousand times to betray the revolutionary interests of their country, but the joke of history is that *der Bien muss* – they've got no choice.²³ They must fight, because in the long run a compromise with imperialism is impossible.

The pashas can, of course, conclude a compromise, in order to assure themselves of a good life, but when they try tomorrow to dupe the Anatolian peasants, in order to pay for the compromise, they will discover that it was not in vain that history subjected the Turkish peasants to twelve years of war. The peasant is now a different person from what he was before the War.

A Social-Revolutionary publication, which certainly does not write flatteringly of Soviet Russia, prints a letter from Constantinople. Describing the impact produced by the victories of Kemal Pasha, it says: There were two cries on the streets, where tens and hundreds of thousands of people were gathered, 'Long Live Kemal Pasha', and 'Long Live Soviet Russia'. The masses knew that the French had helped as well, but no cries rang out for France. For they felt instinctively that France acted because of diplomatic considerations, sometimes for Turkey and sometimes against. But Soviet Russia, despite centuries of struggle between tsarism and Turkey, had rejected tsarism's imperialist policies and wanted to establish fraternal relations with the Turkish people. And this fact has sunk roots in the consciousness of the Turkish people. It leads down the road of victory.

And that is why we say, from the point of view not of Soviet Russia but of the Communist International, don't try to scare us! We are placing our bets not on the transitory policies of this or that clique, but on the great historical stream that brings together the West European working masses and the awakening masses of the East.

Comrades, I'd now like to say a few words about the reports and what was said here regarding the state of our parties in the East and their work.

As always, comrades, I'd like to begin by saying you should not have too rosy a view of the situation. Do not exaggerate your strength. The Chinese comrade says here: We have sunk roots across all China. I must reply: Dear comrades, it is good to feel enough strength at the beginning to get the work under way. But you must look the facts in the face. Our Chinese party has developed quite separately in each of the country's two parts.

23. The joke is German dialect humour, first recorded in 1597, about a foreigner talking of bees supposedly as large as sheep. How then can the bee fly into its hive? 'Der Bien muss' – the bee just has to do it.

The comrades working in Canton [Guangzhou] and in Shanghai have made very little headway in linking themselves to the working masses. We struggled with them for a whole year because many believed: How can a good Communist get involved in such everyday matters as strikes? Many of our comrades there locked themselves in their room to study Marx and Lenin, as they had once studied Confucius.

That was the situation a couple of months ago. How is it possible that the cause of revolution, which has already taken a blow with the fall of Sun Yat-Sen, is suddenly such a strong force? In the North, where the Party is quite weak and enjoys support only among the railway workers, how can it represent great power? Comrade Thalheimer gave us a quotation from Lenin, in which he said: Don't boast of your victory before the fact. That is an excellent saying, one to learn and understand, just like the proverbs of the Chinese sages of old.

The first task of the Chinese comrades is to focus on what the Chinese movement is capable of. Comrades, you must understand that in China neither the victory of socialism nor the establishment of a soviet republic is on the agenda. Unfortunately, even the question of national unity has not yet been historically placed on the agenda in China. What we are experiencing in China is reminiscent of the eighteenth century in Europe, in Germany, where the development of capitalism was still so weak that it had not yet given rise to a single unifying national centre.

When you speak of the *tuchuns*, the military governors; when you proclaim: Here we have Sun Yat-Sen and there Wu Peifu – what does that tell us? It means that capitalism is beginning to develop in a whole number of different centres. With a population of more than 300 million people, without railways – how can it be any different? We have wide perspectives, which you should advocate with all the fire of your youthful Communist convictions. Despite that, our task consists of unifying the real forces taking shape in the working class with two goals: first, organising the young working class, and second, establishing a proper relationship between them and the objectively revolutionary bourgeois forces, in order to organise the struggle against European and Asiatic imperialism.

We are only beginning to understand these tasks, and that is why, comrades, we must be aware that to become stronger we have to establish a concrete programme of action. The Communist International tells the Communist parties of the West: Go to the masses! So too, what we say to you is: Get out of the Confucian scholars' reading rooms and go to the masses! Not only the masses of workers, not only the coolies, but also the massive peasant population that has been stirred up by these events.

I will move on to Japan and India. In both countries, the relationship of forces is quite similar. In both Japan and India there is quite a strong working class. Both countries are experiencing a severe social crisis, in which different layers of the bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy are contending for power, and in neither country do we yet have a mass Communist movement. That is a fact. Look at the appeals that Comrade Katayama assembled in the most recent issue of *Kommunistische Internationale* regarding the situation in Japan, which are extremely interesting.²⁴ In these appeals, published legally by different groups of workers, you find an entire spectrum of viewpoints from Tolstoyism over to syndicalism and communism and including even the most elementary social reform. And I must say that, in this choir of voices, that of communism is the weakest.

Why is this? Previously, we were still uninformed about the mood of the workers, who are going through a period similar to the British Chartists.²⁵ We did not succeed in building bridges to the specific tasks that are now before them. These consist of organising the working class as a power that can intervene in the class struggle in Japan, above all to establish democracy.

I do not believe that developments in Japan will simply repeat those in Britain. One hundred years have passed, and, obviously, the pace of developments in Japan will be more rapid. The entire history will be compressed, and as a result even in this bourgeois revolution now being prepared in Japan, soviets will arise, not as organs of power but as organs unifying the working class. But, now, we have to form trade unions and advance a sensible programme that presents the working class with immediate tasks. And the immediate task is to lead the working class into struggle as an organised force.

In India, we have an intellectual centre. It must be acknowledged here that what Comrade Roy has succeeded in creating in recent years – a Marxist orientation to Indian reality, presented in his outstanding book and in his newspaper – represents a very great labour. No Communist party of the East has carried out intellectual work on its own; this work deserves the strongest support of the Communist International. But, in practice, during the present flare-up of strikes, we have made no progress with India's large trade-union movement.²⁶ We have not found a way under the British occupation to utilise the rights that it is compelled to provide. The reception received by Comrade Roy shows that legal possibilities exist there. We have not succeeded in taking

24. See *Kommunistische Internationale*, 23 (1922), pp. 54–62.

25. The Chartists were a mass working-class movement in Britain from 1838 into the 1850s, which demanded universal manhood suffrage and other democratic reforms.

26. See M.N. Roy, 'The Indian Trade-Union Congress', in *Inprecorr*, 2, 1 (3 January 1922), p. 4; and 'The Railroad Strike in India', in *Inprecorr*, 2, 3 (10 January 1922), pp. 295–6.

even the first practical steps as a workers' party. And all this tells us that 'It's a long way to Tipperary'.²⁷ And when comrades complain here that there is not yet great interest in their work, I must reply that interest in parties is tied to their deeds.

It has been explained for the twentieth time at a congress that there are many workers in Iran. These are things that we learn not from a congress but from a geography textbook.

Comrades, let me express the hope that we will succeed, at this congress, in steering the work that you and our Eastern division have achieved onto a practical track, so that we are able, at the next congress, to report on practical organisational achievements. If that happens, then the International will be aware not only of the great importance of the Eastern question but also that you are carrying out work that is in step with its great importance.

Comrades, the world situation has changed since the time of the Second Congress. At that congress, our political line in the East was oriented toward immediate and broad revolutionary uprisings. This was not made explicit, but all the delegates from the East felt it.²⁸ As for the present world situation, we find ourselves around the world in a period where the revolution is gathering its forces. This has an impact on the situation in the Eastern countries as well. If we are to play a revolutionary role in these countries in the coming period, we must set the goal of accomplishing a vast organisational, political, and intellectual labour.

Of course, the revolutions of the East will not wait until our comrades in every country have learned that revolution does not signify reading and digesting the theses of the Communist International but carrying out practical revolutionary work among the masses. But when great events develop in the East similar to those in Turkey today, where we are weak and unorganised, then they will take place without us and we will not be able to influence them in a revolutionary direction. Therefore, the slogan of this congress in the Eastern question must be to go to the tormented masses of the East, to work for their education, and to create solid bastions of the Communist International in the East that are capable of carrying out practical work for the struggle before us and of influencing the broad masses. And then, after we have gathered the workers around us, we must go to the peasants and craftsmen and become the leaders of a future people's party. (*Loud applause*)

27. The quoted words are in English in the German text.

28. The orientation to immediate revolutionary uprisings in the East was made explicit in the Comintern's 1920 Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East, in which Radek participated. The Congress called on Asian peoples to 'go forward as one man in a holy war' for the 'liberation of the peoples of the East'. Riddell (ed.) 1993, p. 231.

Chair: There are a few announcements.

First, the Presidium proposes to set up a commission to examine the theses and resolutions on the Eastern question and then present them to the Congress. The Commission will consist of the following comrades: Roy (India), Radek (Russia), Safarov (Russia), Ravesteyn (Netherlands), Webb (Great Britain), Salih (Turkey), Sen Katayama (Japan), Tan Malaka (Java), Chen Duxiu (China), Isakov (Bulgaria), Cachin (France).

It has also been proposed to add to the Commission one comrade each from Iran and Yugoslavia. (*Agreement and objections*)

We have to vote on this, and I will first take the vote on the Presidium proposal without change.

The proposal is adopted. That disposes of the other proposal.

Comrade Bunting of South Africa has the floor to read a resolution on the situation in that country.

Bunting (South Africa): Comrades, the resolution reads as follows.

On the Repression in South Africa

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International has received word that the South African government of General Smuts has shot dead four workers because they defended themselves during the miners' strike against the armed forces of the government, a faithful servant of the gold capitalists.²⁹

The Congress condemns the South African government, which presents itself in Europe through General Smuts as liberal and pacifist but, in reality, does not shrink from murder in order to repress the workers' movement.

The Fourth Congress sends fraternal greetings to the South African workers in the conviction that they will not abandon the struggle but rather renew their efforts to draw the black workers into battle against South African capitalism. The South African workers can count in this struggle on the support of the Communist International, which views them as one of its leading detachments.

Bunting: Now I would like to add a few words. (*Interjection: 'Long live the South African martyrs!'*) I fear that some of them are already dead, and it is

29. Miners and other workers in Transvaal declared a general strike in March 1922 against reductions in wages and living standards, in particular through the replacement of white workers by much lower-paid blacks. The strike movement developed into a general uprising, which was put down at a cost of 154 lives. Four workers were executed. Despite efforts by the CP to promote racial unity and equality, the white workers' movement defended the colour bar and a 'white South Africa', while some workers engaged in sporadic attacks on black workers.

too late to wish them long life. But when we cable this resolution to South Africa, we can perhaps still save some lives. And there is something else that we can do. We can implant in the souls and brains of the survivors such a hate that they will never make a deal with the bloodstained government of General Smuts but will wage the struggle against capitalism relentlessly.

I believe that this is the first time that the Communist International has had the opportunity to become involved in South African politics without fear that this would lead to difficulties. At present, as rebellion sweeps the land and the government's actions arouse protests on every side, the Communist International has an opportunity to earn the respect and high esteem of South African workers.

I hope that the resolution will be sent off by cable to South Africa with this end in view. (*The resolution is adopted unanimously*)

Adjournment: 4:10 p.m.

Session 21 – Friday, 24 November 1922

The Agrarian Question

Speakers: Varga, Renaud Jean, Teodorovich, Joss, Rieu, Marcel Pauker

Convened: 11:45 a.m.

Chairpersons: Kolarov, later Marchlewski

Varga (Hungary): Comrades, the agrarian question was thoroughly examined at the Second Congress of the Communist International. Theses were adopted there that still constitute the foundation of our work. *The action programme presented to you by the agrarian commission does not signify any change in these theses; it expands on them.*¹ This supplement became necessary because of the historical shift that has taken place in the last two years.

Comrades, at the Second Congress we were all convinced that the revolution would very rapidly advance further toward the West. It was the moment when the Russian armies were moving victoriously into Poland, and the Communist movement was expanding across all Europe. Under the impact of this ascending revolutionary movement, the Second Congress theses were worked out from a point of view concerned with an immediate conquest of power. At this time we cannot project that the seizure

1. Varga's opening remarks respond to the opinion of Lenin, expressed in a letter to Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Radek, that Varga's draft 'gives virtually nothing new in comparison with the resolution of the Second Congress of the Comintern' and 'is of very doubtful value'. (Lenin 1960–71, 45, pp. 593–4) Varga takes up Lenin's letter and the resulting changes in the draft on pp. 901–4. For the Second Congress resolution, which was drafted by Lenin, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, 660–70.

of power in European countries is an imminent prospect. *It is necessary to draw in the broad masses as auxiliary troops to expand the Communist party's attacking army.*

This idea is at the root of the united-front tactic, and it also forms the basis of the proposed agrarian action programme. If we want to achieve a decisive victory in Europe through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, we need above all else the active support of broad layers of the rural population, while other layers must be neutralised. For we must recognise, comrades, that we are not the only ones to have learned from the Russian Revolution – the bourgeoisie has learned a great deal as well.

When the Bolsheviks seized power, the bourgeoisie was convinced that the proletarian dictatorship could only be a passing phenomenon. But now they have learned from the example of the Russian dictatorship the true dimensions of the danger that threatens them, and they are on their guard around the world. We can no longer think in terms of a small revolutionary group overpowering the bourgeoisie by a surprise attack.

Given our goal of winning the layers that are accessible to us and neutralising other layers, we must above all specify the *methods of our work*. These methods must consist of *linking up with the real daily interests of the relevant layers of the rural population* within capitalism. And I want to stress particularly that these layers cannot be won simply through advancing a programme. By and large, these layers regard the Communist party with suspicion. If we want to reach them, it is not enough to adopt a good programme. It is absolutely necessary to win these layers through actions, through participation in their daily struggles, and thus remove the suspicion against the Communist party.

To this end, it is above all necessary to win the layers of the rural proletariat, *plus the poor peasants, that is, the peasants who do not have enough land to sustain them and are forced in part to rely on labouring for wages, as well as the poorer layers of the middle peasants.* To be able to win them, we snatch them away from the ideological influence of the large peasants and large landowners.

In Europe, this is a challenging task, because the European peasantry is not an amorphous mass similar to the Russian peasantry before the Revolution. The rural population in Europe has its political, economic, and cooperative organisations, which are everywhere led by the large peasants. Our approach must be to link up with the interests of the poorer layers and pull them away from the leadership of the large peasants. This task is immensely difficult, and the problems are rooted above all in the character of the Communist parties in Europe.

All these parties, almost without exception, lack forces on the scale needed to carry through such a campaign. In the case of many of the parties, their

forces are insufficient even for adequate work with the industrial proletariat. Few resources are left for work in the countryside, and this can lead to a situation where the Communist party in a country is entirely cut off from contact with the rural population.

Here is an example of this. I asked the comrade assigned by the Romanian delegation to the agrarian commission a question: What are the political results of the fact that a major land redistribution is now taking place among the peasant population?

He had to reply, 'We do not know.' I do not want to reproach the Romanian Party. We all know the immensely harsh conditions in which it has been working in the recent period. I only wish to point out that, in many countries, the forces of the Communist parties have not been sufficient to carry out extensive work in the countryside. Of course, the solution is not to renounce work in the countryside. Rather, we must strive to attract leaders, agitators, and party workers from the rural population itself, from the rural proletariat, to give them special education and then throw them back into the movement.

This work, comrades, this process of linking up with the real interests of different layers of rural working people faces great objective difficulties. The greatest of them, in my opinion, is *the indistinctness of the class character of these layers*. In industry, the class divisions are much more clearly defined. You know exactly: here is an industrial worker, here is a craftsman, and here is an employer, and the transition from one layer to another is difficult and rare. Of course, in capitalism's present period of decline, we often see that an industrial worker also engages in small, speculative trade on the side, or that he produces certain things at home. But, on the whole, the layers are clearly defined.

With the agricultural population, the situation is entirely different. Here, there is constant transition from the true agricultural proletarian, without any land or property, to the rich peasant. There is a constant transition from one layer to another. The class divisions are also not fixed over time. Through a cultural change, someone who was previously, let us say, a small peasant, can become an employer. Then he may be forced by some other external change to carry out wage labour to some degree. Thus, the class divisions do not merely flow into each other but are also not fixed over time.

In addition, I want to stress the *qualitative difference* between agriculture and industry with regard to the weight of the middle layers. In our agitation in the cities, we generally do not need to pay particular attention to the petty-bourgeois, vacillating layers of small masters, small traders, and so on. By contrast, there are many countries where the actual agricultural proletariat is quite small in numbers, and where the small and middle peasants, with their

semi-peasant mode of life, make up the overwhelming majority of the population. As a result, we must devote much more attention to these layers in our work in the countryside than we do in our work in the cities.

I will refer briefly to the economic reason why class division is so indistinct in the countryside. It is a fact that *the most important means of agricultural production, the land, is readily divisible*. It can be divided without causing any particular decline in production. Comrades, it is quite inconceivable that an industrial worker would come upon the idea of dividing a railway line, an electrical generating station, a large shipyard, or a factory producing machinery. Obviously, this would be idiotic: production would be destroyed. But, in agriculture, the chief means of production, the land, can be divided, without reducing the yield to any significant extent. If the small peasant is sufficiently intelligent, the division of the land has no negative consequences for production. Pieces of land can be sold back and forth. The farm can grow larger or, through division of an inheritance, it may become smaller. The foundation of production is itself divisible, and, as a result, the layer resting on this foundation is also undefined and changeable.

Finally I want to refer to the great difficulties that flow from the variability of conditions in each region and each country. With the industrial proletariat, its problems and the conditions in which it lives are essentially the same everywhere. But, in agriculture, the differences are immense. I will identify only three main variants. First is the *colonial countries*, with an oppressed native peasant population. I think for example of the situation in Egypt or India, where the peasant is subjugated by foreign robbers who are closely linked to the feudal large landowner of the district in question and to the great princes who are allies of British imperialism. In these territories, the struggle against imperialism is, simultaneously, a social struggle of the oppressed and subjugated peasantry against its own landlords. Here, the national-liberation struggle is also a struggle of the peasants for freedom from long-established social enslavement.

A second pattern is found in countries where there are still *strong vestiges of feudalism*, where the bourgeois revolution has not carried its work through to completion. Even in Germany, significant relics of feudalism are still present, and, as we move further to the east, into Poland, the Balkans, Romania, and Asia Minor, we more and more encounter a pattern of agriculture that approximates feudalism.

The third pattern is found in the purely capitalist states, such as the United States, where agriculture is a branch of capitalist production, as well as in the British settler-colonies such as Canada and Australia and in Britain itself. Here, we have a simple relationship between exploited and exploiters.

The degree to which relationships are confused is shown, for example, in the small country of Yugoslavia, where we find in the newly added territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina an almost entirely feudal relationship between the rural workers and the former Turkish large landowners. The former Serbia is a pure, democratic peasant country. In the territories added from Hungary – that is southern Hungary [Vojvodina] and Croatia – we find fully developed capitalist agriculture, large farms with modern equipment. So, in this small territory, three quite different social and political patterns are present. This, naturally, makes our work in the countryside much more difficult, since the slogans linking to immediate demands must be quite different in old Serbia, in Bosnia, and in capitalist Croatia or the districts annexed from Hungary.

The second great difference is the *land question*. There are countries where the rural population's full attention is focused on the hunger for land. There are also countries where the land question plays hardly any role. In Poland and Hungary, for example, or also in certain parts of Germany, the land question is overriding. This is not the case in the United States or the settler-colonies, for example, because enough land is available there. In France it is also less of a question, because the population is growing very slowly there. In the War, 1.5 million peasant sons were killed, so, for the moment, one cannot speak of an acute hunger for land. In Bulgaria, by contrast, there is certainly a hunger for land, but great estates that could be divided are quite lacking, and the hunger for land is therefore, so to speak, abstract.

I identified the unclear and changeable character of rural class relations as the dominant characteristic of the poorer social layers in the countryside. This fact also determines their political role, which is wavering. Just as their economic position is variable, so too their political position is always wavering. Sometimes they feel closer to the proletariat; at other times, in better economic conditions, they feel closer to the large peasants. In general they are a very changeable force, which must be analysed intensively and always in terms of the current situation.

In this regard, I must refer to the changes that the War has produced in the class structure and political outlook of the peasant population. I will summarise it in this way: the division of income between agriculture and industry, between the countryside and the city, shifted during the War in favour of agriculture. This enabled various layers of the peasantry that before the War had stood closer to the proletariat to rise and draw nearer to the large peasantry.

I would say that, as a result of the War, the line defining layers approachable in terms of proletarian revolution has been drawn somewhat lower. After

the War, we could reach a more restricted range than was possible before the War. Also, as a result of the War, the division between the layers that we could approach and the layers we could not became somewhat sharper. The countryside was enriched during the War by the fact that the price of food rose more sharply than the price of other goods. As a result, the layers of peasants capable of marketing surplus production grew richer.

On the other hand, the forces that had to earn their living in part through wage labour became poorer during the War, and the division became sharper, although not nearly as sharp as in industry.

I would also like to add that, in the last year or two, there has been a *new deterioration*. Consider the great agrarian crisis in the United States and Argentina, and the fact that as a result of the more rapid increases in industrial prices, the peasant no longer enjoys the advantage of selling his foodstuffs for a high price and buying industrial goods at relatively low prices. This recent worsening in the position of the peasantry is reflected in a number of countries in the present increase in their indebtedness.

Comrades, the variable class position of the bourgeois layers in the countryside, which I have emphasised as their chief distinguishing feature, explains why, wherever there is an agricultural proletariat, *we must view the agricultural proletariat as the central factor in the revolutionary movement*. These landless agricultural workers, true proletarians, must become our party's steadfast and ever reliable comrades in struggle. This is clearly stated in the action programme, comrades.²

I must now point out that an incomprehensible error appears in the French text of the theses – one could almost call it a forgery. In the German text, Point 6 states quite clearly, 'It is the most important factor in the revolutionary movement'. The French text inexplicably reads, 'One of the most important factors'.

I ask the comrades editing the translation to take note of the fact that the German, signed text is final and definitive.

How do we reach these agricultural proletarians? I believe there is no need to speak of this at length. We reach them by linking up with their *real immediate demands as wage workers, as proletarians*, by supporting their struggles for wage increases, improvements in working conditions, extension of social legislation, and the like. Indeed, we do not just support these struggles but unify them, place ourselves at their head, and strive to link them with those of the industrial proletariat, and, in this way, provide proof that the Communist party is really the party of the proletariat. I believe there is no need to say more. It's set out in the programme itself.

2. See 'Agrarian Action Programme', pp. 954–9.

I will now take up our work among the semi-peasant layers,³ and, here, I will point out the dangers arising from this work. Dangers threaten us, so to speak, from both right and left. The danger from the right is that in countries where the semi-peasantry and small peasantry is numerically large, *there might be no clear and principled distinction between the work of the Communist party and that of a radical peasants' party*. Let me refer to two examples of this kind.

First, in France, the approach of Comrade Renaud Jean in this work seems to represent a certain danger of this type. The interests of semi-peasants and small peasants are stressed, but, in the process, those of the true landless proletarians are forgotten. I also see an indication of this type in the report of the American delegation, which demands nothing less than a government guaranteed floor price for agricultural products, for the so-called staples, which clearly runs counter to the interests not only of the agricultural population but to those of the industrial proletariat in the cities as consumers. Here I see dangers from the right.

On the other hand, comrades, I see certain dangers from the left. Some comrades display a fear of the peasants, a certain sectarian attachment to the idea that only true proletarians in industry and agriculture can be active fighters for revolution, while the layers of poor peasants cannot be won for a real revolution. In my opinion, that is just as great an error, because there is a large number of countries where, without active support from these layers, a proletarian revolution is impossible. I would say that with the exception of Britain, there is no European country where our dictatorship can be maintained if the bourgeoisie, the rich peasants, the middle peasants, and the small-peasant layers are all against us.

The fear of peasant support, the suspicion of the possibility that broad peasant layers may become revolutionary, is, in my opinion, a political error similar to the neglect of the interests of rural workers. It's very clear that only the rural proletariat can provide us with secure and steady contingents of struggle. But when a revolutionary movement arises, the broadest layers of rural working people must be drawn in. Without this, in many countries, the seizure of power is impossible, and without this active support, our dictatorship cannot be maintained in these countries.

The question is therefore how we can reach out to the different layers of the peasantry. Our action programme indicates the various forms of peasant dependency on capitalism:

3. 'Semi-peasant' here translates the German word *Halbbauer* (half-peasant), which refers to peasants holding half-size plots of land, that is, too small to sustain the peasant family.

- Dependency on loans and usury.
- Dependency on speculators, who buy products cheaply from the small peasants and then sell them at high prices in the cities.
- Dependency on industrial capital, which is able through monopoly to artificially raise the price of industrial products.
- Dependency on transportation capital, which in the United States, for example, has decisive importance, often consuming as much as half the proceeds.

Perhaps some of you comrades have read the very interesting novel by Norris,⁴ in which he explains that, in the United States, the railroad company changes their rates every week or every other week. A poor fellow, who has worked his way up through heavy labour as a proletarian to become a small-scale grower of hops, asks the railway director, 'Tell me, just how do you actually decide on these rates?'

The director responds, 'We set them at the highest rate your business can bear.' In other words, they take everything beyond a bare wage for the farmer's labour.

In addition, we must consider the peasants' struggle against the *capitalist state*, which confronts the peasants as an antagonist with its taxes and with its wars, which are a tax in blood.

In my opinion, our actual work must consist of taking up and supporting these individual demands of the peasant population against capitalism. Here, in my opinion, lies the key to the very difficult matter of our stand on the price question. Of course, we cannot say that the peasants should receive high prices. *But we can turn the question of prices into a struggle by the peasants against capitalism.* We must say that capitalism should be compelled to provide the peasants with inexpensive productive equipment, machines, and fertiliser, in order to make it possible for the peasants to sell foodstuffs at low prices. We must not say we want a specific high price. We must say that the capitalists should provide all industrial goods that the peasants need for production at a low price.

But the focus of our work, comrades, must be our stand on the *land question*. The hunger for land is the most compelling driving force for all rural revolutionary movements. The question is clearly posed whether or not the Communist party should support the movement of poor peasants to obtain more land within capitalism. Should we oppose this or be in favour? There is

4. Varga is referring to Frank Norris's novel, *Octopus: A California Story*, which portrays a conflict over land between wheat growers and a railway company. The novel is based on a historical conflict of farmers with the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1880, which led to the 'Mussel Slough Tragedy', in which seven people died.

no evading this question. In most countries, the question is so sharply posed that the Communist party must answer 'Yes' or 'No'.

In my opinion, comrades, the Communist party must respond everywhere with a clear 'Yes'. It must actively support all efforts of the working peasants to obtain more land. Our policy must consist of *sharply and constantly counterposing to every bourgeois agrarian reform our revolutionary solution to the agrarian question*, and of leading the actions of these layers toward our slogans.

The land-hungry peasants – for example, the sharecroppers and poor tenant farmers – demand that rents be lowered. The Communist party cannot say we are against this. Rather, it must say that yes, we support this, but we also say that this is no solution. What is needed is to expropriate these fields that you are now renting. Revolutionary confiscation can provide a solution.

The land-hungry peasants want to *buy land*; they want the state to provide it to them at a low price. The Communist party must not oppose this. Instead, it must say we are in favour, but we want you to receive this land *at no cost*. We struggle with you now so that you can receive it at a low price, but we go further, so that you can receive it at no cost, including the buildings, the livestock, the machines, and so on.

In this way, comrades, and only in this way, is it possible to achieve active contact with these layers, which are today, we can say, almost cut off from the Communist party, and bring them into our sphere of activity and our campaigns, and unite their revolutionary movements with those of the urban proletariat.

At this point, an objection can be raised. When the bourgeois governments see that the [peasant] movement has grown truly revolutionary, they try to subdue the movement by distributing land to its leading elements, to the most active forces in the peasantry. This has already taken place in all the countries surrounding Russia: in Finland, Estonia – in Poland it has only been promised, not carried out – and in Romania. A quite clear account of this with regard to Romania appears in the 22 October 1922, issue of the British *Economist*:

It is obvious that it was fear, not economic considerations, that led to the agrarian reform in Romania. This was simply the price that the ruling classes have paid in order to protect the country from Bolshevism.

That is quite clear and correct. This could lead to the idea that if this is the case, why should we support such movements, which, at a certain point, could become counter-revolutionary in their effects? But I must say the question is sharply posed, and the Communist party must answer either 'Yes' or 'No'. And it cannot say 'No' in these countries. It must say 'Yes', and must take upon itself the danger that partial success will lead the revolutionary movement to wither away.

For the revolutionary movement, the ideal situation would, of course, be that *the struggle of the urban workers and the revolutionary movement of the land-hungry peasants would rise side by side to the point where the industrial proletariat takes power in the cities and the agricultural proletariat and the land-hungry peasants simultaneously occupy the land*. The ideal is that the rural population receive the land from the proletarian dictatorship, as happened in Russia; that it is not the bourgeoisie that distributes the land but the proletariat that has just taken power. That would be the ideal path of events. But we are not alone on the battlefield. The bourgeoisie is also struggling, and it may have occasion to distribute the land earlier, precisely in order to avert a generalised revolutionary movement.

If it does this, we must begin again. We must immediately show up all the deficiencies in a bourgeois agrarian reform. We must indicate immediately that such a reform is limited by its bourgeois character. A bourgeois reform offers nothing to the totally landless proletarians, because it distributes land in return for payments or the assumption of debt. It cannot give land to people who do not have the means of production, the livestock, the seeds, the machines, the stalls, and so on. If they try that regardless, as was the case for example in Yugoslavia, where, in the territories newly acquired from Hungary, land was distributed to soldiers entirely without means, this achieves nothing, for the soldiers just rent out their land and that's the end of the matter.

To sum up: *We must consciously assume the danger of a bourgeois-agrarian reform*, and if this takes place, immediately shift our policies to show up all the deficiencies of such a reform.

The social result of such a bourgeois agrarian reform is the following:

- It reduces the revolutionary movement for a time, creating a bigger layer of large peasants tied to capitalism.
- It also greatly deepens the class antagonism separating these rich peasants from poor peasants who either have no land or have received it on conditions that make them the debt slaves of banks and very quickly drive them back into their previous poverty.

Comrades, as I said earlier, our agitation must always advance our programme: the confiscation of the land and of all means of production linked to it and the transfer of this land with all related equipment to the landless proletarians and the land-hungry peasants. In order to win the neutral middle layers, we must always emphasise that the proletarian revolution will abolish the mortgages and rents. Everyone who has previously rented a field now receives it for use without payment. And we must again and

again clearly demonstrate *the difference between bourgeois agrarian reform and proletarian agrarian reform.*

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about the organisational measures provided for in the proposed action programme. It is obvious, comrades, that where the true agricultural proletariat is not yet organised in trade unions, our task must be to organise them, to build Communist cells in these agricultural unions, and bring them under our leadership. But it must also be pointed out that it is in our interest to organise the agricultural unions in industrial federations in such a manner that all the industrial workers who have steady employment in agriculture – for example, locksmiths, blacksmiths, woodworkers, construction workers, and machinists in the big estates – are organised in the unions of agricultural workers, so that we have a better footing in these unions.

It is also desirable, comrades, for Communists living in rural areas to join the yellow, bourgeois, fascist, or other counter-revolutionary trade unions in rural areas, to build cells there and work to disrupt them by showing that these unions cannot achieve their supposed goals and cannot conduct a struggle against the employers. In addition, the Communists should enter the different small-peasant organisations – economic organisations, cooperatives – build cells there, and bring them under the leadership of the Communist party.

Obviously, the Communist party must strive to win the leadership of actions by the poor peasants. It must try to influence the struggle and provide it with slogans that are ever more revolutionary – of course, as shaped by the tactical situation at any given time – in order, in this way, to provide the agricultural population, including proletarians and land-hungry peasants, with a demonstration in life that the Communist party represents the interests of these working and impoverished rural layers not only in its programme but in its activity. Wherever there is the slightest opportunity, we must strive to link the struggle of the agricultural proletarians and the land-hungry peasants with that of the industrial proletariat through mutual support in struggle. That is no utopia. In Germany, we are aware of cases in which the poor peasants supported, for example, the metalworkers' strike in southern Germany through rather significant donations of food, and certainly there are occasions in which industrial workers can support the struggle of land-hungry peasants. We must strive to unify these two types of movements, which until now have proceeded side by side but without any real connection.

Where there is a strong factory-council movement, estate councils can be built on the great estates as well as councils of small peasants, so that a common factory-council movement can arise embracing both agricultural and industrial enterprises. In this way, small peasants can find points of support in the

industrial council movement, and so forth. Of course, I do not have time to enumerate every case, and can only provide examples.

Comrades, I will now conclude my presentation. The action programme before you, which was adopted unanimously by the Commission, does not signify that there were no disagreements on this in individual delegations. Such differences arise as a result of the complexity of the subject matter and the confusion of social relations in the countryside, examined objectively.

One comrade – I believe from Poland – used a quite striking formulation: the agrarian programme is a bus and everyone can climb aboard. That is quite true, comrades. It could not be otherwise. Precisely because the distinctions in agriculture are not clear and sharp and the class divisions are changeable, our action programme must be so constructed that, while stressing the primacy of the genuine agricultural proletarians, it also gives all layers of rural working people a chance to take part actively, on the basis of this programme, in the revolutionary movement of the Communist party. (*Loud applause*)

Renaud Jean (France): The reports written by various sections of the Communist International on the state of the agrarian question in each country indicate that Communist activity in the countryside is everywhere encountering exceptional problems. And, still, there can be no question of leaving the peasants out of the revolution, especially in countries like France, where nearly half the population lives from tilling the soil. That would mean simply giving up on the revolution itself.

As a result, the Communist International must regard the work among the peasants – propaganda, recruitment, agitation – as one of its most essential tasks. The Communist Party of France has been aware of this since its foundation. At its Marseilles Congress last year, the Party discussed and voted on an agrarian programme that had been previously approved by the Executive.

The characteristic feature of this programme is its neglect of immediate demands. It is devoted to determining the broad lines of agrarian organisation after the seizure of power. Why was this the case? I know that this conception of an agrarian programme surprised many representatives of the other sections of the International. And, yet, it is the only one that corresponds to the present mood of the French peasants.

In recent months, in order to write a report requested by the Executive, I conducted a survey that encompassed all our party sections. As I wrote a few days ago in *Bolshevik*, most of the comrades who work in the small market towns and villages report that an indisputable change has taken place in the peasants' thinking. This is true in the most varied regions, even in those such as Brittany that were long the pillars of social conservatism. The hard test of war strongly assailed the former political illusions of our rural population. It

is true that, in the 1919 general elections, they spoke in their majority – as did their worker comrades – in favour of the capitalist system and its representatives. But, today, it is clear that they moving in a new direction.

The majority of French peasants have become aware that the political and economic organisations are experiencing a severe crisis. A large portion of them regard the possibility of revolution without dismay, and sometimes even with sympathy.

This fact, based not only on personal experience but also on the news that we receive from the vast majority of our agricultural sections, explains the stand that the French Party has taken with regard to the agrarian programme. In some countries, the concept of revolution can be taught to the working people of the soil only through a series of campaigns based on a limited platform on issues like conditions of work, taxation problems, and so on. But the French peasants, for reasons that we will now examine, are in a position to leap over these intermediary stages.

The agrarian question has another peculiarity in France. Whether directly, by forming branches, or indirectly, through these branches' influence on the hesitant masses, it is possible for communism to win not only the agricultural proletariat but also peasants who are well off, who own their lands, their house, and their agricultural implements.

Certainly, the peasants without property have a special reason to turn against the prevailing order. The question of property affects them in just the same way as it does wage workers in industry or commerce. Deprived of ownership of their means of production – the land, the livestock, their home and other buildings – they are proletarians just like their comrades in the factories and shops, just like the day labourers and the farmhands. This is true despite the bourgeoisie's exaggerations about the enrichment of the countryside, where life is in fact very difficult.

It is true that the War reduced the supply of labour in the market and thus improved the status of rural workers. But these changes affect wages that have no relationship to the work performed: 1,200 to 2,000 francs a year plus room and board (with the exception of the regions of Brie and Beauce, where wages generally exceed the level of 3,000 francs a year).⁵ Peasants in our times are quite unwilling to put up with the level of hardship willingly experienced by our grandfathers. They wish to be decently dressed and on occasion to have some recreation. So very little is left for them.

At year end, the sharecropper is in just the same economic straits as the small tenant. Those who were not drafted or at least left someone at home – a

5. During 1914–18, the French franc was worth approximately US\$0.18. After the War, its value declined to \$0.08 in 1922.

wife, children, or old folk – to make use of the soil were able to accumulate savings that enabled them, in many cases, to free themselves from the exploitation of the rural bourgeoisie. The rest, however, had no choice at the War's end but to subject themselves once more to this exploitation.

How large is the number of these landless peasants? I will not hide the fact that, on this point, I hesitate even to make an estimate. Statistics are organised so as to deceive those who use them rather than to serve the truth. In 1906, the number of agricultural wage workers was estimated at 1.3 million. How many of these were left after the War? A million, or perhaps 800,000. To this can be added an approximate total of hundreds of thousands of sharecroppers and tenant farmers. The number of male workers on the land in 1920 was not more than 3.7 million. So, we can conclude that the agricultural proletariat makes up a third of the entire agricultural population. For about a third of the French peasants, the question of property is posed in the same way that it is for the proletariat in industry and commerce.

We are left with the small-scale landowners. At first glance, we would think that these peasants, who have already won their means of production, would be indifferent toward the revolution – which they, in fact, have already carried through on their own. And, indeed, we would think that conservative propaganda would have led them to fear revolution and that they were therefore condemned to assist the counter-revolution. Nonetheless, there are still rather solid reasons for them to have a hostile attitude to the prevailing system, so that we can hope to lead the majority of this layer of the population to communism.

They own their fields, which, since the War, are now always free of mortgages, but they must go every day to market, to sell their products and buy essentials of life. They are subjected in their work to the dictates of large-scale capital, which sets the prices and then imposes them on the peasants.

The financial condition of the country causes them particular concern. During recent years, they invested their savings – 5,000, 10,000, or 15,000 francs – in government bonds. With horror, they observe the increase in the government debt. They fear a catastrophe and sense that it is inevitable. Some will say that this reflects a capitalist predisposition. But these are very modest capitalists, whose savings are only just sufficient to secure their survival in case of hail, or a livestock epidemic, or a protracted illness. And in any case why should we be concerned with the causes of their rebellious spirit? The main thing is to arouse this spirit, take hold of it, and transform it into a revolutionary will. (*Applause*)

The peasants have a particular horror of militarism and war. I am astonished that the Communist International has not accorded this double hatred the weight that it deserves and given expression to it. A modern war that

involves twenty countries and throws forty to fifty million men onto the battlefields represents a new reality that could not be foreseen seventy-five years ago.

At that time, capitalist development robbed the working masses of their tools and subjugated them, just as it does today. But, in those days, when the search for markets, for raw materials, and for the conquest of the great transportation corridors on land and sea resulted in an armed conflict, it involved only some hundreds of thousands of men. Today all healthy men are involved, while the appearance of new imperialism and the lack of certain raw materials have multiplied the dangers of conflict.

For the peasants, war represents the most fearsome threat of expropriation. In France, just as in all the countries involved in the War, there are thousands of people whom the capitalist system has robbed of seven or eight years of their lives; thousands and yet more thousands of cripples, robbed of their limbs, their strength, and their youth; one and a half million families deprived of their main support –

Bordiga: No one in France noticed this attitude during the War. Everyone was patriotic, including the peasants whose anti-militarism you are praising.

Renaud Jean: I explain that fact by the deplorable collapse of the Second International in 1914. Like everyone else, the peasants were intoxicated by the chauvinist propaganda of the bourgeois press. Like everyone else, they were influenced by the money that the government was throwing about the country in great quantities.

But they had a mainstay in the leaders of the International, whose duty was to call for revolt. These peasants would have responded to a campaign against the War and would have made a revolution.

The fact that they marched off to war was not their fault, not the fault of the peasants, but the fault above all of the prewar Socialist party, the prewar International, which failed in 1914 to carry out its duty.

I can only say here that at least in France – I do not know the other countries, and it is my custom not to speak of things that I do not know – the hatred against the War and against militarism can be converted into a real lever of social revolution. Of course this is on the condition that this hatred by the peasants is not, as in recent months, turned against individuals – Poincaré or Wilhelm – not against these puppets, who can have only a superficial effect on history, but against the capitalist system itself –

Bordiga: For war against militarism!

Renaud Jean: Please be assured that the French peasant, and I hope the Italian peasant as well –

Bordiga: They made war only for the bourgeoisie.

Renaud Jean: They made war in 1793 against the feudal landowners. They made the revolution. They can set about that again.

All those who made it through that all-encompassing bloodbath know that the peace treaties that have been signed, far from banishing the danger of war, have only increased it. The peasants can be easily shown that the War is the direct result of the capitalist system and can therefore only be abolished through their revolutionary will.

For these different reasons, the agrarian bourgeoisie does not exercise its influence on the small-scale landholder in the same fashion and with the same intensity as in the majority of other countries. Because our smallholders own the land, you could well believe that they would stand together with the rural bourgeoisie, and, to some degree, they believe this too. Their daily life, shared labour, and above all the memory of the hard struggles of their ancestors for the land bring them closer to the agricultural proletariat. They have contempt for the idlers, the rich, the owners, a hatred that has been magnified by the suffering in the trenches. The best evidence that the barricades in the countryside are erected between the bourgeoisie and the smallholders, and not between the smallholders and the proletariat, is the fact that there is no agrarian party in France of the type that plays a significant role in Central Europe.

Meanwhile, the government does everything possible to gain influence over the mass of smallholders. It has created powerful associations, unions, and cooperatives. It cannot be denied that in this way it succeeded from time to time in gaining political leadership over the peasants. However, the peasant mostly goes to the union to buy fertiliser or seed grain, or to deliver his produce. In the association, he votes for the local landlord that leads it, only then to combat him in the political arena. The large landowners have by and large remained loyal to the parties of political reaction. The majority of the small-peasant masses, on the other hand, have been voting since the beginning of this century for the Radicals. A conflict between peasants and landlords has erupted in all the poor-peasant regions over control of the municipal government. The landlords have been driven out of municipal government by their former tenants, now small landowners. By the way, the peasant, now set up in the municipal offices, has maintained the administrative procedures of those whose place he has taken. In addition, Radicalism is simply one of the different disguises assumed by the bourgeois class, little by little, in order to keep the people's attention fixed on its Punch and Judy show and diverted from the social issues.

Nonetheless it is a fact that even before the War, the majority of the French smallholders had escaped the influence of the rural landlords. And, today,

they can see from the results of the War, and from the bloc that has come into existence between anti-clerical, clerical, radical, moderate-republican, and reactionary bourgeois parties, that, in reality, there is no difference among these parties, that they all represent the interests of different branches of the bourgeoisie. The small peasants' hatred against the rich became more intense during the War, and this hatred will lead them to revolution – provided, of course, that the Communist Party succeeds in rising to the challenge of the task it has undertaken.

Last year, in certain regions of the southwest, we saw the appearance of a trade-union movement whose future cannot be predicted, but whose unusual character provides a remarkable expression of the solidarity that exists among different categories of working people in the countryside. The sharecroppers and tenant farmers had come into disagreement with the large landowners regarding the division of the most valuable portions of livestock.

On the pretext of *vis major* [act of God] arising from the War and the impossibility of foreseeing sudden price shifts, the large landowners refused to adhere to signed contracts. Actually, only the sharecroppers and tenant farmers had a vital interest in this conflict. Nonetheless, trade unions were formed spontaneously in which small-scale landholders, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and wage workers joined together. It was an alliance of true peasants, an alliance of all the exploited against the exploiter. And this did not happen by accident. The same thing has happened in other regions of France.

In a word, proletarians in the countryside and small-scale landholders in France can be won for the revolution, even though for different reasons. The Communist Party must therefore carry out a very special type of campaign. It must exert itself to bring into existence an alliance of all categories of working people in the countryside and draw them closer to the urban proletariat.

This alliance in the countryside faces only two categories of unwavering enemies: the indolent large landowners – successors or descendants of the feudal lords – and most of the large-scale tenants, who, in many regions, take advantage of abundant labour resources by devoting themselves to industrial cultivation of the land.

However, before the peasants enter upon the road that leads to revolution, they wish to know, if not in detail then at least in general terms, what the revolution will do for them and what it will make of them.

In my opinion, the Communist International is not sufficiently aware of this need to know the future, which is so evident to those taking part in the life of urban and rural workers.

The industrial proletariat also demands that before it commits itself absolutely to revolution, the content of this revolution must be explained.

It is hardly a month since our Comrade Delfosse, secretary of the miners' federation,⁶ stated before the entire federal executive committee that the main cause of the hesitation in overthrowing bourgeois rule is a doubt regarding what kind of organism will replace this rule.

I fear that there is a misunderstanding in this regard between the Communist International and the proletarian masses that could, at some point, grow to tragic proportions. We want to establish an organisation of struggle. Our primary goal is the seizure of power, and all other goals are subordinate to that. Those who do not accept this point of view place themselves outside the Communist International. However, we see a secretary of France's mightiest workers' organisation saying: The masses will hesitate to overthrow the power structure until the moment that they are convinced that communism will operate in a better fashion than the bourgeoisie. All the Party's activists who have contact with the peasants know that these same feelings shape their attitude.

Anyone who stubbornly refuses to specify the broad character of economic organisation during the period of our dictatorship is abandoning the most effective means of arousing the proletariat against the prevailing system and kindling the proletariat's will to struggle. This will to struggle must arise from below.

It is so easy to lock ourselves into doctrines, to offer abstract observations, to close one's ears to the constructive thoughts of peasants and workers, and to speak about utopian concepts. Utopia? Yes, certainly, if it was a question of specifying the political and economic structure of the proletarian state in all its details.

But that is not the issue here. Moreover, we can always point out that a programme worked out in advance for a transitional period is only a possibility but cannot be precise, because events may not necessarily follow the desired course. But there is a middle way between an utter lack of a constructive programme and a daring and dangerous attempt to determine everything in advance. Today we establish certain propositions, such as the need to use force, our dictatorship, socialisation. These formulae are inadequate. Our peasant audience always raises the questions, 'What will you do on the day after you take power? What is this dictatorship? How will the councils function? How will you resolve the question of property?'

And, please, also bear in mind that this is not at all impossible. As a result of the War and its devastation of human and material resources, plus the

6. The German text gives Delfosse's post as secretary of the 'canal workers' union [*Kanalarbeiter*]. The present translation substitutes his union affiliation as given in Maitron 1964–97, 24, pp. 286–7.

economic and financial crises, the revolution has come substantially closer. Ten years ago, it seemed that it would come only after many years, many centuries. Someone who tries to determine its broad contours is not working in fantasyland. If the proletariat seizes power in three, five, or ten years, the distribution of land, the degree to which productive equipment has been perfected, and the psychology of the peasantry will still be the same as it is today. Industry, too, will not experience any remarkable changes in such a short period. Even less will this be the case in the countryside, where every major development takes place over a much longer period of time.

These, comrades, are in broad outline the main features of the agrarian question in France. It is possible within a short span of time to win a large proportion of the peasants for the revolution, regardless of whether they are wage workers, tenant farmers, or small-scale landowners. Deceived during three-quarters of a century of the universal franchise and parliamentary rule,⁷ they no longer believe in reforms, in limited improvements, in the declarations of the different political parties. But, to win them to communism, we have to show them that, after the period of struggle, they will enjoy better conditions under the new government.

In developing its agrarian programme, the Communist Party of France has drawn on the peasants' psychology and also based itself on the material conditions of French agriculture – conditions that are discussed in the report of the commission named by the Executive. Together with the programme that you will adopt, it appears to correspond to the main requirements of Communist action in the countryside.

Teodorovich (Russia): Comrades, the fact that the peasant economy – a survival of the middle ages – has remained everywhere in existence, is explained by and large by three circumstances.

- 1.) The law of absolute rents, which itself arises from the fact of the monopoly of private ownership of the land. Only peasant enterprises were capable, after covering their own needs for sustenance, of providing the owners of land with a rental income drawn not only from the economic category of rent but from profits and even from wages for labour.
- 2.) Large-scale enterprise, or, to put it more precisely, the capitalist form of exploitation, was not able to solve the problem of attracting to agriculture the necessary capital and workforce.

7. Renaud Jean means universal male franchise. Women in France did not win the right to vote until 1944.

- 3.) Commercial, financial, usurious, and speculative capital have entangled agriculture in a web of relationships that reminds one of big industry's putting-out system, both in its purchasing and wage labour forms.

The first and best way to characterise agriculture as a whole is to use the words that Marx applied to Germany in the 1840s: It suffers not only from capitalism's development but also from the insufficiency of its development.

Thus, among the most important basic contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, is the fact that the equilibrium between agriculture and industry has been disrupted on a world scale. The industrial sector is marked by maximum concentration and maximum accumulation, which is already breaking through the shell of private property. In agriculture, on the other hand, we witness a process of decomposition, decay, and backwardness, with the exception, of course, of certain agricultural sectors – the great capitalist estates and the large peasants' enterprises – which have found ways to adapt and merge into capitalist economic structures.

Thus, Marx's description of the peasantry in his time is still by and large quite accurate, when he said, 'Bourgeois society sucks the peasants' blood from their heart, and the brains from their head, and throws everything into the cauldron of the new alchemist, capitalism.'⁸

If we now turn to Russia, we see that all the basic features that characterise agriculture are found here in particularly acute and very distinctive form. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian village displayed half-aristocratic feudal remnants, such as the nobles' *latifundia*, rents in kind, and working off debts through labour. Meanwhile, on the other hand, we see the coercive rule of commercial, usurious, and speculative capital; the downfall of peasant handicrafts; the destruction of domestic manufacturing.

These are all forms that characterise life in the villages in general. But the Russian peasant economy is also characterised by the fact that relics were present that we have not seen in Western Europe for a very long time. Among them are the three-field system, compulsory crop rotation, and the commune, with its system of dispersed fields, tiny fields, and distant fields. All of these, as I said, are no longer found in Europe, because there the development of the money economy and the accommodation of peasant economics to the requirements of the market had destroyed all these odious survivals of the middle ages. In Russia, however, they exist to this day.

8. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx said of the French smallholding peasant: 'The bourgeois order... has become a vampire that sucks out its blood and brains and throws them into the alchemist's cauldron of capital'. Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 11, pp. 190–1.

When the Revolution broke out in 1917, only a sixth of the Russian peasants escaped the burden of the agrarian crisis, because they had managed to get into their hands half of the land and overall production, while five-sixths of the peasants were caught in the claws of agrarian crisis. The weak development of urban industry prevented the absorption of rural surplus population in the cities as well as the achievement of a level of demand for the products of the peasant economy that would have spurred a process of more intensive cultivation and a transition in the direction of raising livestock. The fact that our revolution was successful is explained in large measure by the fact that our villages responded to the urban population, to the movement of the industrial proletariat, with a magnificent agrarian movement. And the victory of this movement here in Russia was possible only because it was organised by the proletariat, with its Communist Party in the lead. That is how the fundamental evils and afflictions of the village were extinguished with one stroke.

As you know, in 1917, we were the first to carry out the concept of nationalising the land, exactly fifty years after it was proclaimed by the [1867] Lausanne Congress of the First International. We confiscated the lands of the estate owners and of the monasteries, appanage lands, and crown lands. We established a land fund for the peasantry with a total value of about five billion gold roubles.⁹ Simultaneously, we cancelled peasant mortgages whose value (outside Siberia) is estimated at 1.5 billion. We freed the Russian peasants from rent payments, which amounted to a sum of 200 million gold roubles a year (not counting Ukraine, northern Caucasus or the Caucasus proper). And, finally, we handed over to the peasantry an inventory of livestock and implements with a total value of 300 million gold roubles.

In this manner, we succeeded not only in neutralising the peasantry but in drawing it into the active struggle for the achievements of the republic. As a result, all the attacks of the counter-revolutionary bands of estate owners and capitalists were put down through the united effort of the working class and the peasantry.

Our party knew that the conquest of power would make it possible to create conditions where the workers and peasants would no longer be working for the exploiter, but would work for themselves. The Party was aware that this disruption would lead to a temporary reduction in output, and it took this effect into account. We were aware that, as a result of its backwardness, our peasantry would not maintain the large capitalist enterprises but would take the approach of dividing the land. And, in fact, we have a picture that can only be characterised by the words of a Russian scholar, who stated that

9. A gold rouble was then worth approximately half a US dollar.

the land had been brought into a condition of fluidity. The land was taken and experienced the so-called 'black repartition'.¹⁰

As a result, what we see is a pattern of distinctive reduction, fragmentation, or parcelling out of our land. The statistics indicate that the not more than 2% to 4% of agricultural holdings in Russia exceed a sown area of eight *dessiatins*.¹¹ The number of holdings with no sown land has decreased. But the following pattern is typical of the Russian village. In the central, western, and eastern provinces, we have an average sown area of four *dessiatins* for each peasant holding and, in the south, of not more than eight *dessiatins*. The pattern reminds one of a honeycomb. The small commodity producers, who, as early as the French Revolution, raised the slogan of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity' (for, that is, in fact, the slogan of small commodity producers) succeeded in achieving an equalisation in the holdings of the land they had parcelled out. They have created an array of parcels that are approximately of the same size.

The result – and it could not have been any different – was a fall in the production of grain. At the same time, conditions were created in which the peasantry could make its power – the power of those who control the means of food provisioning – felt by the proletariat. That happened in the period of the Revolution when our republic had a critical shortage of food, as a result of the imperialist war followed by the civil war that had been forced on it. This situation forced us to requisition foodstuffs, and the peasants reacted to these demands in a quite idiosyncratic way. By and large, this reaction can be summarised in the fact that the peasantry began to reduce the extent of cultivated land. This reduction ultimately reached the extent of thirty per cent, compared to 1916. Moreover, the peasantry began planting mainly the grains used for bread, while replacing wheat with rye, and barley with oats.

Thus, the peasantry steered their economy toward grain cultivation and stifled the seeds of a more intensive agriculture that had been noted in the previous period. The peasantry reduced cultivation of industrial crops and dropped fodders out of the crop rotation. It is true that this was not only a result of their conscious decision to take their operations in this direction. It was also the outcome of the mass destruction of productive forces in the villages through the shocks of civil war, imperialist war, crop failures, and so on.

10. 'Black repartition' referred to the Russian peasant concept of redistribution of the land. It was also the name of a current of the Russian populist movement formed in 1879, whose leaders later founded Russian Marxism.

11. A *dessiatin* is equivalent to 1.1 hectares or 2.7 acres.

Yet we still face the fact that the peasants' subjective reaction to the demands placed on them by the proletariat cannot be denied. The peasants, ignorant and intimidated by all the centuries of their history, were not able to grasp the true greatness of the proletariat's ideals.

We, therefore, faced the following results: the land had been fragmented and parcelled out, production had fallen, and the peasantry were extremely discontented with regard to the proletarian struggle. And, precisely at this moment, the proletariat, and the Communist Party that leads it, decided to change the foundations of their policy and develop new forms for the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry.

In the years of so-called war communism, we tried to use requisitioning to obtain a certain surplus in raw materials and foodstuffs from the peasantry, which would provide a basis for re-establishing industry and expanding it, so that its products could be distributed through an organised plan to the villages. By this plan, the village would have been providing the city with an unusual form of credit. But the peasantry most decidedly rejected an alliance on this basis, and the historical experience that we gained from these great events led the Party to decisively and boldly change its policy toward the peasantry.

And, so, we announced the New Economic Policy, which rested on the possibility of permitting capitalist relationships in the village based on commodity production. This situation has been characterised with precision by Comrade Lenin in these words:

Capitalism is an evil compared with socialism, but it is a blessing, a step forward compared to the middle ages. The Russian villages were marked by the most extreme survivals of the middle ages. Authorising capitalist production in the village is thus equivalent to making possible a special form of struggle against these survivals.

Now that the New Economic Policy has been pursued for two years, we can draw some conclusions. I will use the most recent statistical information and the most recent budget surveys that have just been conducted. The first tendency that we observe is the *equalisation of prices*. Before the NEP, all our agricultural products were undervalued in comparison to rye, and Russia became a true land of rye. Now, however, we see an evening out of prices, which is an extremely important development because it is one of the main preconditions for more intensive agriculture. And this intensification is the solution of the underlying problem of our peasant economy in the transition to socialism.

The second tendency that has arisen as a result of the New Economic Policy can be termed a slowing of the tempo and, in some places, a complete stop to the shrinkage in cultivated land. In many regions, we see a rise, an extension of the cultivated fields. And, in regions where the shrinkage continues under the impact of hunger, this is happening at a slower rate.

Another tendency resulting from the New Economic Policy that we have observed in the village is that the flow of population from the city to the village has halted, and, instead of that, we see the first signs that the city is once again beginning to draw to it the surplus population in the village.

Another tendency can be termed a striving of the population for *individual economic forms*. Back in 1917, when we published our agrarian law, we declared that the decision regarding how to utilise the land was entirely free.¹² Nonetheless, the peasantry then mostly opted for black redistribution; there was no noticeable tendency for the destruction of the village commune. Now, however, this tendency is clearly at work, and it obviously goes together with the trend toward more intensive cultivation of which I have just spoken. For the smallholder, in terms of his psychology and operations, it is quite natural to prefer the form of land utilisation that in a context of growing market demand enables him to manoeuvre freely in this market. And the form that is freest and most adapted to the market is that where land use is determined by a single individual, not the community.¹³

The final tendency that we presently observe in agriculture consists of the *differentiation of the peasantry*. For, when the laws of the market come to the fore, there will of course be lucky devils and unlucky ones. What is our approach to this phenomenon? We regulate it very closely. Thus, for example, our decree on debt-slave transactions clearly shows that we will keep this process in limits and lead it onto a path that excludes odious and outrageous forms of exploitation, but, on the other hand, also hinders the expansion of backwardness.¹⁴

We, therefore, have land that has been fully divided and relationships in which factors of non-economic coercion are entirely absent, given that the dictatorship of profit has ended and there is no further capacity to promote

12. The decree on land adopted by the newly formed Soviet government on 26 October 1917 abolished private ownership of the land, provided for land tenure on an equal basis, and specified that 'There shall be absolutely no restriction on the forms of land tenure – household, farm, communal, or cooperative, as shall be decided in each individual village and settlement'. See Lenin 1960–71, 26, pp. 258–60.

13. For a different outlook on the village commune, see Zetkin's comments on pp. 327–8.

14. 'Debt-slave transactions': The Russian text, *dekret o kabal'nykh sdelkakh*, refers to a ban on agreements exacting labour services for non-payment of debt, or, more generally, agreements with crushing terms.

a process of accumulation through the Church, the school, and the army and police. These means of accumulation have been eliminated. At the same time, cooperation among the population is now subject to control by the workers' and peasants' government. The cooperative movement is freed from the chains of bourgeois ideology and is oriented not, as in the capitalist countries, toward blunting the class struggle, but toward contributing to socialist construction.

All these basic economic and political preconditions make it possible for us to say with full confidence that this process of overcoming the survivals of the middle ages will take place here in the least painful form. In this respect, we can concur with Comrade Lenin in his judgement, presented to this congress, that the peasantry is, by and large, contented.

In conclusion, I would like to recall the well-known words of La Bruyère on the French peasantry, words that are quite an apt description of the Russian peasantry of the pre-revolutionary era. La Bruyère said: 'There is a type of human-like creature, little males and females, dirty, emaciated, sunburnt. They dig in the earth. But when they raise their heads, we can recognise their human face.' And those words, 'when they raise their heads', have a certain symbolic meaning. Yes, when the peasantry raises its head, we recognise its human face, but that can happen only under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat, through nationalisation of the land, will create conditions in which the peasantry can raise its head, not only in the physical sense of which La Bruyère spoke, but in the political and social meaning of the word. (*Applause*)

Joss (Britain): Comrades, the agrarian problem affects Britain in two ways, one national and one international. What we face in the British agrarian situation is very challenging, because, during the last 150 years, the development of Britain's industrial strength has taken place at the cost of agricultural development. Today, 80% of our population is involved in industrial activity, and only 20% is engaged in agriculture or the provision of raw materials. From this, we must draw the conclusion that, in order to make a proletarian revolution in Britain possible, we must either develop the resources of our own country, or, if not, we will be very interested in the agricultural development of other countries.

Now, however, we see that the question most frequently asked not only of our own people in the Communist movement but among the workers of Scotland is this: Communist speakers are challenged, 'When you have carried out your revolution in industry, how will you provide the necessary food for your people?' People remind us of the relationship between industrial and agricultural workers. In Britain and some districts of Scotland, there is a

great demand for workers who were once active in agriculture and then were drawn to the cities by industrial development. Now, industry in Great Britain is in decline, and, during the last ten or eleven years, these workers have made increasing claims for the land, to which they wish to return.

Northern Britain and Scotland has been transformed exclusively into a reserve for the sport of rich people, of the capitalist class. This rich land with its fertile valleys, which once fed a large population, is now left exclusively to the rabbits and deer. As a result, there is now a current in the northern part of Britain that is rising up against the authorities in order to gain access to the land. Many of these workers were soldiers during the War, when they were promised that after the War they would find a country fit for heroes. Now, these people, seeing the promises unfulfilled, have taken possession of the land in these regions. In these special territories, where the agricultural workers live, the task of the Communist Party must be either to develop the nations' resources or else to settle these landless people elsewhere.

There is also another important aspect of the agricultural problem. In Britain, there is a type of differentiation distinct from that in the continental countries. Our farming population is extremely small in number, and they mostly belong to the agricultural proletariat. Thanks to the trade-union movement, they act in concert and advance their demands. Thus, as far as Britain is concerned, the link between agricultural and industrial workers is easily maintained.

But, recently, a new factor has arisen, namely, the existence of two million unemployed in Britain's basic industries. In addition, [living standards of] workers in the basic industries of coal, iron, steel, and agricultural enterprises have been driven down by economic decline by up to 60% compared with their prewar living standard. The cost of living is 80% higher than before the War. The wages of coal, iron, and steel workers are 20% to 30% lower than the prewar level, which means they are some 60% lower than at that time.¹⁵

We also see that the bourgeoisie has begun to grasp that there is a problem here that it must solve. The member of parliament who chairs Lloyds Bank, a respectable organisation that dominates industrial capitalism in Britain, in reviewing the statistics from 1921, said that the relationship of the industrial population to agriculture showed that, unless Britain could re-establish the trade that it conducted in 1914, it can maintain a population of only fifteen million.¹⁶

15. The German text is garbled. Joss's thought appears to be that wages have risen 20%–30%, while prices are 80% higher, leading to a fall of real wages.

16. In 1914, the population of the United Kingdom, including Ireland, was forty-six million.

Britain is increasingly dependent on the countries that at present supply it with foodstuffs: the United States, Canada, and India. There is an increasing tendency for the United States and the colonies to detach themselves and step aside where Britain is concerned. This poses a special problem for the Communist Party of Great Britain.

As a result of this situation, we insist that our agricultural problem should be addressed not just by maintaining close ties with the agricultural proletariat of Britain but also by developing the necessary resources there to the greatest possible extent, while maintaining our ties with the agricultural workers of the whole world.

Professor Varga presented us with the proposition that there is no country in the world apart from Britain that can carry through a revolution without the peasant proletariat. We, on the other hand, must answer the question how, if we have a revolution, we will maintain it and how we will maintain the proletariat. The revolution in Britain will depend on the success achieved by the Communist Party in resolving the agrarian problem not only nationally but on an international level.

Rieu (France): I am not in agreement with the report of Comrade Renaud Jean, at least not with regard to the communist and revolutionary capacities that he ascribes to the French peasantry. Comrade Renaud Jean's report inspires the belief that the French peasants are revolutionary, which is not correct, or that they may be ready to become so, and that anti-military propaganda would rapidly make them revolutionary. This is a dangerous point of view.

In France, there are large landowners that are our irreconcilable class enemies. There are also agricultural wage workers, that is, landless peasants. And there are smallholders. The agricultural wage workers share common interests with the urban proletarians. The task of the trade unions – like the CGTU – is to create agricultural unions and draw agricultural and urban wage workers in a common struggle. As far as the smallholders are concerned, I believe that our Comrade Renaud Jean is not expressing the exact truth when he claims that they do not have a privileged position compared to the agricultural and urban wage workers.

Renaud Jean: I did not say that, and you know it very well!

Rieu: The rural proprietors earned no small quantity of money during the War. Our entire propaganda was aimed at showing them that what they were earning was only paper money, without real value. To this, the peasants responded that the paper money provided a capacity to buy and to trade, thus placing them in a more favourable situation than the wage workers. So

long as the rural smallholders enjoy better living conditions and find their status in life to be superior, the best we can do is merely to try to neutralise them by promising that, after the revolution, they will retain their land. But there is no basis for hope that they will become revolutionary or that they will take part in revolutionary struggles for the conquest of power, like the agricultural and urban wage workers.

Comrade Renaud Jean also said that he will lead the peasants on the road to revolt through anti-militarist propaganda, which will develop their revolutionary spirit. In my opinion, this is not correct. I believe Comrade Renaud Jean is underestimating the requirements of civil war and of armed struggle, without which the proletariat cannot deprive the bourgeoisie of its property and cannot take power.

We create serious dangers for ourselves if we go to the peasants and talk against militarism, always and unceasingly, implanting a hatred against the uniform and the army. We must consider that we too will have need of an army both to conquer power and to defend power once it is gained. This approach maintains confusion in their thinking, and the confusion is reflected in the Communist Party of France and in our Communist rallies.

There are more than a few people who say that this displays the shameful spirit of a sergeant major, which would make us all once more into soldiers and servants. And these comrades say that they would perhaps accept the use of force, of armed force, under certain conditions, but they use the horrors of war and this theory of abstract anti-militarism as a pretext for not making preparations for organising this army, which will inevitably be needed.

Renaud Jean: How do you want to organise an army in France today, alongside the government's army?

Rieu: That question has nothing to do with the matter at hand. Nonetheless I will say that propaganda among the soldiers and the creation of cells in the army makes it possible –

Renaud Jean: Then we are in agreement, aren't we?

Rieu: – by supporting propaganda among the youth, which you have not supported in the past, and by seeking to win over to us the spirit of the army. Not by saying that we do not need an army, that this instrument of force is now superfluous. Rather, we must explain that we need this power and that it will be placed at the disposal of the proletariat. (*Applause*)

When Comrade Renaud Jean says that the sacrifices demanded of the peasants in terms of human life signify more for them than the expropriation of the land, I must agree with what Comrade Bordiga interjected: I must say that

the French, like all other peasants, stood ready during the War to send their children and relatives to death. They let their children be seized, but not their savings. And they let their children be taken, asking nothing in return, but they gave their small savings only as loans and in return for interest.

In my opinion, we must strive above all to win over to our side the agricultural wage workers, who possess nothing, through the struggle for their immediate interests: wages, housing, and all other questions of concern to them. We must give them the slogan of taking possession of the soil that they work on.

After that, we must strive to neutralise the smallholder. Above all, we must devote all our united resources and all our time to the most important, immediate task, the conquest of power. And, to take power, we must throw into the struggle the working masses, both urban and agricultural workers.

As for the programme for construction [of socialism], the Russian comrades have shown us through a variety of productive experiences that nothing here is written in stone. Events themselves will show the various possible types for real construction in each country after the conquest of power.

Comrade Trotsky as well says there is a certain period in which the country's economic life and the rural workers must be subordinated to the requirements of civil war and of the proletariat in maintaining its power.

We must not attribute too much importance to the legend that French peasants are revolutionary. We, as comrades of the International, must give it no credence. Otherwise, it would have to be asked why they have so far provided no help to the urban workers and why they are not yet liberated from the capitalism they face.

The French peasants are not revolutionary; the French peasants are conservative. They have an intellectual make-up that Comrade Trotsky quite rightly characterised as petty-bourgeois. The only way to realise the social revolution in France is to attempt to divide the peasant classes, by bringing the agricultural wage workers with us and subjecting the other elements to the dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Applause*)

Renaud Jean: Have your speech printed and hand it out to the peasants of the Gironde.¹⁷

Pauker (Romania):¹⁸ Comrades, by and large we are in agreement with the theses. I believe that we owe Comrade Varga an explanation, since he

17. Rieu was party secretary in Bordeaux, in the Gironde region, not far from Renaud Jean's home in the village of Samazan.

18. There were two congress delegates from Romania named Pauker. This speech was given by Marcel Pauker, as indicated by Varga on p. 782.

complained that, when asked regarding the impact of the agrarian reform in Romania on the peasants, the Romanian delegation had responded only that they did not know.

Well, comrades, I must confirm what Comrade Varga said. Yes, it is correct – and perhaps it is quite unfortunate – that we do not know. We are not fully enough informed to really be able to give the International sufficient material that could be a contribution toward creating an action programme, arising out of not only theoretical but also practical experience. Yes, in this sense, we can say, ‘We do not know’. But it must not be forgotten that, despite the praise it has received here and in the commissions, the Communist Party of Romania in reality does not yet exist as a unified, functioning organisation. It is still only coming into being, and this process, comrades, has been rather difficult.

Moreover, I do not believe that in general it is any disgrace to say, ‘I do not know’. For example, we asked Comrade Varga the simple question whether he believed that an intensively industrialised large rural enterprise was more productive than a small peasant holding. And Comrade Varga answered, ‘I do not know’. Well, that shows that the question of rural production and the rural movement has not been sufficiently studied elsewhere in the International, including by organisations that are stronger and better organised than the Communist Party of Romania.

Well, the errors committed by the Romanian Socialist Party in the past, the betrayal, and reaction, have all had the result that the Romanian organisation is now tiny and still in formation, and has therefore not had the possibility of going into the countryside to struggle against reaction and the Romanian police, and to strike roots there.

That is the reason why we answered, ‘We do not know’, not – as Varga’s false conclusion would have it – because we did not accord the proper weight to the peasant question.

Comrades, there are a couple of questions not included in the action programme that nonetheless are of some importance. I would like to touch on that briefly. Comrade Varga has explained that, in the Anglo-Saxon countries, the railways and other means of transportation that are in private hands represent an important question, because the private capitalists are able to take away a portion of the peasants’ earnings by adjusting the railway rates upwards or downwards in step with the rise and fall of grain prices.

In Romania, the situation is quite similar. The Romanian bourgeoisie reckons with the fact that the Romanian peasant will export the majority of his production, because Romania is a country that exports grain. As prices for grain rise and fall on the world market, the same happens to the export duties

on grain that flow to the Romanian bourgeoisie. These dues are no small percentage of the proceeds, but sometimes reach 100% of the price – as happens to be the case right now. However, Comrade Varga's viewpoint, and I believe the Commission shared it or at least raised no protest, is that we cannot take a stand against this because it is a matter of taxes collected by the Romanian state, and taxes are a given in a capitalist society. If these taxes did not exist, some other taxes would be there. But I believe that we must oppose the other taxes too, especially if they amount to 100% of the proceeds. Here, we see an inconsistency in the action programme.¹⁹

As for the question of propaganda in the countryside, I think that our viewpoint may have some validity, even though our practical experience is limited in extent. But we certainly need to devote more attention to this question, because, as a party and a revolutionary movement, we can exist only if we understand how to reach out to the rural population. The question that has the greatest importance for us is which layer of the rural workforce it is that can really be won to revolution and which layers can only be neutralised. Here, we do not at all agree with Comrade Renaud Jean.

I believe there is a real disagreement here. All the details presented by Comrade Renaud Jean are quite correct. We can win the peasants through anti-militarism. We can win small peasants by promising them that the revolution will not take their land. But that is what we call, simply put, neutralising the peasantry. These peasants will not seize the revolution by the throat; they will not take action against the revolution, because they will think they have nothing to lose by it.

But they will also not seize the bourgeoisie by the throat. They will not take part actively either before or during the revolution. They will not climb on the barricades. I am speaking here of the peasants that have enough land to nourish themselves and their families on their own. The methods advocated and utilised by Comrade Renaud Jean will certainly enable us to win this layer of peasants to the revolution, in the sense that they will not actively oppose it, at the moment of the struggle for power. But peasants who do not have enough land to be able to feed themselves and their families and must therefore work for wages can certainly be won for the revolutionary struggle, if not now then in a few years. They will work actively with us, although we, of course, do not expect of them the same degree of basic revolutionary activity that we expect of the industrial proletariat and the true rural proletariat.

There is another way of looking at the question. Whether we say in the programme that we will win these peasants to the revolution or only that we

19. For the position on taxes of the action programme's final text, see Point 7, p. 956–7.

will succeed in neutralising them might seem ultimately a minor point. But that is simply not the case. Comrade Renaud Jean has made a fatally erroneous statement, and repeated it in private discussions. He says that we make many more gains for our communism among the peasants than among the agricultural proletariat. I responded to him that I can also imagine a sort of communism with which we would have more success with the large landowners and industrialists than with the proletariat. It all depends on what we understand to be communism.

This shows that the way we are carrying out propaganda, at least in one part of France, is incorrect. We must therefore insist that this question be clarified, and that we define precisely the sector of the peasantry that we can neutralise, and how this will be done; and also the sector that we can win to revolution; and how this will be done. The stress placed in our action programme on the demands for the rural proletariat is, of course very welcome to us.

I will move on, comrades, to the points that concern Romania. In my opinion, we have the duty to pass on some information, and I will close with that. The Romanian bourgeoisie has succeeded in carrying out an agrarian reform – that is to say, it was not disrupted in carrying it out by the outbreak of social revolution or by the direct seizure of power by the proletariat and the peasantry. As is well known, Romania is the classic country of peasant revolts. They have occurred approximately every ten years – the last time, a fearful experience, in 1907. The years from 1907 until the War were a time of struggle between sectors of the bourgeoisie, who sought to neutralise the peasantry, and the large landowners, who sought the continuation of the traditional feudal system of exploitation. And Romania was sufficiently feudal to enable the feudal lords to safeguard their continued rule until the Russian Revolution.

The Russian Revolution was the decisive factor that took the land out of the hands of the great landowners and placed it in those of the peasantry. This happened roughly in the way portrayed in Point 9 of the action programme. That is, the peasants who received land are in general either rich peasants or those who have politically supported the bourgeoisie, that is, influential types who are mayor of their village or something similar.

The poor peasants, few in number, who have obtained land fall quickly into subjugation to the banks, since they do not have sufficient equipment, machines, and livestock to cultivate the land. They are therefore required, of course, to borrow money from the banks, which bleed them dry. It is remarkable that even the bourgeois law on expropriating the land has enough escape hatches and even wide-open doors to sabotage the process, for example by

permitting peasants to sell the land [that they receive]. That provides a means of favouring the rich peasantry.

On the other hand, the cultivated land still in the hands of our bourgeoisie – to say nothing of forests, vineyards, and so on – is still so large as to make up well over half of the expropriated territory, at least in Old Romania.²⁰ The slogan of total expropriation therefore still has deep and revolutionary significance for the peasant masses. For this reason, we hope that if the Communist Party is able – and we are sure it will succeed in this – to apply this slogan broadly and deeply, it will make enough progress to rightly deserve the praise of Comrade Varga and of the International. (*Loud applause*)

Adjournment: 4:00 p.m.

20. 'Old Romania' refers to Romanian national territory before the First World War, which consisted of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Dobruja. The treaties ending the War added Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina.

Session 22 – Saturday, 25 November 1922

The Agrarian Question; Youth; Blacks

Speakers: Kostrzewa, Katayama, Varga, Schüller, Billings, McKay

Convened: 12:20 p.m.

Chairpersons: Neurath, later Kolarov

Kostrzewa (Poland): Comrades, I would like to examine the agrarian question from a particular point of view. I would like to direct the attention of the Congress to the lack of correspondence between what we, the most outstanding and discerning spirits of our International, say regarding the importance of the agricultural population and the positions of our parties on this question both theoretically and practically.

At the International's Second Congress, Lenin said that the most essential and profound problem of the present epoch – affecting not just the Russian but every social revolution – is *the problem of the revolutionary alliance between the workers and peasants*. These words of Lenin have not received a sufficient response in our International.

At the Spartacus League congress in December 1918, *Rosa Luxemburg* characterised the German revolution as 'mainly a political revolution, which must become one that is primarily economic. But it was also only an urban revolution. The countryside remains virtually unaffected....If we are serious about carrying out a socialist revolution, we must pay as much attention to the countryside as we do to

the industrial centres, and in this respect I am afraid we are not even at the beginning of the beginning.¹

Since then, four years have passed, years of the dreadful experiences known to world history, and we can justifiably say that we are still only at the beginning of the beginning.

Comrade Varga was right in identifying here all the complexities and difficulties that pile up against us whenever we approach the agrarian question.

We are confronted by a mosaic of the most varied relationships and problems and run up against difficult technical barriers, all of which impede our activity in the countryside. All this is only too true. But there is another thing, another factor present that troubles us: this question has not yet been sufficiently clarified from a political point of view inside our International. One can say that it is not yet organically incorporated into our political teachings.

Comrade Zinoviev said in his report that the scope of the movement for factory councils that has arisen in each country can be taken as a gauge of the revolutionary movement's strength there. If we seek such an objective gauge, we can say that the maturity of revolutionary conditions in each country can also be measured by the degree of objective decomposition that disrupts economic and social equilibrium not only in the cities but also in the countryside. And, yet, analysing the situation in these terms remains almost completely beyond the scope of our parties. We can get information from our comrades on almost everything except regarding the economic and social structure of the countryside, the struggles that take place there, and our effective involvement in these struggles.

We have spoken often of the capitalist offensive. We have tried to account for all the effects that this offensive has on the life and struggle of the urban proletariat. But we have not attempted to extend the same type of analysis to the class struggle in the countryside and to discern the results of the offensive in this arena. Yet, all the agricultural countries have voted for agrarian reforms, especially at the time when workers were on the offensive, and efforts are now under way to eliminate them. These attempts by the bourgeoisie can make the agrarian question in these countries extraordinarily acute.

We restrict ourselves to an incomplete analysis because we are accustomed to limit the scope of our activity in this same fashion.

I believe I must explain that the slowness with which the concept of a revolutionary alliance of workers and small peasants has made headway in our Communist International is a symptom of the slowness with which our young Communist parties are transforming themselves into general staffs of the revolution. The revolutionary general staff must direct its attention to all

1. See Riddell (ed.) 1986, p. 233.

these problems and develop an understanding of the totality of the interests tied up in them.

We always talk of the social revolution. Yet, in many ways, we do not understand the problems posed by this revolution, remaining enslaved to the traditions of the old International. We are not able to dispose definitively of our old existence. We are always inclined to believe that it is enough to develop our activity in purely proletarian milieux and to defend only the interests of the working class. However, in the present period, one in which the proletariat must carry out its great historical mission to free all oppressed and exploited, this is not our only task. In this period, we must draw closer to the other oppressed social layers and place ourselves at the head of their struggles. Most of our parties have not yet in reality assimilated these ideas.

For this reason, the agrarian theses of the Second Congress have, in a certain sense, remained a dead letter for us. They have not had a sufficient influence on the practical work and activity of the parties.

Each time that we take up the agrarian question, we note immediately a strong tendency to restrict it by saying that in the countryside, just as in the cities, we must base ourselves exclusively on the proletariat, on the wage earners.

Comrades, the main task of every Communist party is to organise the proletariat in the cities and countryside. That is clear, and, if there are problems for us in these arenas, they are purely organisational. The political problem that faces us here is quite different in nature. It is the problem of finding ways and means to draw close to the other layers of the oppressed population. And, again and again, attempts are made to evade this question.

The comrades of Western Europe tell us that this is a problem only for Western Europe. And what do comrades from Eastern Europe say?

In Poland, for example, the agrarian question has become particularly acute, but a large portion of our comrades are not of that opinion. These comrades say that, yes, it is true that we have 1.5 million small landowners who possess in all four million hectares, while the large landowners possess eight million hectares of arable land, that is, twice as much as the poor peasantry. At present, there are barriers to emigration, which means that overpopulation and the hunger for land in the countryside are increasing.

All this is true, comrades tell us, but still the question is not so important, because there is no evidence that the population in the countryside can break apart the bourgeois state. Yet it is just as impossible to prove that any layer of the proletariat can break up the bourgeois state – unless you examine the entire complexity of the situation. This is just a way to try to get rid of the question.

Comrades, whenever the question of our activity in the countryside comes up on the agenda, a thousand political doubts are expressed. Are we not running the risk of being converted into a peasant party? Are we not exaggerating the political role of the peasant population? Are we not anticipating too much from them? Are we not downgrading the role of the agricultural proletariat relative to the peasantry? And so forth and so on.

Comrades, let us try to come to agreement. When we talk of winning part of the peasantry for the revolution, what does that mean? Do we believe that the peasant population can constitute the vanguard of the revolution? No, never. The vanguard of the revolution and its creative force will be the proletariat and it alone – and especially the urban proletariat. Never will we shape the peasants into a disciplined army of revolution equal to the working class. Anyone who harbours such hopes is chasing illusions that are dangerous both for him and his party. But that is not what is at issue here.

Nor do we have here some illusion that at the moment of revolution the role of the peasants will be the same in every country. Where land distribution is shaping up as a decisive issue, we must reckon with the possibility of violent explosions. In other countries, the involvement of the peasants will be less active. But, everywhere, the attitude of the peasant masses will have enormous importance for the revolution.

What is the meaning of our statement regarding winning a portion of the peasantry for the revolution? We simply want to say that the period of capitalist disintegration creates conditions that raise the discontent of the peasant masses, sharpen the class antagonisms in the countryside, and bring a portion of the peasantry closer to the workers. Heightening this discontent and putting it to use, showing the peasants that their essential interests are identical with those of the workers – that is what we mean by winning them for the revolution. We must not forget that the stability of bourgeois rule has always depended on the countryside being immobile and completely inactive. When we bring this immobility into motion, we thereby shake the foundations of the existing system.

The Western European comrades tell us that the best we can do is to neutralise the peasantry. Yet neutralising them is no small task. It is a great political task, one that is very difficult and complicated.

The task of winning a portion of the peasants for the revolution is of considerable importance in all countries. *The problem is not organisational but political in character.* It is a matter of finding the ways and means of removing the barriers that separate us from the small peasants. These barriers consist of continuing and real differences in interests, which are artificially heightened by our enemies.

This is a difficult matter. If we are to carry out this task correctly, we must utilise every favourable political opportunity.

The proposal distributed to this congress says that it is not enough to have a good programme. We must develop activity that shows the peasant population that we are truly its spokesman, that we are capable of defending its interests. It is therefore not enough to expound this programme in abstract fashion. We must have a good grasp of life in the countryside and utilise the programme at a propitious moment.

The proposed text gives many suggestions that can lead us on the path of a convergence between workers and small peasants. The proposal shows how to avoid conflicts in the arena of prices, taxes, and so on, and how a united front of small peasants and workers can be established. For a long time, there was a very imposing barrier between us and the peasant population: illusions regarding a falsely understood collectivism.

These illusions find expression in statements that, immediately after the revolution, we must immediately collectivise all landholdings. Such illusions ought to have been dispelled by the theses adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International.² Nonetheless, they are still present in the thinking of a certain number of comrades.

Our Executive has the task of providing these theses with a theoretical foundation and demonstrating their interrelationship with the principles of the New Economic Policy and of Marxist theory as a whole, which bases our activity on the objective course of events. And in a country ruled by a profound hunger for land, this course of events will necessarily take the path of dividing up a portion of the large landholdings.

The Communist Party must not persist in a utopian outlook and remain closed to reality. It must not pit itself against the course of revolution.

None of these questions have yet been sufficiently clarified in the International. They require a profound study.

I am convinced that if the Executive provides assistance, and if all our work is placed at the service of clarifying these political and theoretical problems, our main task will be greatly eased. We will advance much more rapidly toward the revolutionary alliance of the urban and rural proletariat with the small peasantry.

I am well aware that dangers await us on this path. I hope we will be able to overcome them. But I would like to say what I think of the approach that consists only of perceiving dangers and possible betrayal everywhere.

2. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 660–70.

When one proceeds down any path, the guide must be aware of the dangers. However, those who are so haunted by the phantom of danger that they limit themselves to inactivity are not revolutionary leaders but cowardly weaklings.

Between the workers and the small and middle peasants stand conflicting interests, which are created by capitalism and are in many respects artificially heightened. We know that they will not exist in the proletarian state. In order to open the road to our future power, we must make every possible effort to dispose of the multitude of secondary interests and bring these two classes closer to each other so that together they can carry out and defend the social revolution.

Chair: Comrades, before we continue the debate, I would like to make a few announcements. Today we have to resolve (1) the agrarian question; (2) the black question; (3) the youth question; and (4) the report on cooperatives.

Obviously, if we want to complete this agenda today, the speaking time must not be lengthened, as it was for the last speaker. A motion has been received to close the speakers' list. Does anyone wish to speak against this motion? There is no such request. Is anyone against the motion? The motion is adopted.

Katayama (Japan): Comrades, we of the Japanese delegation are satisfied with Comrade Varga's report. Japan is a young capitalist country. As I reported earlier, most of the population – 63% to 65% – is engaged in agriculture. Of 5.5 million families, 3.75 million cultivate less than 2.5 acres [1 hectare] each, which means we are dealing with tiny peasant holdings. Of these, however, only 1.5 million families own their land, while the others rent some or all of it. They are exploited, for they must pay high taxes on items of consumption, on their income, and also local taxes. These poor peasants have no political rights – not even the right to vote in parliamentary elections.

We must take these conditions into account when we discuss the work of winning Japan to revolution. Let me point out that the Japanese tenant farmers have always been truly revolutionary in outlook. Over many centuries, during the feudal period, they enjoyed neither political rights nor education. Through their revolts, they sought to achieve an improvement in their conditions. There were countless rebellions during the last three hundred or four hundred years, in which the peasants always demanded democratic rights of some sort.

Let me mention a fact that has not been cited by either Western or Japanese bourgeois authors: When the peasants and tenants rose up against the feudal landowners, they always demanded the right to themselves elect the

tax collector. In such cases, only the leaders of the uprising were punished. Peasant uprisings of this type were always successful: the peasants achieved a reduction in taxes and a general improvement in their conditions. Of course, the feudal landowners always sought to oppress and exploit the peasants, and that led to the continuation of this tradition of revolts up to the present time.

According to newspapers that have reached us, at present the peasants are presenting their complaints to village mayors and land authorities in the form of rebellious texts and appeals, accompanied by mass demonstrations.

Thus the peasants have a thorough revolutionary experience regarding the landlords.

During the last fifty years, capitalism has penetrated the country.

The majority of the 5.5 million [peasant] families in Japan – namely 3.75 million families – can be reckoned as a revolutionary factor. Only a few weeks ago, news arrived that there were peasant uprisings in some parts of the country, and that the peasants were demanding nationalisation of the land.

Japanese tenant farmers and agricultural workers are already making attempts to organise. Already about 35,000 to 50,000 of them have organised, and at least 35,000 have joined the Japanese workers' federation. In this way, the basis has already been created in Japan for collaboration of agricultural workers and the proletariat for the revolution.

In general, the Japanese peasants are further advanced than those in the Western countries, because they are already emancipated with regard to education. Instruction at the elementary level is compulsory, and the schools in the peasant villages (of which there are ten thousand) have the same textbooks and teachers as elsewhere. The peasant children can read and write, and there is voluminous literature dealing with the life of tenants and peasants. Indeed, it goes further than that. The peasant youth, both boys and girls, are organised, and although these organisations are sponsored by the government, they protest against this sponsorship.

For the Japanese Communist Party, the road is therefore wide open. The Party is already working among the peasant leagues and is winning influence, thanks to its work against the landlords. The Japanese agricultural workers can be organised and, in some cases, already are. In addition they are easy to organise, because they work seasonally. The silk industry works for three or four weeks; the rice industry for a month; they are able to demand high wages. The fact is that they have already secured wages three or four times higher than those received by the average agricultural worker.

Japan's poor peasants are close to the industrial workers – a result of the fact that Japan's industry arose only during the last forty or fifty years. Japanese workers come to the city from the countryside, where they work during

the season and where there is a rebellious tradition. I assume that, in Russia, conditions are similar. In a country where industry is still in development, there is always a close bond between industry and the countryside. That is why the awakening of the urban proletariat can be extended to the agricultural workers with relative ease, and vice versa. The Japanese revolution will thus be achieved not by the industrial proletariat alone but just as much by the country's peasants and agricultural workers.

Neurath (Chair): A procedural motion has been made to close the debate. Does anyone wish to speak on this motion? That is not the case. Is anyone against this proposal? That is not the case.

The motion is adopted.

Varga: Comrades, in my opinion, the debate that has taken place here has not quite hit the mark. What was needed, in my opinion, was for comrades of the different countries that are actually carrying out work among the population in the countryside to report on the methods they use, the barriers they face, and the results they achieve in this work, so that everyone could learn from their experiences. Instead of that, the debate has followed a more general path.

Looking through and summarising these points of view, I find that the dangers from right and left that I referred to in my report are fully evident. The fact is that many comrades are quite unfamiliar with this entire question. This reflects the reality that the Communist party grew up above all in the cities as the party of the industrial proletariat. This results in a pattern of thought that nestles very close to the interests of the proletariat and asserts, in a quite indistinct manner, that the industrial proletariat, that is in fact called on to decisively influence state policies during the period of our dictatorship, can also make the revolution on its own, without the assistance of the broad masses of the rural population. That, of course, is an error. There is not a single country on the continent of Europe where we can carry out a successful revolution without the assistance of the rural proletariat or of broad layers of the poor peasants, the semi-proletarians in the countryside, the peasants with tiny holdings, the tenant farmers, and the poorer layers of small peasants. It is just as impossible to maintain ourselves in power without their help.

There was a strange confrontation of viewpoints around the question whether the peasants are revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. This question came to a head in the debate over France between Comrade Renaud Jean and Comrade Rieu. Overall, I would say that *the question cannot be addressed in this fashion*. We cannot approach the matter in this rigid, unhistorical, and non-dialectical way, as Comrade Rieu did, claiming that Renaud Jean is wrong,

that the French peasant is not revolutionary but conservative and counter-revolutionary. That is not correct. The most characteristic feature of the peasant population is that its class position is not clear. It is constantly shifting from one social layer to another, changing over time from one to another. There are moments in history when it is counter-revolutionary. But it cannot be said once and for all, as Comrade Rieu has done, that the French peasant is conservative or counter-revolutionary.

To assert this is a denial of our own revolutionary openings for work. How can we reach out to the rural population when we ourselves say there is nothing to be done, these people are counter-revolutionary or conservative, and the best we can do is merely to neutralise the poor peasants? That conception is completely unhistorical and, I would say, obstructs our own work. I am therefore not of the opinion that this fear of the peasants and suspicion of the poor peasantry is in any way justified. We must understand that although the peasantry cannot provide the revolution's élite-detachments, as Comrade Kostrzewa has quite correctly stressed, there are certain moments in history in which it provides the great reservoir of revolutionary forces from which we can expand our forces and draw on all the resources that can be accessed.

For this reason, I would like for my part to underline the remarks of Comrade Kostrzewa, who said that we cannot undertake to win the broad rural masses without an ongoing and detailed analysis. If we fail in this, we wind up with very fixed conceptions such as those of Comrade Rieu and also, to a degree, Comrade Renaud Jean, one saying that the peasant is revolutionary and the other saying he is conservative. We cannot proceed in this way. The conditions of the rural population must be constantly studied and analysed, and, at every moment when they can be reached politically, they must be drawn into movements.

I am therefore not at all in favour of condemning the work of Comrade Renaud Jean as some comrades here are inclined to do. Of course, in the views of Comrade Renaud Jean, there are certain aspects that are not entirely communist. But we must say that he works among the rural masses, he wins people for the revolution, he organises layers that are difficult to reach, and that is important work. In addition, what he said on the level of theory – that the peasant emerged from the War with a different psychology – is very important. We must not be rigid, saying the peasant has always been like that, is so now, and always will be. Rather, we must grapple with the facts and understand the situation historically.

I would like to touch on the different presentations only briefly, and take up only the speech of the British comrade, who said essentially the following: the cause of revolution is made more difficult for us by the fact that Britain can

survive only a few months without the importation of foodstuffs. In response, I would like to say that the situation in Britain in this regard is not at all as grave as might be thought on the basis of the statistical data.

A study by a German professor, Oppenheimer, once showed that, if Britain were cut off from all foreign food supplies, it would not at all necessarily starve. He referred above all to the fact that there are large regions in Britain that are not cultivated – a situation that can be changed within a year. He showed that there are always immense supplies of food in Britain, that its livestock represent a large reserve of food, and that it has an unlimited capacity to expand its food supplies through fishing. If Britain were cut off, it could feed itself quite adequately, not at the present level of nourishment in Britain, but with a norm similar to the level that we see in Italy. And that is why I say it is dangerous to spread the legend in Britain that revolution is excluded because it could not feed itself.

Radek: It couldn't do that anyway.

Varga: If a dictatorship [of the proletariat] in Britain was left for a period to its own resources, there would be severe hunger, of course, but the people of England would not die of starvation.

The Romanian comrade is the only one who raised certain objections to the action programme. He stated that, in the Commission, we did not want to take a stand on his idea of opposing the Romanian government's export tax. I was strongly opposed, because what would it mean to say in Romania that we do not want the state to levy taxes when it exports food from the country?

I will not address the economic and theoretical question of who pays this tax – the foreign purchaser or the vendor inside the country. But I maintain that, in either case, it is impossible for the proletariat to take a stand against this tax. For, if we take the case that the tax is paid by the foreign purchaser into the Romanian state treasury, the abolition of this tax means that the Romanian state will extract more taxes from the workers. In the other case, if it reduces the prices within the country, this reduces the income of the large peasants and large landowners from grain sales, but this does not reduce the income of workers or of those layers of peasants who have only a small surplus of food to sell.

Comrades, I will not take much of your time. In conclusion, I want only to repeat what I said at the outset. The fact that we have drafted an action programme, in itself, does not take us far.

The programme will become a reality when the various parties become aware that, for the revolution to succeed, it is absolutely necessary to win broad layers of the rural population. The advice given in the programme must

not be adopted mechanically but must be linked to an ongoing analysis of the political situation and the conditions of the rural population. The programme must be applied in a manner appropriate to these conditions, with an approach that is practical rather than theoretical. In this way, the Communist party's gains among the urban working class can be accompanied in the shortest possible time with a great success in organising, influencing, and revolutionising the rural masses. (*Applause*)

Chair: The Presidium has proposed the selection of an *editing commission* made up of the following comrades: Varga, Renaud Jean, Teodorovich, Marchlewski, Rieu, Preobrazhensky, Pauker,³ Hoernle (or Unfried), Katayama, Joss. In addition, the Chinese delegation is asked to appoint one of their number to the editing commission.

Does anyone wish to speak against this motion? That is not the case. Is anyone opposed?

The proposed members are therefore elected.

Report on the Youth Question

Schüller (Youth International) (*Greeted with Applause*): Comrades, the Communist International has considered the question of Communist work among the masses of youth and the situation of the Communist Youth International [CYI] as sufficiently important to place it on the agenda of its world congress.

To the degree possible, we want to take up three points in this report, namely: (1) Analysis of the Communist Youth International's development from its Second World Congress to this moment;⁴ (2) The condition of worker youth under present conditions and their struggle against the capitalist offensive and reaction; and (3) The practical relationship between the Communist parties and the Communist youth organisations.

The Second World Congress of our Communist Youth International achieved some renown among both friends and opponents, and certainly earned this respect with good cause. For it brought about a profound change in the activity of Communist youth organisations. As you know, during the War, as the Social Democrats clearly turned away into the camp of the reformists, it was the Communist youth organisations that were the first to grasp the banner of the class struggle and take up the struggle against the War and for

3. Probably Marcel Pauker, who spoke on this topic.

4. The Second Congress of the Communist Youth International took place in Moscow in July 1921, and was attended by 120 delegates from 36 countries.

social revolution. You also know that the youth organisations were the first to unite again in an international organisation and became enthusiastic supporters and vanguard fighters for the Russian Revolution and the Communist International.

During this period, a particular type of socialist – but, rather, let us say right away ‘communist’ – youth movement took shape; a period that can be characterised as that of a vanguard political role. At that time, the Communist parties either did not yet exist or were still weak, and the Communist youth organisation carried out a leading political role inside the workers’ movement.

The Second World Congress of the Communist Youth International [1921] opened a new period in its activity. The Communist parties had now been formed, and the Communist International had grown into a solid, international organisation. In those places where it had been justified for the Communist youth organisations to play an overall leading role politically, this was no longer necessary. They had to pass on their leading political role to the Communist parties. This important decision was taken by the Second World Congress of the CYI.

This policy will continue to provide the fundamental and practical basis for the youth organisations’ activity. It will remain the soul of the Communist youth movement, as it has been, but the Communist youth organisations should now turn above all to accomplishing the particular tasks related to youth. Among these tasks, three things stand out: defence of the economic demands of the worker youth, methodical education of the youth in communism and Marxism, and anti-militarist propaganda among young working people both outside and inside the bourgeois armies.

The third important result of the Second World Congress deserves special emphasis: the Communist youth organisations decided to broaden their organisational framework. During the War and in the first years that followed it, the Communist youth organisations were necessarily, just like the Communist movement as a whole in that period, more or less tightly unified groups and small organisations that were rather like sects in character.

There was a slogan: ‘First clarity, then majority’. That means that the Communist youth organisations could encompass only a narrow selection of tested and clear-thinking comrades. That slogan, which was advanced by the German Communist youth during the War, can be seen as the motto, so to speak, of the entire Communist youth movement. It was historically justified during the War and the first postwar years, when parties did not yet exist, but lost its historical relevance as the parties themselves moved to the task of organising the masses in their ranks.

The call 'To the masses' applied to the Communist youth movement as well. Grasp hold of the masses, organise them, and become mass organisations, in the sense both of the numbers organised in our ranks and those led by our organisation. The slogan of the Communist International's Third Congress, 'To the masses', was correspondingly taken up by the Communist youth and applied, not as a tactical slogan for the moment but as a principle for the youth movement as a whole.

We must hold firmly in view that the organisational framework of a youth movement must have a much broader reach than that of a party. A Communist party is made up of members recruited on the basis of a clear common commitment to the Party and marked by a definite level of class consciousness in their Communist thinking. However, the youth organisation must penetrate into the masses of working youth, seize hold of rough, indifferent forces, draw them into the class struggle, give them the beginnings of education, and only gradually educate them through the struggles of the organisation to become conscious workers.

In order to achieve all this, the Communist youth organisations must extend their organisational framework much further than the Communist parties and must hold their doors open much more widely to still indifferent young workers who have not yet been awakened to Communist class consciousness. We must stress this point, because it has not yet been universally understood, by either our parties or our Communist youth organisations. And, at present, we are still in discussion with our Italian comrades, who have not yet clearly grasped that the Communist youth organisation should not close itself off as severely and abruptly from the layers of worker youth on the outside as the Party must do toward those outside.

I must also say that the Third World Congress slogan 'To the masses' was more essential at that moment for the Communist Youth International than for the Communist parties. It was correct that at the time of the Third Congress the Communist parties were already running the risk of losing their intimate feel for the broad working-class masses, if they had continued the policies of the first postwar years. But this was even more the case for the Communist youth organisations.

The role of the Communist youth movement is different from that of a Communist party. And the almost exclusively political role played by the Communist youth organisations during the War was more a historical exception. There were already changes among the working youth themselves that urgently required a shift in the CYI's activity. Among worker youth, interest in politics was not present to the degree that it had been during the War and

the first postwar years. That is part of the general phenomenon of decline and temporary weakening of the revolutionary tide in the working class.

For this reason, the Communist youth movement was all the more unable to continue its war-communist methods, so to speak, of purely political activity, if it wanted to hold the masses and win broader masses. It had to adjust its policies to the new objective and subjective situation among worker youth. It had to find the means offered by this situation to win and organise worker youth. As I said, this challenge was resolved by the CYI's Second World Congress, which handed over the political leadership role to the Party, assigned to the Communist Youth International primarily the task of representing the youth organisations, and showed the Communist youth organisations how to change from closed political organisations to broad mass organisations of the worker youth, dedicated to representing their interests in every sphere of life.

Now, comrades, we will look into the further development of the Communist Youth International since its Second World Congress, and whether the decisions of this congress were correct.

This second question must be answered affirmatively. It is true we have had problems, but we must nonetheless say that the decisions of the Second World Congress were quite correct and brought us closer to the correct goals. We must note that these decisions obviously represented something novel for our youth organisation, that they obviously demanded a certain expenditure of educational work, until the ranks of the Communist youth movement could come to fully accept this conception of the movement's present tasks. That took considerable time and discussion. Thus the decisions of the Second [Youth] World Congress were adopted in Italy only in March of this year and in France only in May.

During this process, the Communist youth naturally set the task of following events in the working class and reacting to them. And these events did not wait until we had completed all possible preparations, prior to throwing ourselves into the struggle. Already, during the course of the year, the youth organisations were called on to carry out active work along the lines foreseen by the Second World Congress – in economic questions, in the struggle against reaction, in educational work, which the Communist youth organisations could not carry out completely because internally they had not yet fully worked matters out. As a result, there was a certain slackening of the influence of Communist youth organisations last winter among the masses of worker youth outside their ranks. The rise of youth organisations was also rendered more difficult by the economic crisis, which had a crippling effect overall on all working-class organisations, and through persecution by reaction, which robbed many organisations of a good part of their membership, as in Italy or other countries where we felt these effects.

But, in general, we came through this initial difficult period in rather good shape. By the time when the bureau session and the session of the Expanded Executive took place we were in a period of undeniable advance.⁵

We had a kind of aftershock in the Communist youth movement of Czechoslovakia. It was the youth organisation in Central Europe that had perhaps been engaged in purely political propaganda activity most consistently and for the longest time, and, for this reason, its influence on working-class youth had been significantly reduced. The result of this was a crisis within the organisation. But we successfully surmounted this aftershock – it was actually sort of a late arrival. Today we can say that our Communist youth movement has, in general, grasped well the need for the decisions on our ‘new phase’. This is a success that must not be overlooked.

The transfer of our leading political role to the parties has succeeded well and proceeded quickly, a sign that this question was truly already ripe, and our decision simply recognised the already existing historical necessity.

As regards the political activity of the different youth organisations, in general we can say that it has been healthy. In a number of countries, we have had good success in political work carrying out the line of the Communist International. In France, for example, it is in large measure through the activity of the Communist youth that the left wing of the Party has won such influence and that the slogans of the Communist International have won more and more of an echo within the French working class. The Communist youth of Italy as well have adjusted their political activity as required by Fascist reaction.

The Communist youth movement in Norway deserves mention as a case where, in agreement with us, their political activity has been carried forward during this period to a heightened extent, because this was demanded by conditions in the Communist Party of Norway [Norwegian Labour Party]. Some disagreements have appeared recently, but they concern only individual questions. In general, the quantity of political activity in recent months was rather good.

Now, however, we must note that in the Communist youth leagues of Central Europe we observed a weakening of political activity and even a decline of political interest. This was perceptible not only among the broad masses, not only among the membership of our organisation, but even in the central executives. And this is the phenomenon that has caused the most unease among our comrades in the Communist parties.

If you talk to comrades who have come from Central Europe, for example, who have observed the situation in the youth, they always start by remarking

5. Schüller is probably referring to the first Expanded Executive conference, 24 February–4 March 1922.

that the youth is little concerned with politics. They are engaged, at best, with educational work. And comrades are right in expressing unease over this fact. There is an element of exaggeration here. This is based in part on the fact that party comrades have not yet correctly grasped the tasks of the youth in this new period. But, fundamentally, this observation has been and is correct. There is no doubt that political activity and interest in our Communist youth organisations in Central Europe have declined.

What is the cause of this phenomenon? We must start with a general objective fact. Of course, our Communist youth organisations are part of the worker youth and are subject to all the moods and relationships of the worker youth as a whole. These moods and relationships and the overall conditions of worker youth changed in 1921, as we have said, to the degree that they were much more concerned with questions of immediate concern to youth, questions related to the economy, to their education and upbringing, and even to their own youthful needs for social intercourse. That is the first general cause. This mood among the worker youth has an obvious impact on the Communist youth, which forms part of the worker youth.

Secondly, the decline of political interest and activity among Communist youth in Central Europe is also explained by the fact that these parties, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, have not recently gone through crises like those in other parties, such as in France or Norway, or been confronted by important questions, as in Italy, which make immediate involvement urgent. We had the Levi question in Germany,⁶ but during the interval between the Second and Third [Youth] Congresses [1921–2] the parties of Central Europe were spared to a greater degree than other parties. That also contributed to the fact that there was not such a necessity to take a political position.

The third factor, however, lies in a false conception of the CYI's political activity, as established by its Second Congress. In some locations, these decisions created a false conception among the youth that exaggerated the need to rein in their political activity. The CYI has seriously followed and combated this phenomenon both directly and through the central executives in each country. It has worked to help them understand this problem and revive political activity in each country, through discussion, taking positions, education, and taking part in political life and in the party's struggles beyond the previous level. And I believe that we can assure the Communist International that we are on the way to prevent such exaggerations and, to the degree

6. In the second half of 1921, some forces in the KPD, led by Friesland, favoured a rapprochement with the KAG, headed by Paul Levi. The Friesland current was defeated, and left the Party at the end of the year.

necessary, bring the Communist youth back into active participation in the party's political struggles.

The results of the CYI's involvement in economic struggles reveal an important step forward in its development. I must note that the question of economic struggle, that is, struggle for the immediate demands of worker youth, was the subject of some controversy both at the Second CYI and the Third Comintern World Congresses,⁷ and was the subject of lively discussion afterwards as well. This task was new for the majority of Communist youth leagues, with the exception of Russia, Austria, and Germany. However we can say today not only that the need for Communist youth organisations to engage in economic struggle has been recognised by all youth organisations but also that practical steps have been taken to put this into action.

The economic struggle of worker youth today stands in the centre of our youth leagues' attention and activity. Already, practical steps have been taken to interest the working class in this question and in the struggle for the demands of youth. If we survey the press of the Communist youth today, compared with what it was like before the Second World Congress, we note very lively reports and portrayals of daily life of working youth, in the factories, in the small shops, and with the peasants and landlords. The newspapers are filled with portrayals and accounts of the exploitation of working-class youth.

We see that, everywhere, the Communist youth organisations have advanced slogans based on these carefully observed conditions of youth, and have begun to advance them orally and in writing. In addition, in almost every country, they have begun comprehensive propaganda for definite and specific demands. And, finally, we see that Communist youth leagues like those in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Denmark, in carrying out struggles for individual demands, have become true organisations of struggle against capitalism and the government.

This entire campaign of Communist youth organisations has taken place under slogans of the united front of youth and of struggle against the capitalist offensive and the growing poverty of working youth. This is an initial start toward active work in the economic and trade-union field and in representing the economic interests of working youth. It is a promising beginning for the future work of Communist youth.

7. The German text reads, 'the Second World Congress and also the Third World Congress of the CYI', an apparent error in transcription, since the latter event had not yet taken place. The Third CYI World Congress opened in Moscow nine days after Schüller's report, on 4 December, and continued until 16 December. It was attended by 91 delegates from 31 countries.

Comrades, we must now speak of anti-militarist work, which has been carried on by the individual youth organisations as in the past. It continues to be conducted with enthusiasm, and the youth comrades have continued their press campaign against militarism. In this work, they have suffered losses, which is unavoidable. In Central Europe alone, we must note a decline in interest as well as of activity in this question. This must be taken just as seriously as the decline in political interest in general, and we must use the same methods to combat it.

We made a small beginning in the field of educational work. However, we were forced to recognise that we could not achieve as much in this field as in that of work in trade unions on economic questions. That is because educational work demands forces that must be provided by the parties, and we have not received them. In addition, many improvements were carried out with regard to organisation. Take the examples of the Communist youth of France and Britain, which were built on a federated basis, just like the parties in those countries. It proved possible to get them to collaborate in the organisation on a centralised basis. A general division of labour was introduced, with greater self-activity by the members and more centralisation.

We also made headway on an international plane. In general, collaboration between the Youth International's executive committee and the national leagues has now become just as close as between the leagues' central executive committees and their districts or branches. The CYI can say today that it functions better in many respects than some central committees of national sections, particularly with regard to dispensing advice.

In general, looking back at the period since the World Congress, we can say that experience confirms the correctness of our activity. The Communist youth movement has succeeded well in adjusting to the tasks of the new period, in understanding these tasks and in beginning to convert them to realities. We have waged struggles in some fields, especially economic, and also carried out some organisational and educational work, all of which constitutes important preconditions for the rise of the Communist youth leagues and for them to encompass the masses. But we did not succeed during these fifteen months in becoming mass organisations.

Our conception of a mass organisation is that it has a massive membership and also enjoys permanent influence among the masses of working youth and constantly leads these masses in their struggles, using its slogans. In our rise to becoming mass organisations, we also are subject, of course, to all the difficulties of the Communist movement as a whole. Since the Third Congress, with the exception of the Communist Party of Germany, this movement was blocked by the prevailing conditions from making significant progress

toward achieving mass organisations, increasing its numbers, and broadening its influence and embedding itself in the masses.

We therefore have no illusions, and we take the question very seriously. We know that the Communist youth movement is dependent in this regard on the development of the Communist International. But we also know that the youth movement can, in many respects, rush on ahead and must do so. Our third congress will take up precisely and specifically the work that we must carry out in order to hasten our rise to becoming mass organisations.

I do not wish to leave this point without stressing a fact that is perhaps not so obvious. When you examine the earlier Social-Democratic youth movement, here is the pattern that you find: the political organisation of the working class, the Social-Democratic party, made the decisions, which were then carried out. The youth organisation was a more or less passive appendage, which carried out internal educational work, while always remaining pretty much the same.

No matter how vigorous the movements of the working class, no matter what events took place, by and large the activity of the Social-Democratic youth always remained the same, untouched by the struggles of the party, untouched by working-class struggles – a republic unto itself, closed off and not really deserving of much praise. We see today that the pattern of a movement of working youth has changed; now it is new and alive. We see that, when the Communist International proposes a slogan or decides on a policy, the CYI sets about – not just as a formality but in life – realising what the International has decided. We see that the Communist youth movement is making every effort to apply the slogans of the Communist International in the most practical way, in its own field of work.

I now come to the conditions of worker youth and the struggles that the CYI has waged in this regard. You all know that during the fifteen months since the Second [Youth] Congress, the conditions of working youth have not improved but worsened, under the pressure of reaction and the threats of war and militarism. You know that the working youth suffer from the same abuses as adult workers: from the wage reductions, the lengthening of the working day, unemployment, and from the exploitation that prevails in the small shops. But these abuses take more acute forms for youth than they do for the adult working class. Youth suffer from special burdens. I will not dwell on the details. If we are speaking of the economic conditions of worker youth, we can only confirm what the Communist International's Expanded Executive said nine months ago regarding this situation. Under the present conditions of capitalist breakdown, the economic conditions of working youth must be regarded by the working class as a whole with grave concern. The working youth are threatened by the danger of physical and moral impoverishment.

This fact, identified by the Communist International nine months ago, has not since been disproven. If it needs to be amended, then it is only in the sense that the conditions of working youth have worsened even more.

During this period, the campaign of reaction against our Communist youth movement has also begun to intensify. We face an offensive by reaction against the Communist youth movement that appears to be proceeding according to a plan. The Communist youth movement has been subject to persecution in France, Poland, Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. In many cases, this persecution is directed exclusively against the Communist youth organisation, as in France or Czechoslovakia, where the government banned the Communist youth organisations because of their anti-militarist propaganda, while the party remains entirely legal.

The increasing danger of militarism strikes against the working youth first of all, because they are to supply the bourgeoisie with cannon fodder. Tens of thousands of unemployed British youth have gone into the army. Tens of thousands have taken part in struggles in Morocco, in Asia and Africa, in all parts of the world.

Thus, the conditions of young workers have worsened at every hand. But we must stress one fact that must be taken extremely seriously. Working youth are being utilised as a means of pressure on the adult working class, in order to worsen their conditions. The way this is happening is generally understood. The wages of working youth are reduced. They are the first to be reduced, and are reduced more, as a way to cut the wages of adult workers. There is information on this in all the youth publications. The working time of young workers is lengthened more than that of the adult workers. It is lengthened first, and this is then used as a way of coercing the adult workers.

Germany provides us with an example. The working time in the trade schools had previously been factored into the eight-hour working day. The government has not yet dared to eliminate the eight-hour day for workers. But its committee on social policy has drafted legislation that no longer reckons the educational time as part of the working day.⁸ In addition, it permits apprentices to work an hour a day beyond their working time, doing clean-up. In this way, the eight-hour day is replaced by one of ten or at least nine hours of work.

We find examples like this in every country. It is a means of pressuring the adult working class. Let us take a practical example. If youth are working ten hours a day in a factory, it is hardly possible to have the adults working less

8. By 'educational', Schüller is referring to the obligatory educational component of an apprenticeship.

than that, and, as a result, there will be a shift to a longer working day for the adult workers as well.

In addition, we observe everywhere a pattern of hiring youth in branches of production where adult workers are being laid off. Young workers are employed to increase unemployment among adult workers and thus worsen the conditions of the working class. There are countless examples where working youth have supplied strikebreakers against adult workers, and where, in army uniform, they have been used against their adult co-workers.

The utilisation of youth against adult workers has however taken on a special meaning in the capitalist offensive and is much employed by capitalism today. The reformists of every country have taken the same traitorous position toward the situation of worker youth as they have toward all the vital questions of the working class. But the reactionary trade-union bureaucracy, the Amsterdam trade-union International, has not only failed to come to grips with the facts and take action, but has virtually abandoned the demands of working youth in all these respects.

Wherever there are movements for wage increases or over working hours, wherever it's a matter of taking part in strikes or negotiating wage rates, we see that the reactionary trade-union bureaucracy always fails to respond to the demands of worker youth. Indeed, we see them dropping the demands of youth supposedly in order to salvage something for the adult workers. But, in actuality, subordinating the worker youth to the adults in this way is disastrous for the adult working class and only depresses its own living standards.

It was the Communist Youth International that first launched the slogan of struggle against the capitalist offensive and of united front between the youth and the adult working class. This slogan was applied in campaigns in each country and on an international scale.

What is happening with the Social-Democratic Youth International? We see the same performance that is presented by the Second International, repeating itself with respect to the youth question. True to the example of the Amsterdam trade-union bureaucracy and its parties, this Youth International is unresponsive to the dire poverty of worker youth, to reaction, and to militarism. Where the worker youth develop campaigns, and struggles arise, we see the Social-Democratic Youth International exerting itself to choke off these struggles. They steer the working youth away from the struggle in order to pacify them.

The Communist Youth International made a specific proposal to the Amsterdam young workers' International and the Vienna socialist Youth International to convene a world congress of young workers, which was to

organise the struggle against the capitalist offensive and the participation of working youth in the struggle of the adult working class. The socialist Youth International had previously stated that it was in favour of such a congress and that we were the ones making it impossible. Now they showed their true face and turned down participation in even a preliminary discussion to take up the question.

Instead, they worked out a programme, together with the Amsterdam trade-union leaders, with so-called demands that are so ignominious that they cannot be taken seriously. Instead of leading the working youth into struggle in unified formation and together with the adult working class, they carried out their fusion manoeuvre. Today, we are on the eve of the fusion of the Two-and-a-Half Youth International with the young workers' International, that is, the definitive capitulation of the centrist eunuchs to the Second International.

We now come to a topic that has particular importance for us: the movement that has become noticeable among the working youth themselves, among the indifferent masses, in defence against impoverishment and toward taking part in the struggles of adult workers. We have examples where the working youth have moved out in struggles and strikes entirely spontaneously, against the will of the Social-Democratic trade unions and youth organisations and, unfortunately, without our initiative. The trade unions forbid apprentices from leaving the factory and joining in strikes. Such an example can be found in the British metalworkers' strike.⁹ The apprentices, in locations, mark you, where there is not and has never been a youth movement, spontaneously gather together and declare, 'No, we are not staying in the factory. We're joining the strike.'

We have such an example in Germany, where about one thousand apprentices and young workers in the shipyards struck spontaneously for more pay and stayed on strike for five to six days, despite sabotage by the trade-union leaders. Other such examples of spontaneous strike movements have been seen in Munich, Mannheim, and in Poland. We hear that, in an Austrian city, four hundred young workers went on strike because they had not been taken into account when the wage agreement was concluded. Thus we see how a strong fermentation is becoming more and more noticeable among the working youth and how the youth spontaneously launch defensive struggles against the capitalist offensive.

9. British metalworking employers locked out members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union on 11 March 1922, aiming to assert 'managerial rights' over working hours and conditions. The lockout was extended to all metalworking unions on 2 May. The conflict ended in June in a defeat for the unions.

This development is quite thought provoking. What conclusions should be drawn from it? The first conclusion is what I mentioned earlier, namely, that there is an increasing will among the working youth today to take part in the struggles of the adult working class and to struggle against the growing poverty of working youth.

Secondly, we must draw the conclusion that organisations of the working class do not encompass the working youth, and that the youth will no longer wait until these organisations represent them. When I say that the working-class organisations do not encompass the working youth, I am referring not only to the trade unions and the Social-Democratic party but also, in a certain sense, to the Communist party and the Communist youth organisation. We must have no illusions on this score.

The comrades from Germany who have taken part in these movements know it well. Even if young Communists took part, these movements arose spontaneously, without any direct initiative by the Communist International, and only later did they come under the Communist International's leadership. These movements were not called forth by our organisation, but, rather, broke out spontaneously. It is obvious that the working youth are no longer willing to wait for someone else to take up their interests.

This fact has both good and bad sides. The good side is that it shows that working youth want to struggle and that they will no longer wait; they want to take part in revolutionary struggle. But there is also something here that we must examine carefully. It tells us that if the Communist youth organisations, trade unions, and so on do not succeed in taking up the interests of working youth more actively than before, working youth will become alienated from the trade union and other related organisations, and will be influenced by a tendency to mistrust these organisations. On the other hand, if the Communist International stands by these movements of worker youth, as the German Communist youth has sought to do, then it will secure its influence among the masses of worker youth.

Clearly, a strike of working youth is pointless and can lead to no results unless the adult workforce joins in and the trade unions offer their support. I must say that, in these recent localised and spontaneous movements of working youth, we see something that stands as a quite sinister counterpart to the utilisation of working youth against the adult working class. That is the fact that the adult working class has let itself be used almost routinely as strike-breakers against the young workers in these local movements of working youth.

Take the example of Hamburg. The apprentices there went on strike because their wages had been kept disgracefully low, while those of the adult workers

had risen greatly. The apprentices were getting 1,000 marks, and the adults 4,500 marks. The shipyard owners declared that if the adult workers did not do the work of the striking youth, for the same wages that the youth received, the adult workers themselves would be locked out. This happened in other locations as well. And what did the adult workers do on these occasions? They performed the work of strikebreakers, and they did this not for their wages, but for the starvation wages of the young workers.

These facts are disquieting. They show the great gulf between the mass of working youth and the mass of adult workers. It shows the extent to which capitalism has succeeded in bringing these two groups within the working class into conflict and playing them off against each other, causing harm to both sides and to the working class as a whole.

That is why the Communist International must take an unambiguous and forceful stand on this question. And the Communist International is prepared to do this. *It declares that it is absolutely necessary to build a united front of young and adult workers in common struggle against capitalism and reaction. It calls on all its parties and the working class as a whole to represent the interests and demands of working youth in their daily struggle and to wage a struggle every day for these interests.*

And we know well that, when the Communist International directs such an appeal to its members and to the adult working class, when it takes a decision of this type, it is not merely paying lip service. Rather, it is indeed ready to transform this decision into reality and obligate all its organisations to come to grips with this question and apply this decision and this principle in practice, in all their daily struggles. The Communist International must not tolerate the loss of its influence among young workers; it must not tolerate the young masses slipping into indifference. Rather, it must draw the working youth over to its side.

The attack of capitalism and reaction must shatter against the iron resistance of the entire revolutionary working class. If we are able to represent the interests of worker youth today, we will be opening the doors to winning working youth and organising their broad masses into the Communist International.

The entire question of the struggle for working youth has a practical aspect, namely, the practical collaboration between the Communist party and the youth. In general, we can and must say that this collaboration has improved in the past year. However, a great deal of effort must still be expended on this two-way relationship, in order to achieve what is necessarily both our ideal and our practical goal.

I will cite only one example, which bears on our general evaluation of youth organisations. In Czechoslovakia, we have had a month-long discussion with

the Party's leading bodies over whether or not there is actually any need for a Communist youth organisation. Many leading party comrades take the position that no Communist youth organisation is needed. It is enough to have the Party, the trade unions, and the athletic organisations, all of which also educate their young members. This completely misjudges the tasks of a Communist youth organisation in attracting the broad masses of working youth and educating them in communist politics. We were finally able to convince the comrades. But the fact that we have officially dealt with this point of view does not mean that it not still to be found within the Party.

In Britain, we have had to work very hard to convince the Communist Party of the need to create a proletarian youth movement at all, and, only after many long months, did we achieve a positive stand on this point by the party congress.

These examples show that in some countries the value placed on a youth movement is still too low. But on the whole we can say that collaboration has improved substantially.

We have drafted a resolution which makes a number of practical proposals for collaboration in every field of activity, and this resolution will be submitted to each delegation.¹⁰ Since my speaking time is quite limited, I would like to touch only briefly on some specific questions.

First of all, there is the question of economic struggle. Unfortunately, we have not found the requisite understanding of this question among the Communist parties. A number of parties showed a good understanding, including those in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. The Italian Party also gave us very strong support in this regard. But we still encounter attitudes among Communist party members that simply cannot be tolerated.

I will mention only one example, which by the way involves a German comrade. At a session of the executive of the Red International of Labour Unions, we made various proposals for representation by working youth within the International. We then received the reply that outside organisations do not have the right to interfere in our trade union. It was not until a few days ago that we were able to speak with a Spanish comrade, who is a leading Communist trade unionist, and explain to him that the utilisation of youth is a factor with regard to the capitalist offensive.¹¹ We were then told that there is no need to trouble the adult comrades to this degree with our problems, and that our insistence reflects an '*esprit corporatif*', the spirit of a guild.

So the fact that we ask that working youth not be left outside the ranks of the adult workers and that they be encompassed in trade-union struggles, the

10. For the final text of the youth resolution, see pp. 1025-9.

11. The Spanish comrade in question is Andreu Nin.

struggles of adult workers, is evidence of an 'esprit corporatif', the spirit of a guild.

We maintain that the guild-like narrowness is being displayed by those that do not grasp that the struggle of the working class must be a struggle of the class as a whole. I could mention many examples of this sort.

Comrades in the parties and trade unions need to have a much better understanding of the economic struggle of worker youth and the youth organisations. Let us have no repetition of what happened in France. There, a trade-union congress took place at which the youth put forward a number of youth demands. Among 150 Communists, only seven comrades voted in favour even of simply taking up the question of worker youth, and of merely reading the letter of the Communist youth. The other comrades abstained from the vote or even voted against. There must be no repetition of such incidents. The party bodies must display more understanding for the interests of youth. Party comrades in the trade unions must take a stand for encompassing the youth in the unions, taking them into account in collective agreements, supporting the Communist youth's efforts to build fractions, and organising cells of Communist youth in individual factories and work places.

Something must also be said regarding anti-militarist struggle. This is rather a sore point with most of our parties. We must work together more closely in this area, because, in the present situation, there is no way that Communist youth can carry on the struggle on their own. The parties have to reinforce this struggle and lead it. There is an urgent need for more collaboration.

We also make a series of proposals in our resolution regarding educational work, with the aim of having the party support the educational work of Communist youth by making available educational forces, granting places in the party schools, and the like.

We must also speak of the party publications in this regard. It must be said that there has been a certain improvement in the handling of youth issues in the party press. Most papers give them more attention. Nonetheless, there is a great deal left to do. Germany is, without doubt, the focus of the economic struggle of worker youth. However, we see in Germany that a conference of press coordinators was capable of taking a decision to cancel all youth supplements in the entire German-Communist press! We are told that the Berlin *Rote Fahne* accepts articles on youth questions only after great resistance. The youth supplement cannot establish itself there as a permanent feature.

There have been lengthy struggles. The political bureau makes a decision and the editors say no. It is unfortunate that in a country like Germany, in the Party's main publication, so little is done for youth work. The main publication in Czechoslovakia also lacks a youth supplement. Also, in the British

press, it has not proven possible to get a single article on the youth organisation. Not even an article on the founding of the youth organisation was accepted. As for *L'Humanité*, getting something on youth into it is even harder than with the Berlin *Rote Fahne*. There is much here that must be improved.

To conclude, I must say something about the question of *children's groups*. In recent years, this movement made a good start in many countries, and the parties are beginning to take an interest in this work. This interest is most welcome. We must ask that the parties overcome the trend to bringing up workers' children in a generally undefined way. They must ditch all the bourgeois nonsense about a general and rational child-rearing and raise children in a Communist fashion.

It is not right that in France the Party distributes a journal called *Les petits bonshommes* [*The Little Fellows*], published in France by a group of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and does not have its own Communist magazine. In addition, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has tolerated the publication and promotion of a drab little sheet that competes with the youth organisation's Communist children's magazine, which has been appearing for some time. The work of the Communist youth in the movement of children's groups deserves much more support, and tendencies toward a bourgeois upbringing must be overcome.

Comrades, obviously, it is not possible to deal exhaustively with all the different questions of practical collaboration that come up between the party and youth organisations. We hope that the resolution will meet with your agreement and will be applied in practice. We hope this will enable the Communist youth organisation to carry out its duty to the party even more zealously than in the last year, and that the party, for its part, will be more zealous than was the case in many instances in the past.

Through such collaboration in every field between the Communist party and the Communist youth, we will be able in the coming period to establish our influence among working youth, win them, and organise them. When the Communist International has won the working youth, we can be certain that it will win the future, and the revolution will triumph.

It is now about three years since the Communist Youth International was founded in Berlin. It was in a small and smoky back room in a pub in a Berlin suburb. A few of us comrades gathered in the First Congress during the rule of Noske, who had driven the Party into illegality.¹² Since that November of

12. As head of the army in an SPD-led government, Gustav Noske, a long-time stalwart of the SPD's right wing, organised the suppression of the revolutionary workers' movement in a brutal civil war during the early months of 1919.

1919, the Communist Youth International has grown enormously, increasing its numbers almost four times over. It is stronger, firmer, and more solid in its positions. Comrades, we hope that the Communist International will succeed, together with the CYI, in continuing on its previous path into the masses of worker youth, arousing them and in this way leading powerful fighting contingents into the Communist movement. And we hope to be able to provide you at the next congress with evidence that the international Communist youth movement, assisted by the Communist International, has succeeded in representing the interests of the working youth in their masses, in drawing them into the struggle of the adult working class, and in winning them to the banner of communism. (*Applause*)

Chair: The Presidium proposes that the resolution on the youth question be referred to it and that no special commission be established. Is there any objection to this? That is not the case. The proposal is adopted.

Report on the Black Question¹³

Billings (Huiswoud, United States): Comrades, the Second Congress of the Communist International recognised the importance of the colonial question for the world-revolution. From the ranks of comrades in the East as well as from some comrades in the colonies, we hear the reproach that little attention has been paid to this matter and that it has not received the attention it deserves as a component of the world-revolution. The black question is another part of the racial and colonial question, and it has, until now, not received any special attention. I mean by that to say that the Second International did not devote any special attention to the black question. That is why we find in the Second Congress theses the remark that the Second International is an International of white workers and the Communist International is an International of the workers of the world.¹⁴

Comrades Zinoviev and Bukharin referred in their speeches to the fact that the colonial question is today among the most important issues that we must deal with. And, since this important problem is now under discussion, I expect of this congress that it will recognise the experiences we have gone through and the policies recommended for the colonial question. The Congress – or

13. The German text uses the word 'Neger', which was then equivalent to the English 'Negro' – the word probably used by the US delegates who spoke on this question. In recent decades, the English term 'Negro' has acquired a pejorative connotation and has fallen out of use. The German word 'Neger' is therefore translated throughout as 'black'.

14. See the introductory paragraphs of the Comintern Statutes, Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 696. John Reed addressed the Second Congress on the oppression of US blacks, drawing an objection from Serrati. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 224–8, 235.

rather the Communist International – has gathered certain experiences during its activity among the peoples of the Near and Far East and should have gained some knowledge regarding this particular problem. We will find that in handling this question certain unavoidable errors have been committed, from which we must learn. When we address the black question, we must begin by heading in the right direction.

When we examine the black question, we should include in our analysis the psychological aspects of the question. We must recognise that various peoples that have reached a definite level of development at a given time necessarily react to the world in a specific psychological fashion. If we try to work with these masses and carry out our propaganda and agitation among them, we must necessarily take into consideration the elements we find in this special question that is posed for analysis.

Although the black question is chiefly economic in nature, we nonetheless find that the problem is worsened and deepened by frictions between the white and black races. As is generally known, the question of race, based as it is on prejudice arising from the class prejudices of specific groups in society, still plays an important role. It is true that in the United States, for example, the competition between black and white workers is the main source of racial hatred. But we must not forget that the blacks still bear the mark of bondage stemming from the time of slavery. For this reason, we find that the particular antagonism of white workers against black workers takes a special form.

There are, in all, about 150 million blacks in the world, of which approximately 25 million live in the New World and the rest in Africa. The blacks in the United States and the West Indies are a source of cheap labour for the American capitalists. We observe that the capitalist class has always utilised them, as it still does today, in order put down the white working class in its daily struggle. 'White-guard' forces are recruited from the ranks of these blacks, to be used anywhere that there is a revolutionary uprising.

The exploitation of blacks in Africa makes possible the continued accumulation of capital. The capitalist class as such recognises the useful assistance provided by the black masses. For this reason, it many years ago set itself the task of infecting the black population with bourgeois ideology. This it did, of course, in its own interests, and not in order to help the blacks. The capitalists have carefully planned the formation of organisations among the blacks that carry out propaganda for the bourgeoisie and against the white workers. They have called into being the renowned Rockefeller Foundation and the Urban League.¹⁵ The first organisation is a well-known strikebreaking institution,

15. Between 1910 and 1930, approximately 1.5 million US blacks fled the South to escape poverty, segregation, and racist terror; a great number sought work in

which was at its post while most revolutionaries were asleep, while the second gives financial support to schools for blacks. Despite these factors, it was unavoidable that the black population would find a way of defending itself against the oppression that it suffers everywhere in the world. Initially, this took the form of religious institutions, which were in some periods the only permitted framework for their private recreation. Later we see, however, the continual development of black organisations that, although composed entirely of blacks, either directly or indirectly stand to some degree in opposition to capitalism.

The three most important black organisations are, first, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], an organisation composed mainly of proletarian forces and led by bourgeois intellectuals, whose activity is based on the principle of petitioning the capitalist class to improve the conditions of blacks, which, in practical terms, is simply a form of begging.

We then come to a second and more interesting organisation, the Garvey organisation, which is ultra-nationalist and has a radical membership.¹⁶ Although this organisation veils its programme with an inexpensive share-certificate system, it has nonetheless moved the blacks into action against imperialism. This organisation was founded after the World War. Of course, it did not take any definitive radical form; this was prevented even at that time by its leader. Nonetheless, it has awakened racial consciousness and utilised it on a broad scale, even into the interior of Africa, where one would hardly expect that an organisation formed in the United States would find a base of support.

industry. During this period, many US unions excluded blacks, to the degree that blacks made up only about 2% of union membership in the 1920s. Employers seized on these conditions to utilise black workers as strikebreakers. The Rockefeller Foundation established a Department of Industrial Relations in 1914 to advise employers on countering labour militancy. The Urban League, founded in 1910, sought improved opportunities for blacks in northern cities.

The Urban League called on the American Federation of Labor to act 'not with words only but with deeds' for an end to anti-black discrimination in its affiliates. (Parris and Brooks 1971, p. 136.) The AFL did little to achieve this goal. The League advised blacks not to take jobs as strikebreakers, unless the union in question excluded blacks from membership. However, at least some incidents justified the League's reputation for engaging in strikebreaking. See Parris and Brooks 1971, pp. 135–45; Weiss 1974, pp. 203–15.

16. Marcus Garvey led the Universal Negro Improvement Association, founded in 1914. The UNIA sought to unite blacks internationally in a struggle for freedom and equality.

The third organisation is the African Blood Brotherhood, a radical black organisation whose programme is based on the destruction of capitalism.¹⁷ This organisation was the only one to wage a struggle during the racial battles in Tulsa, Oklahoma – a brilliant and brave struggle – and it is the organisation to which the capitalist class of the United States is now going to devote its attention.¹⁸

There are also various small nationalist organisations in Africa, such as the Ethiopian movement, which all find their inspiration in the United States, the centre of political tendencies among the blacks. These organisations have expanded and developed as far as into the Sudan. They could be utilised by Communists, if the propaganda material was written carefully and with reflection and was then used intensively to bring these movements together. So we see that there is already a sort of organisation that will oppose world imperialism.

There are about 450 black newspapers and magazines in the United States, most addressing only the question of race, but nonetheless exerting a great influence on the black masses. Thus we have, for example, the *Chicago Defender*, with a weekly press run of 250,000, which is sent everywhere in the world where significant numbers of blacks are to be found. Then there is also *Crisis*, a monthly magazine with a run of more than sixty thousand. These publications, especially the *Chicago Defender* and others with a smaller circulation, have always made use of the radical propaganda material that we have made available to them.

The blacks sense the approach of a crisis that will break out between whites and blacks in the South. The seeds have been sown in the South and they must sprout up there in some form. It is likely that the crisis will take the form of race baiting on a vast scale.

For us, comrades, the black question is of great interest and supreme importance. We see, for example, that, among the approximately twelve million blacks, two million work in the industrial districts of the North and another

17. The African Blood Brotherhood, founded in 1919, aimed to achieve 'a liberated race; absolute race equality – political, economic, social; the fostering of race pride; organized and uncompromising opposition to Ku Kluxism; rapprochement and fellowship within the darker masses and with the class conscious revolutionary workers; industrial development; higher wages for Negro labor, lower rents; a united Negro front'. It sought liberation 'not merely from political rule, but from the crushing weight of capitalism'. (Draper 1960, p. 325.) The ABB had its own delegates to the Fourth Congress (see p. 437) and subsequently merged into the US CP.

18. For eighteen hours during 31 May–1 June, 1921, a white mob waged war on the black community of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The attackers destroyed the entire black district, leaving 300 or more dead and 10,000 blacks homeless. White-only hospitals admitted 800 wounded; black hospitals had been burned down.

nine or ten million in the South. (I assume that you all have some conception of this South. When you go there, you will believe yourselves to be in Dante's inferno. Sometimes you will feel that all hope is futile.)

The South is almost a separate country. Among the blacks, eighty per cent live in the countryside. The [racial] division is kept very sharp, and blacks are robbed of their right to vote. And here, where the class struggle is waged in its most brutal form, we find that the relationship between blacks and whites consists of continual conflicts and life-and-death struggles. This is where you find lynching and racial uprisings. You see that, in the South, the lynching of a black is the occasion for enjoyment, as it is elsewhere to go to the cinema. When you grasp that the white population of the South is so imbued by this notion of white domination of the blacks, you will also understand that we must take up this question.

At present, when major strikes are carried out in the North of the United States, we see that the capitalist class send their paid agents as rapidly as possible to the South to bring the blacks there to the Northern districts as strike-breakers. These agents promise higher wages and better conditions in order to induce blacks to enter the strike districts. This poses a constant danger to white strikers.

But the blacks must not be held solely responsible for this situation. The American trade unions, and I am speaking here of genuine trade unions, have insisted during recent years that a black, even if a skilled worker, is barred from membership in the unions because of the colour of his skin. Just a short time ago, the American Federation of Labor made a feeble attempt to enable blacks to join the regular trade unions. But, even today, if I am not mistaken, even such an organisation as the machinists' union has a regulation in its programme establishing as a condition of membership that each white brother will recruit other white workers, or something of this sort. That means that blacks will always remain outside the union, simply because they are black. The capitalist class and the reactionary black press exploit this fact as much as they can in order to turn black workers against the unions.

When you discuss with a black about his joining a union or about the need to be a radical, you always get hurled in your face the response, 'Don't preach to me. Preach to the whites. The unions are useful to them, not to me. I am always ready to fight side by side with them, if they are prepared to let me join. But as long as they refuse, I will carry out work that has been struck. And by God I have a right to do this. I need to protect my life.' That is one of their arguments, and we cannot ignore it. We can advance all the fine theoretical formulations that we have at hand, but yet, in the daily struggle, there are some harsh and stubborn facts.

The commission on blacks has drafted theses on the black question, which I will now read. During our discussion of the black question, we made certain definite proposals, which in our opinion should be carried out by the different sections of the Communist International whose countries or whose colonies contain blacks. We have, of course, not made these proposals so they could remain on paper, but rather so they could be transformed into reality by the various sections. And we ask the Communist International to see to it that these proposals are applied to the letter and in the spirit in which they have been written.

We have drawn up an outline for our work, a proposal to begin work immediately among black people of the entire world. We have also proposed the founding of a bureau for blacks as a component of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. The reason for this was that we wished to coordinate and centralise the work. We thought that Moscow is the best place for this bureau, or section, or whatever you choose to call it. The black question is of great importance for us, and for this reason we have made an effort to study the real situation in Africa and especially in the United States. We have not fallen into reverie over a programme. But we have nevertheless made specific proposals for a plan for a black organisation. This plan took into account the specific spiritual characteristics of blacks in the present period.

The theses on the black question read as follows.

Draft Theses on the Black Question¹⁹

The foundations of the process of accumulation for capitalist development that existed before the World War have been turned upside down by the War's results. This applies especially to the relationship between the advanced capitalist countries, which export capital, and the colonial and semi-colonial peoples under their rule. At the same time, a movement of rebellion against the power of world capitalism, personified by the British Empire, has grown up among these peoples and is more and more successful. This power has extended to the degree that it is penetrating the territories inhabited by black races. Colonising these peoples intensively is the last great challenge on which the course of capitalist accumulation depends.

The French capitalists have clearly recognised that postwar French imperialism can only be maintained by establishing a French African world empire, linked by a railway running through the Sahara. American financial magnates,

19. The draft theses that follow were subsequently revised and expanded by the commission on blacks. For the final text, see pp. 947–50.

who exploit twelve million blacks in the United States, have also now turned to the peaceful penetration of Africa. The degree to which Britain feels threatened in its position is evident in the extreme measures they have taken to suppress the strike in the Rand.²⁰ Just as the danger of a new World War has grown acute as a result of the competition in the Pacific Ocean among imperialist powers established there, so too there are sinister indications that Africa is becoming the prey of competing efforts by these peoples.

Added to this is the fact that the Russian Revolution and the great revolts of Asian and Muslim peoples against imperialism have awakened the consciousness of millions of blacks. These are the same blacks that have been exploited by capitalism for a hundred years not only in Africa but even more in America, where a rebellious movement is growing ever more intensive. This exploitation has exerted its influence on the entire black race, oppressing and degrading them.

From this it follows that the black question has become important for the world-revolution, both subjectively and objectively. The Communist International has already grasped how useful the support of coloured Asian peoples in semi-capitalist countries can be for the proletarian revolution. It also recognises the collaboration of our oppressed black brothers and sisters as necessary for the revolution of the proletarian masses and the destruction of capitalist power. For this reason, the Fourth Congress declares that Communists have a special duty to apply the Theses on the Colonial Question to the Black question.²¹

- 1.) The Fourth Congress considers it essential to support every form of the black movement that undermines or weakens capitalism and imperialism or prevents its further expansion.
- 2.) Black workers should be organised everywhere. Where black and white working masses live side by side, every opportunity must be utilised to form a united front.
- 3.) Work among blacks should be carried out primarily by blacks.
- 4.) Steps should be taken immediately to call a general conference or congress of blacks in Moscow.

Billings: Comrades, to conclude I would like to express the hope that comrades of each section of the Communist International where there are black workers will seize hold of the black question in its current form, viewing this not merely as a New Year's resolution but as work to be carried out in reality

20. See resolution on South Africa, p. 736, and n. 29 on that page.

21. For the Second Congress Theses on the National and Colonial Questions, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 283–90.

and in action, in order to awaken the consciousness of the black masses and put us in a position to integrate them into the proletarian revolution.

McKay (United States): Comrades, I have the feeling that I would prefer to face lynch justice in the civilised United States rather than to try to make a speech before such an intellectually developed and critically minded world audience. I belong to a race of speakers, yet my public speaking is always so poor that those of my own race say that I should not try to give speeches any more but should stick to writing. But, when I heard that the black question was to be placed on the agenda of this congress, I felt nevertheless that I would stand in eternal disgrace if I did not say something about the brothers and sisters of my race. I would particularly disgrace the blacks of the United States, since I published a poem in 1919 that has become known, which is always shoved into the limelight because of my poetical temperament as a leading spokesperson for black radicalism in the United States.²²

I have the feeling that my race has been honoured by the invitation to one of its members to speak at the present Fourth Congress. It is an honour not because my race is different from the white or yellow races, but because it is a race of workers, of hewers of wood and drawers of water, a race that belongs to the most oppressed, exploited, and subjugated part of the working class of the world. The Communist International is for the emancipation of all workers of the world without distinction of race or colour. And this stand of the Communist International is not just written on paper, as is the Fifteenth Amendment to the constitution of the United States of America;²³ it is something real.

The black race at present has a special position in the economic life of the world. In every country where whites and blacks must live together, the capitalists set the one against the other. It is as if the international bourgeoisie wished to use the black race as a trump in the battle against world-revolution. Great Britain has black regiments in the colonies, and by using them in the last war it showed what can be achieved by black soldiers. And the revolution in

22. McKay is probably referring to his poem 'If We Must Die', written in 1919, which contains the words,

If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain...
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

Reprinted in Cooper 1987, p. 100.

23. The Fifteenth Amendment to the US constitution, ratified in 1870, barred the exclusion of US citizens from voting because of 'race, color, or previous condition of servitude'. By 1900, most blacks had been deprived of this right by a combination of legal regulations and extralegal terror.

Britain is still far distant as a result of the well-organised exploitation of the subject peoples of the British Empire.

In Europe, we see that France has a black army of more than three hundred thousand men, and that it aims to use this army to carry out its policy of the imperialist subjugation of Europe. In the United States, we face the same situation. The North-American bourgeoisie knows how well the black soldiers fought for their liberation in the Civil War, even though they were illiterate and unpractised. It also knows how well the black soldiers fought in the Spanish-American War under Theodore Roosevelt. It knows that, in the recent war, it mobilised more than four hundred thousand blacks, who acquitted themselves very well. In addition to fighting for the capitalists, they bravely weathered a hard struggle for their own interests when they were forced after their return to the United States to struggle against the white mobs in Chicago, St. Louis, and Washington.²⁴

But even more important is the fact that the American capitalists use black soldiers in their struggles against the interests of the working class, and that they are preparing to mobilise the entire black race in the United States in combat against the organised working class. The present situation in the United States is horrendous and fraught with danger. It is more dreadful and horrendous than that of the peasants and Jews under the rule of the tsars in Russia. It is so dreadful and horrendous that very few people in the United States can accept it.

The reformist bourgeoisie has carried out a struggle against racial division and race prejudice in the United States. The socialists and Communists conducted this struggle with great caution, because there are still strong prejudices of this kind among the American socialists and Communists. They do not want to take up the black question. In my dealings with American comrades, I have seen that, on many occasions, when white and black comrades came together, that prejudice was noticeable. And the greatest hindrance that Communists in the United States must overcome is that they must first of all free themselves from their attitudes toward blacks before they can succeed in reaching blacks through any form of radical propaganda.

But, when I consider the blacks themselves, I have a sense that, just as other oppressed races have come to Moscow to learn how to struggle against the exploiter, the blacks too will come to Moscow. In 1919, when the Communist

24. Attacks on Chicago blacks began 27 July 1919 and lasted a week; 38 people were killed (23 of them blacks). Attacks in East St. Louis 28 May and 2 July 1917 originated in resentment against the use of blacks as strikebreakers and left about one hundred blacks dead. Attacks on blacks in Washington DC 19–22 July 1919 were met by significant armed resistance, including by black soldiers.

International published its manifesto, which contained a passage regarding the exploited colonies,²⁵ there were many groups of radical blacks in the United States that distributed this propaganda among blacks. In 1920, the American government set about combating and suppressing radical propaganda among blacks. Several small groups of radical blacks responded to these efforts of the government by a public declaration that socialists were striving for the emancipation of blacks, while the reformist United States could do nothing for them.

It was on this occasion, I believe, that American blacks grasped for the first time in American history that Karl Marx was concerned with their emancipation and fought for it energetically. I will read a relevant quotation from a writing by Karl Marx during the Civil War:

When an oligarchy of three hundred thousand slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the world, 'slavery' on the banner of Armed Revolt, when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great Democratic Republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the eighteenth century; when on those very spots counter-revolution... cynically proclaimed property in man 'the cornerstone of the new edifice' – then the working classes of Europe understood at once... that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labour, and that for the men of labour, with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic.²⁶

Karl Marx, who wrote these lines, is generally known as the father of scientific socialism and the author of the epoch-making work, *Capital*, popularly known as 'the socialist Bible'.

Together with Richard Cobden, the atheist Charles Bradlaugh, and John Bright, he travelled throughout Britain to give addresses, and aroused the working class against the Confederacy to such a degree that Lord Palmerston, the prime minister, who wished to recognise the South, was forced to resign. Just as Marx fought against chattel slavery in 1861, his intellectual followers, today's socialists, are fighting against wage slavery – the exploitation of people by other people.

25. See Riddell (ed.) 1987, pp. 227–8 or Trotsky 1972b, 1, 24–5.

26. See Letter of the International Working Men's Association to Abraham Lincoln, Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 20, pp. 19–21.

If the American Workers' Party were a genuine workers' party, which embraced the blacks as well, it would be illegal in the South.²⁷ And I would like to inform the American comrades that there is a local branch of the American Workers' Party in the South, in Richmond, in the state of Virginia, which is illegal – illegal because it has coloured members.

Here, we have a small group of white and black comrades who work together, and the fact that there are laws in Virginia and in most other Southern states that ban meetings that include both whites and blacks means that the Workers' Party can only be illegal in the South. In order to get around the Virginia laws, the black and white comrades have to have separate meetings, and come together only once a month behind closed doors.

That is indicative of the work that must be accomplished in the South. The work among the blacks in the South must be carried out through legal propaganda organised in the North. For the Southern states of the United States, home to nine million of the black population, which numbers ten million in all, is such that even the liberal bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie among the blacks are prevented by legal restrictions from having their own publications to develop reformist propaganda.

The fact is that only in the Southern states is there suppression of freedom of opinion. In the North, on the other hand, there is no such repression. In the North, special laws are passed for specific situations, such as for example the laws against Communists and socialists during the War. In the South, by contrast, there are laws that have been on the books for fifty-five years now, banning blacks from meeting together to discuss their grievances. The whites who are concerned with the condition of blacks are not allowed to go to them and speak to them. When we send white comrades to the South, they are usually expelled by the white oligarchy, and if they do not leave the area the white mob sets upon them and whips, tars, and feathers them. But, when we send black comrades, they do not come back again, because they are lynched and burned.

I hope that the international bourgeoisie will not succeed in utilising blacks in the final struggle against world-revolution. I hope that, in response to the challenge of the international bourgeoisie, which has now fully grasped the importance of the black question, we will soon see some black soldiers in the ranks of the best, most courageous, and most magnificent armed force in the world, Russia's Red Army and Navy, who will fight not only for their own emancipation but for the liberation of the entire working class of the world.

27. The Workers' Party of America was a legal structure established and directed by US Communists, at a time when the CP itself was still functioning underground. See pp. 215–16, nn. 28–30.

Chair: I would like to point out that this is the first time that a world congress of the Communist International has taken up the black question. I do not consider it necessary to point out the importance of this question. It is a matter of winning the race that has, until now, been the most oppressed. A resolution has been drafted by the commission on blacks whose text seems somewhat theoretical and not easily understood by the working class as a whole and the more oppressed layers of the black race. The Presidium has therefore decided to send this resolution back to the same commission with instructions to amend it and to return with a clearer version.²⁸

Is there any objection to this? That is not the case.

The proposal of the Presidium is therefore adopted.

Adjournment: 4:55 p.m.

28. See report by Rose Pastor Stokes (Sasha) and resolution, pp. 847–51. For a response by a central Comintern leader to points raised by Billings and McKay, see 'A Letter to Comrade McKay', in Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 354–6.

Session 23 – Saturday, 25 November 1922

The Cooperative Movement

Speakers: Meshcheriakov, Lauridan, Henriet, Khinchuk

Convened: 7:10 p.m.

Chairpersons: Neurath, later Kolarov

Meshcheriakov (Russia): The cooperative movement is one of the strongest expressions of the workers' movement, measured not in terms of organisational firmness and discipline but in terms of the number of its members.

In general, it is no exaggeration to say that the cooperative organisations of the world encompass in their ranks not millions but several tens of millions of members.

Cooperatives are not just organisations that a member visits from time to time in order to make necessary purchases. The cooperative makes efforts to create an ideology, to shape all its work around this ideology, and to root this ideology deeply in the consciousness of its members. The old leaders of the cooperative movement stubbornly defended the view that the cooperatives form the movement's 'third form' and must be kept completely independent from the two other forms, the party and the trade unions. This led to the fact that each active cooperative member has a special 'cooperative corner' of the brain in which the old leaders of the cooperative movement had unlimited mastery.

But it is, of course, impossible for the human brain to be divided into different sectors by completely

impenetrable partitions. The new ideas of revolutionary struggle forced their way into even these sacred 'cooperative corners'. But the process took place extremely slowly. In addition, we might say that, besides the osmosis penetrating inwards there was also an osmosis outwards. Diffusion took place in the opposite direction. Deeply rooted opportunist ideas forced their way out of the cooperative corner into other parts of the workers' brain and infected it with opportunism.

The cooperative movement was previously a *purely economic* organisation. It had never been a vehicle for proletarian struggle. The cooperative movement therefore did not attract the attention of revolutionary forces in the working class, who had always been drawn along with the sweep of struggle in political parties and trade unions. Social traitors of every variety made outstanding use of this situation. Given that they did not encounter any resistance from revolutionary forces in the proletariat, they achieved an extremely firm hold in the cooperatives, disposing freely of their financial resources and making unrestrained use of this bulwark to poison the class consciousness of the proletariat with the toxic vapours of their opportunist social-traitor ideology. They have at their disposal an audience of many million workers.¹

In addition, the experience of the Russian Revolution showed clearly that a proletariat that has taken power will encounter great difficulties in organising the nourishment of the people and the exchange of goods if it has not *previously* taken command of the cooperative movement. It is then forced to win these positions at a moment when all its energies must be directed to holding power and organising the new society, when the cooperatives must immediately begin to carry out the tasks assigned by the new proletarian government.

This conquest cannot, however, be carried through in a single day. It is impossible to cleanse the stagnant morass of the old cooperative movement from top to bottom in a brief period. Many important posts in the cooperatives remain for a long time in the hands of the old cooperative figures. They are enemies of the proletariat; they sabotage the work; the organising of feeding the people and exchanging goods is carried out badly – and all this awakens the masses' discontent and weakens the strength of the new revolutionary government.

All these factors clearly show how important it is for the revolutionary proletariat to drive the old leaders of the cooperative movement – traitors to the cause of the working class – out of their last hiding place in good time, before

1. At this point there is a repetition in the German text. The passage 'All these factors...extreme right-wing opportunists' (see third paragraph below) appears here as well, with minor variations in wording. The translation follows the Russian text in removing the repetition.

the revolution, and thus to take possession of this last bastion of the extreme right-wing opportunists.

The Communist International was quick to recognise this necessity. Already at its Third Congress in the summer of 1921 it put the question of Communist work in the cooperative movement on the agenda and approved the theses proposed by the reporter on this question.²

These theses address chiefly the general direction and, let us say, the programme of the work that Communists have to carry out in the cooperative movement. Questions of tactics and, even more, of organisation were touched on in these theses only on the most general level. The main point in the theses was that the cooperative movement must cease being the 'third form of the workers' movement', fully independent and isolated from the others, and that the work of revolutionary cooperatives must be closely interwoven with that of the proletariat's revolutionary, political, and trade-union organisations.

The theses insisted that the old slogan of the opportunist cooperatives – regarding the cooperative movement's supposed 'political neutrality', has to be decisively rejected, because the social traitors have boldly and readily carried out their policy of converting the cooperative movement into a servant of the bourgeoisie. In the organisational arena, the theses insisted merely that Communist cooperative members should form cells, and that these cells must be unified on a district and national level, and that the entire movement must be led by a cooperative department of the Communist International.

This department was given the task of calling the first international conference of Communist cooperative members.³ The department carried out this decision, and the first international conference of Communists in the cooperatives convened on 1 November 1922, in Moscow.

The conference brought together thirty-six representatives of twenty countries with decisive or consultative vote. Those with decisive vote came from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, the Far Eastern Republic,⁴ Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Bulgaria, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, the representatives of the Anglo-Saxon countries, and members of the cooperative section of the Communist International. Among the countries with a strong cooperative

2. See Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 230.

3. The call for a conference to convene on 1 November 1922 was printed in *Impreccorr*, 2, 80 (19 September 1922), p. 603.

4. The Far Eastern Republic was a buffer state, consisting of southern Siberia east of Lake Baikal, formed by Soviet Russia in April 1920. Created to avert a clash of Soviet forces with Japanese occupation troops, it was merged into Soviet Russia in November 1922, after Japanese withdrawal from the region.

movement, only Czechoslovakia and Belgium were missing. There was also no specific representative for Britain.

The conference deliberations lasted six days, from November 1 to 6, with two sessions each day. The conference agenda was as follows:

- 1.) Setting up the conference.
- 2.) Reports of delegates on the state of the cooperative movement in their countries and the work of Communists in the cooperatives.
- 3.) Communism and the cooperative movement.
- 4.) Tactical questions.
- 5.) Organisational questions.
- 6.) Elections.

The delegates' reports made clear that the cooperative movement is everywhere experiencing a profound crisis, rooted in the economic crisis, the sharp shifts in currency exchange rates, and the harsh capitalist offensive. Under these conditions, it is illusory to expect any help from a cooperative movement that remains within its previous, narrow limits. Since the cooperatives are continuing to apply their old methods of work, they cannot provide workers with any significant assistance. Even the cooperative movement's own leaders sense its bankruptcy, but they are unable to find any new way of functioning. All this is creating fertile ground for the growth and development of new revolutionary ideas in the cooperatives.

In addition, all the reports established that the Communist parties of Western Europe have devoted only the most limited attention to the cooperative movement and to Communist work within it. The party publications provide space for this topic only unwillingly and when pressed. In many countries the decision of the Third Congress of the Communist International that Communists in the cooperatives should form cells has still not been carried out to this day. The parties do not assign comrades for Communist work in the cooperatives and show no inclination to assume leadership for this work. They do not make efforts to draw cooperatives into the political and economic campaigns that they undertake.

The complaints from France were particularly bitter. The Communist party there has not yet paid the slightest attention to the cooperatives, and Communists working in this field do not receive any instructions. As a result, there is much discord among them. True, the Party has taken a decision requiring all its members to join cooperatives and to work in this field. But this decision is not being implemented.

As the response to our questionnaire noted, 'Most members of the Communist Party are not members of cooperatives'. At another point, the response stated, 'Only the Communist workers are members of the cooperatives.' The

Communist Party has not yet taken a definite stand on the tendencies that have arisen among cooperative members who belong to the Party. The Party makes no effort to bring this movement under its influence and leadership. The response complains further, 'The Communist Party has provided no help at all to the committee of Communist cooperative members. Right at the start, we succeeded with some effort in publishing some articles in *L'Humanité* that explained what we are doing.'

The fruits of such an approach are clear to see. When the Communist party makes no effort to draw near to the Communist cooperative members, they respond in similar fashion. They do not attempt to obtain leadership from the party. 'Our committee of Communists in the cooperatives has no official relationship to the Communist Party but seeks to maintain friendly relations with it', the answer to our questionnaire informs us.

Only 'friendly relations' – to the general staff of the country's entire revolutionary proletarian movement. And, yet, one of the most important and fundamental principles of the revolutionary cooperative movement is precisely the closest possible relations among revolutionary workers' movements of every sort, and their subordination to a unified will, a unified leadership, in work based on a unified plan, in the Communist party's hegemony over all proletarian organisations of every type. The only way to structure our work successfully is through such a united front of all organisations. It is hardly surprising that given the Party's disconnection from Communists in the cooperatives, and vice versa, the revolutionary cooperative movement in France remains extremely weak. 'So far the Party has not given us the support we anticipated', the response states, 'and our influence is therefore much less than it ought to be'.

The weaker the Party's attention to work in the cooperatives, the stronger is the disunity in this work and the greater are the barriers to achieving agreement. In this regard, France provides a sorry example. In a letter from one of our French comrades, we read:

At the cooperative congress we witnessed the following unfortunate situation. The moment that one of the Communist comrades took the floor to oppose the reformist report, another party member rose to speak – to the great joy of our opponents – and demanded a vote of confidence in the leaders of the cooperative. As a result, most of the arguments raised against statements by Communists were advanced by members of our party. At every opportunity, the reformists, burning to split the Communist Party and weaken it, happily stressed the disagreements among us.⁵

5. The congress of French cooperators met in Marseilles at the end of May 1922. Communists called on cooperatives to ally with the revolutionary workers' movement,

Communist Parties everywhere must devote concentrated attention to the cooperative movement. Otherwise, the lack of discipline among Communists in the cooperatives will strike roots and become a habit, and, at that point, it will be very hard to fight back against this evil. In war, every strongpoint must be occupied at the right moment. If this is not done, the unoccupied strongpoint must later be stormed at great cost.

And the time has already come for Communists in the cooperatives to undertake a serious struggle. Everywhere, the discontent with the cooperative movement's old leaders, old theory, and old way of doing things is making headway. The air is literally pregnant with revolutionary ideas. Although the work of Communists in the cooperatives in France is quite chaotic, weak, and unorganised, their successes are noticeable even there. In a report of our French comrades we read the following:

The successes of our work were most evident in the votes at our congresses. In 1919 there were no votes. In 1920, our comrades received twenty-one votes out of a total of 4,000. In 1921, fifty-one votes out of the same number. In 1922, 300 votes from the same 4,000 members. Each day brings us new supporters. In the near future, we can hope for outstanding results.

In some countries, such as the Netherlands, there is no connection at all between Communists and the cooperatives. The cooperative department has no information whatsoever regarding the cooperative movement in Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, and Latvia – I am mentioning only countries in Europe.

On the other hand, the delegates' reports clearly show that, wherever Communists and Communist parties devote attention, even if limited, to the cooperatives, this work rapidly leads to fruitful results. In this regard, Germany takes first place. A number of experienced comrades are assigned to this work there. In Germany, the Communists have organised 112 fractions in cooperatives that they belong to. There are cooperatives whose entire executive is made up of Communists, although the number of such cooperatives is very small.

To link these cells together, twenty delegated district committees have been formed. From time to time, Communists in the cooperatives hold district conferences – there were three in 1921 and four in 1922. National conferences are also held from time to time. There is a magazine, *Der kommunistische Genossenschaftler* [*The Communist Cooperator*] at the service of the movement. Five party newspapers publish supplements on the cooperatives. There is a

adopt a positive stance toward Soviet Russia, and work actively to counter the effects of economic crisis. Damjanović (ed.) 1981, 5, p. 982, n. 440.

cooperatives section in the Party's central committee, although it has access to only very limited resources. All in all, we can say that the Communist Party of Germany has made a start with work in the cooperatives, but we cannot conceal that previously it did very little in this arena. The answer to our circular reads, 'Previously the cooperative issues were the Party's neglected stepchildren.'

However, although only in its beginnings, revolutionary work in the trade unions has scored evident successes. The number of organised Communists in the cooperatives is rising quickly, along with their interest in this work. That is indicated by the number of delegates that have taken part in the national conferences, of which three have been held so far. At the first (in 1921), there were 24 representatives from 16 districts. At the second, 30 representatives from 21 districts. At the third (on 20 August 1922 in Weissenfels), 96 representatives took part, although the report stresses that this number would have been much higher if the conference had been better organised. If the Communist Party of Germany devotes serious attention to this movement, the work will soon achieve brilliant results.

The same brilliant prospects await the work of Communists in Czechoslovakia, if Communists in the cooperatives there go about their work with more determination.

All these reports from different countries show that the Fourth Congress must stress strongly its endorsement of the Third Congress decision, which stated that Communists in the cooperatives must organise their cells and that all branches of the Party must devote as much attention as possible to this movement.

Our conference's report on 'Communism and the Cooperative Movement' and the surrounding debates showed that the Third Congress of the Communist International quite correctly identified the fundamental issues of programme in this arena. The first international conference of Communists in the cooperatives had no improvements or additions to make on this question. Moreover, there was not a single motion of that type.

In the discussion of tactics, the conference recognised absolutely and categorically the necessity for cooperatives to become energetically involved in struggles on every question encountered by the cooperatives or consumers. This struggle must be carried out shoulder to shoulder and in closest contact with the Communist parties and red trade unions.⁶ It is particularly important to struggle against everything that promotes an acceleration of inflation

6. By 'red trade unions', Meshcheriakov is referring to the Red International of Labour Unions, which favoured labour unity and whose national affiliates sought to work within Social-Democratic-led unions.

or makes it more difficult to combat it. Under this heading falls the struggle against any increase in tariffs, excise taxes, or indirect taxes, and against attempts to levy excessive or special taxes on the cooperatives; the demand to transfer distribution to the population of all essentials of life exclusively to the consumer cooperatives; and also the need for the cooperatives and their members to take part in all forms of these struggles. It is particularly important in Germany that Communists in the cooperatives initiate a very energetic campaign in their associations and leagues in favour of the cooperatives taking part in these struggles and also attending the congress of factory councils.

In Italy, the task of Communists in the cooperatives consists of drawing both urban consumer cooperatives and rural producer cooperatives into the struggle against Fascism.

Agitation must be conducted just as energetically on questions like the rise of militarism, which requires an increase in the taxation of consumers and creates dangers of war and attempts at intervention.⁷

Only the experience of such struggles, carried out jointly with the Communist parties and the red trade unions, can destroy the principle of political neutrality of the cooperative movement, which is deeply implanted by the old cooperative leaders. It will also shatter the conception that the cooperative movement is a fully independent third form of the workers' movement. Only through such a united struggle can a united front be created of the workers' movement in its every expression, and the full unity of this movement be forged.

But this does not exhaust the tasks of Communists in this field. They must also employ *purely cooperative methods* in their work. They must try to determine which methods of cooperative work are the best under the given conditions for their functioning as institutions of the working people – peasants, workers, and craftspeople. This includes, for example, the need to abstain from distributing dividends to the cooperative members. This income should be used to increase the cooperative's resources by assigning the money to its non-distributed reserve fund, as well as to establish a fund for special assistance for strikers, victims of capitalist reaction, and locked-out workers. This includes also work among the women who belong to the cooperative, among youth, the struggle against the penetration of guild socialism into the cooperatives, and so on.⁸

7. The term 'intervention' was then associated principally with efforts by the Allied powers, especially during 1918–20, to support counter-revolutionary armies in Russia, invade the country, and overthrow the Soviet government.

8. Guild socialism, advanced primarily in Britain in the early twentieth century, advocated worker self-government of industry through national worker-controlled guilds.

Under organisational questions, the conference determined a framework for conduct of the work of Communists in the cooperatives, from the cell up to the cooperative section of the Communist International. The section will consist of twenty representatives of different countries, elected at international conferences. For the day-to-day work, the section consists of a presidium composed of seven comrades.

Based on the first year of Communists' work in the cooperative movement, the conference has thus taken two great new steps forward: it has worked out the movement's tactics and its organisational forms.

In view of the work thus accomplished, the section proposes that this plenary session of the Fourth Comintern Congress adopt the following resolution on the cooperative movement.

Resolution on the Cooperative Movement

In the final years before the World War and even more during the War, the cooperative movement experienced very rapid development in almost every country. Broad masses of workers and peasants flowed into its ranks. The capitalist offensive now under way everywhere leads workers – and especially women – to place an even higher value on the assistance that consumer cooperatives can provide them with.

Long ago, the old-time social reformists well understood the importance of cooperatives for the realisation of their goals. They implanted themselves in the cooperatives, which they used to poison tirelessly and energetically the consciousness of working people. Indeed, they even succeeded in arousing among workers favourably disposed to revolution a gulf between consciousness and action. In addition, in some countries where the Social-Democratic parties held the leadership of the cooperative movement, they eagerly scooped into the funds of the cooperatives to find money to support their parties. Under the banner of political neutrality, they in reality carried on support for the bourgeoisie and its imperialist policies.

The old cooperative leadership, holding the movement's reins in its hands, cannot or will not grasp the changed social conditions and the cooperatives' new tasks and work out corresponding new methods of work. By stubbornly refusing to dispense with their sacred cooperative principles, they undermine the purely economic work and existence of the cooperatives, and thus the cooperative movement as a whole.

Finally, they also do nothing to prepare the cooperatives to carry out the colossal and vital tasks that will fall to them when the proletariat takes power.

All these factors lead Communists everywhere to turn their earnest attention to wresting the cooperatives out of the hands of the social reformists and transforming them from a tool of the bourgeoisie's lackeys to one of the revolutionary proletariat.

The Third Congress of the Communist International reviewed and approved theses on the work of Communists in the cooperatives. The experience of one and a half years has now shown that the formulation of these theses was fully correct. The Fourth Congress of the Communist International approves these theses again and urgently instructs all Communist parties, groups, and organisations to energetically set about work in the cooperatives. It also instructs party publications to allocate adequate space in their pages to issues in the cooperative movement.

In particular, and as an extension of these theses, the Fourth Congress points out the following:

- 1.) It is absolutely necessary that all Communist parties carry out the decision that party members also be members of consumers' cooperatives and carry out Communist work in these organisations. Communist members of cooperatives must form cells – whether openly or secretly – in each cooperative. All these cells must be linked in a district organisation, and the district bodies in a national organisation headed by a special cooperative section of the Communist party central committee in that country. All the work by Communists in the cooperatives must be carried out in a strictly disciplined manner under the leadership of the Communist party central committee. The task of these cells is to establish a link with the broad masses of worker members of the cooperative. They must subject to criticism not only the principles but also, especially, the practice of the old cooperative movement. They must draw around them all the discontented masses and influence them in order to form a united front in the cooperatives against capitalism and the capitalist state. All national associations of Communists in the cooperatives must be closely linked to the Communist International through its cooperative section.

While doing this, the Communists in the cooperatives must not seek to break revolutionary or oppositional cooperative members away from the cooperative association, or to split this association. That would only weaken the cooperative movement and break off the contact of revolutionary cooperative members with the broad worker masses. For the same reasons we should not seek to break the national cooperative federations away from the international league of cooperatives. On the contrary, the Communists must demand that all national federations in which they hold a majority that are

not yet members of the international league should join it and be accepted into its ranks.⁹

2.) Both the Communist party central committees and all Communist cooperative members must energetically struggle against illusions in cooperatives, such as that they are capable of bringing about a socialist order on their own by growing into it over an extended period without a seizure of power by the proletariat, or that they are capable, using their old methods, of significantly improving the conditions of the working class.

A similarly energetic struggle must be waged against the principle of supposed political neutrality of the cooperative movement, behind which lurks open or hidden support for the politics of the bourgeoisie and its servants. This struggle must find expression not only in theoretical propaganda but also in drawing the cooperatives into the economic and political struggle that is now being conducted by the political parties and the red trade unions in defence of the interests of working people.

This encompasses the struggle against increases in taxes, especially indirect taxes, that affect consumers; against special or oppressive taxes of cooperatives or of their sales; and against inflation. It includes the demand that the entire distribution of the essentials of life be transferred to the workers' consumer cooperatives. It includes the struggle against militarism which leads to an increase in state expenditures and thus in taxation; against the lunatic financial policy of the imperialist states, which causes monetary collapse; against fascism, which is raising its head everywhere and which mercilessly destroys the cooperatives; against the threat of a new war; against intervention and for trade agreements with Soviet Russia, and so on.

The Communists in the cooperatives must make efforts to draw their organisations into a shoulder-to-shoulder alliance in this struggle with the Communist parties and the red trade unions and thus create a proletarian united front. The Communists in the cooperatives must demand that their organisations provide assistance to victims of capitalist terror, to workers on strike or locked out, and so on. Communists in the cooperatives must insist energetically that the cooperatives carry on revolutionary educational work on a broad scale and must actively carry out this work.

3.) Parallel to this energetic participation in the political and economic struggle of the revolutionary proletariat, Communist members of cooperatives must carry out purely cooperative work in these organisations, in

9. The vast majority of cooperatives were affiliated to the International Cooperative Alliance, founded in 1895. Most ICA affiliates were then consumer cooperatives with a predominantly working-class membership.

order to give them a character corresponding to the proletariat's new tasks. They should strive for unification of small consumer cooperatives into large ones; rejection of the old principle of distributing profits, which weakens the cooperatives; and for utilisation of the surpluses to strengthen the cooperative movement and to set up a special fund to support strikers. They should strive for defence of the interests of cooperative employees; and against bank credits, which can pose a danger to cooperatives; and so on. If it is necessary to raise membership dues, the Communists must demand that the workers who are unable to pay the dues not be expelled from the cooperatives and that dues be reduced for workers without means.

The Communist cells in the cooperatives must link their work as closely as possible with that of the proletarian women's organisations and the Communist youth leagues, in order to carry out propaganda imbued with Communist principles for cooperatives among women workers and youth. It is also necessary to take up vigorously the struggle against the cooperatives' bureaucracy, which uses the slogan of democracy as a cover but degrades this principle to empty words. In reality, it functions arbitrarily and unchecked in the cooperatives, failing to call membership assemblies and taking no note of the will of the working-class masses that belong to the cooperative organisations. Finally, it is necessary for the Communist cells in the cooperatives to bring the Communist members of cooperatives, the women not excepted, into the executives and supervisory bodies of the cooperatives and to take other measures so that Communists will gain the knowledge and habits necessary to lead the cooperatives.

Lauridan (France): The theses and resolutions of the Third Congress, mentioned in the proposal before us, dealt with the cooperative question in a manner that seems to me to have been much too general.

The assessment should have contained some corrections, which, it seems to me, did not make it to Moscow from the West. Comrade Meshcheriakov just complained that, particularly in France, we had not done appropriate work in the cooperatives. However, the report that Comrade Meshcheriakov has presented to us chiefly takes up the consumer cooperatives.

I am certainly in agreement with the reporter concerning the role of the consumer cooperatives, and I would favour devoting all the appropriate time to this question tomorrow. There is a very great danger that the cooperatives will be harnessed to every purpose.

When Guesde returned from banishment in 1876, he encountered such a spirit of neutralism in a cooperative conference that, when support was demanded for the strikers of Montceau-les-Mines,¹⁰ a member of the cooperative council,

10. The firing of fifteen coal miners in Montceau-les-Mines in 1878 sparked a strike, which laid the basis for a miners' union.

Chabert, opposed that and secured the rejection of the requested assistance in the name of political neutrality.

This political neutrality served the purposes of employers and Christian forces who sought to combat the worker cooperatives. An employer in Roubaix by the name of Motte said this on one occasion to Jules Guesde, who had spread the idea of cooperatives in the North and had founded the first worker cooperative in Roubaix. Worker cooperatives, said Motte, were nothing more or less than a milch cow for the revolutionaries.

It is therefore good policy to keep a close eye on the cooperative movement. It would be a fundamental error for us to believe that the cooperative movement can prepare elements of the new society. The material and human elements will be prepared not by the cooperatives but by capitalism itself through the process of fusion [of businesses].

Guesde had a splendid phrase: 'For the workers, communism in the workplace is enough.' It is therefore obvious that we must carefully observe everything that the cooperatives do. But, at the same time, we must attribute to them only a relative importance. We must steer toward the goal that the cooperatives will provide a refuge for the proletariat in struggle and above all provide it with supplies. In northern France, all the cooperatives have founded people's homes for the workers' organisations. They distribute support payments for strikers and unemployed. Many cooperatives provide direct or indirect financial support to the Party.

We can express this through a simple formula: today, the cooperatives must be an assistant to the Party; tomorrow they will be an assistant to proletarian power.

It is therefore necessary and indispensable that Communists take the cooperatives by assault. I just spoke of the tradition in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais departments. There are many cooperatives there, a cooperative movement similar to that in Belgium. After the split in Tours, the Socialist Party tried to expel the Communists from the trade unions.

In many cooperatives the Communists have the majority. Thus, in Tourcoing, a city with sixty thousand inhabitants, in Halluin, a city that in France is called 'red Halluin', in Marcq-en-Baroeul, and Solesmes. However, in Roubaix, the Communists are in the minority. The Dissidents [Social Democrats] succeeded through a series of indescribable manoeuvres in expelling the Communists from the cooperatives.

The Communists then set about building a new cooperative against that of the Dissidents. This proletarian cooperative of Roubaix, which has existed for a year, achieved a turnover of 500,000 francs in the first six months of its existence. It owns buildings with an area of 1,000 square metres, ovens, a loading dock for coal on the canal, a coffee shop, meeting rooms, music rooms, and so on.

These obvious successes are spurring on the Communists in the other regions and the other cities of the North to follow this example.

We start with the principle that we should not give any money to the reformists, the Dissidents, and we take the floor in the cooperatives against the Dissidents and against political neutrality. I am quite aware that it is awkward for Communists to give money to the Dissidents and to subsidise the Social-Democratic party. But if this gesture is awkward, a response that calls for the cooperatives' neutrality is a grave error. What is at stake is not the principle of subsidy, but rather attacking the Party that is receiving the subsidy. We must call for a subsidy for the true workers' party, that is, the Communist Party.

I call the reporter's attention to this isolated Communist cooperative in the North, which may tomorrow become a symbol and cause a deepening, large-scale schism in the cooperatives. Our call, however, is for unity.

Of course, the Communists of Roubaix are obliged to support the Communist cooperative in that city, but they must, nonetheless, strive by every means for the admission of this cooperative to the league of French cooperatives.

I hope that the French comrades, and all other comrades, will support the readmission of our Communist comrades of Roubaix.

Where there are groups of those expelled from the cooperatives, we must win their readmission, while at the same time gathering the material means to establish a cooperative, as was done in Roubaix, when every means to achieve a reconciliation has been exhausted.

That is all I have to say on consumer cooperatives, which, in any case, received lively and comprehensive treatment in the report. But there are other forms of cooperatives, especially those in agriculture. I am referring not to those of the rural workers, who are fundamentally wage workers just like those in industry. I mean the unions of tenant farmers and sharecroppers, which sometimes unite with those of small-scale farm-owners.

Should we oppose the founding of these unions? Should we not view these peasant smallholders as workers, working on their own account? Should we not seek to draw these peasants into the unions, which are, in fact, cooperatives for common purchase and sale?

It's essential to join these cooperatives, not only because they can be very helpful in the socialisation of the land – a point missed by everyone – but because collaboration within them can implant in the peasant's individualistic thinking the conception of a new society, far removed from the individualism of today's society.

This is a form of education, to reach the peasants and familiarise them with the idea that communism assures to every individual the share in the collectivity to which he is entitled under the rule of the collectivity.

There are also producers' cooperatives, of which nothing or very little has been said.

The Fifth Congress, to be held next year, will have to take up this delicate and also dangerous topic. Far be it from me to defend producers' cooperatives, of which I can only repeat that nothing can conceivably be made of them except a form of capitalism within capitalism. Closing one's eyes to this danger is no solution.

The comrades in the North have taken up this question of producers' cooperatives and in fact even gone further. They are thinking in terms of *founding banks* of collective work, which would attract workers' savings and collect workers' money, so that this does not have to be handed over to capitalism or the anti-proletarian state.

Even studying this notion raises dangers, and to implement it is danger personified. The workers have founded producers' cooperatives. In Tourcoing there is a weaving mill called 'Workers Solidarity' – a producers' cooperative that has been in operation for many years. I point to this as an isolated example. Meanwhile, a large number of cooperatives are organising reconstruction in devastated areas.

We could not forestall these reconstruction cooperatives; we had to let them function. They have led to the concept of guilds, which are today defended by USTICA, the Union of Technicians in Industry, Commerce, and Agriculture.¹¹

These guilds are also being studied by the federation of revolutionary construction workers. It is urgently necessary for the Communist Party to develop a position on this and for the Communist International to say what it thinks of these guilds and what they might lead to in France and elsewhere.

From a reconstruction cooperative, it is only a small step to a maintenance cooperative, in which petty-bourgeois forces will gather. Given the fact that workers have become petty-bourgeois, whether through the law on inexpensive residences or in other ways, we can only conclude that we need to keep them on our side, not turn them against us. Moreover, whether or not they are small-scale owners, all workers are concerned about the housing problem, which is becoming more and more urgent. Thus the tenants' leagues in France have achieved significant victories.

This is an arena of activity that we cannot abandon to our opponents. We must talk about socialisation of housing. We must find an approach that prevents workers who rent from being pitted against those who own little

11. USTICA was founded in March 1919 by right-wing members of the CGT with the goal of representing technicians within the National Economic Council; it later evolved into a managers' trade-union.

houses. Our approach will show those with small properties that capitalism feels no mercy toward them. It will show that a reconstruction cooperative that becomes a maintenance cooperative can readily be exploited by the bourgeoisie in the name of the supposed interests of these small-scale owners, who are almost all workers.

It is obvious that the initial task of communism in every country, and especially in France, is to restore purity to the sources of revolution, by recognising the importance of the industrial proletariat and devoting to it the attention it deserves. This task, however, demands that we neutralise forces that could serve the cause of counter-revolution.

That is why I wanted to add a few remarks to the report of Comrade Meshcheriakov, and that is why I join him in saying that we must carry over to the field of the cooperative movement our Communist pride and also our ardent militancy, our theoretical vigilance, and our revolutionary conviction. (*Applause*)

Henriet (France): Comrades, at the cooperative conference that took place in Moscow before this congress, we all agreed that we did not want to initiate any discussions here, because we knew very well that our Communist comrades are not all that interested in the cooperative movement. If the discussion became too extensive, it was highly likely we would find ourselves speaking to empty benches.

We are not very proud of this, but since it is a fact, we cannot pass over it in silence.

We also thought that the Congress would not take up producers' cooperatives. This problem is extremely complex. In addition, we were pretty well agreed that, under capitalist rule, producers' cooperatives will get such a grip on the workers committed to them that they will be entirely neutralised in terms of revolutionary action.

Three things are necessary for the development of a producers' cooperative:

- 1.) Sufficient capital.
- 2.) Technicians and experienced administrators.
- 3.) A market for its products.

These three conditions are very seldom satisfied in the producers' cooperatives that workers organise under capitalist rule. In general, it is above all capital that is lacking. They are forced to resort to [government] subsidies or loans from the capitalists. As a result, they fall under the domination and power either of the bourgeois government that provides the subsidy in order to harness the cooperative to its purposes, or the capitalists, who may well become owners of the cooperative overnight, the moment that it stumbles because of faulty technical or administrative management.

There is therefore a great problem concerning financial resources, which, under capitalist rule, are the most important factor in making it at all possible for Communists to organise producers' cooperatives.

There is also a problem concerning technology and administration. The fact that an enterprise has been launched does not in itself mean that it has access to all the necessary administrative and technical resources. Another factor is that, under capitalist rule, marketing the products is by no means a certainty. Since cooperatives are tied to the capitalist system, they have no way of escaping the crises of overproduction or underproduction that are characteristic of this system. In reality, they can develop only by merging completely into the capitalist system. Under such circumstances, comrades who are active in this field are almost always lost to the cause of revolution.

We live in a chaotic time, in which we constantly face grave crises. I urge Communist comrades to consider carefully before they undertake to found an organisation of this type. The situation is no longer what it was earlier, when the capitalist system still seemed to be secure. On the contrary, today, all Communists must make efforts to avoid undertaking anything that could diminish their impetus and their freedom in propaganda and Communist action.

A moment ago, there was mention of the question of guilds. I believe it is important to warn our comrades that these guilds are nothing other than conventional producers' cooperatives, except that their statutes do not provide for distribution of earnings to shareholders, and that they quite often draw the trade unions into their orbit. Under such circumstances, the negative results I have just identified are compounded, because the trade unions, even the most revolutionary, like those just discussed, are drawn into a reformist framework, and to the belief that something permanent, serious, and useful can be achieved within the capitalist system.

Lauridan: Why did you not say this in the report?¹² If that is your opinion, all that was needed was for you to say so.

Henriet: In the report, we warned comrades against the producers' cooperatives that call themselves 'guilds'. We did not want to go into this more fully for the very reason that I have just mentioned.

Lauridan: The danger is clear. They are like ostriches sticking their heads in the sand.

12. No report by Henriet is available. It could have been submitted to the international cooperative congress in Moscow (1–6 November 1922), where Henriet was a delegate.

Henriet: Lauridan is quite right. The danger is great, but not for Communists in the cooperatives.

The efforts of the working class to win liberation from capitalism go back seventy years. Different systems have been tried – like those of Proudhon or of Buchez – which sought to induce the working class to organise producers' cooperatives. Until our workers' congress in 1879,¹³ the discussion in France focused entirely on producers' cooperatives. It seemed that trade unions had been created not to defend the working class in struggle but purely and simply to serve as the nucleus of producers' cooperatives.

The first such cooperatives were founded between 1840 and 1848. In 1848, thanks to a subsidy by the provisional government, producers' cooperatives were started up all across France. During the entire duration of the Empire [of Napoleon III], from 1848 to 1870, Proudhon's system of 'mutualism' flourished, and several thousand cooperatives were founded. Today, they are almost all dead.

The few survivors are similar to those that have survived from the period before 1848. The cooperative of Paris opticians is the worst of capitalist enterprises. That is a convincing experience.

Subsequently, after the workers' congress of 1879, an organisation of producers' cooperatives was founded in France, called the Consultative Chamber of Workers' Producer Cooperatives. It encompasses about 150 such associations. We are justified in saying that not a single one would have remained alive without the subsidies provided by the state and without preferential treatment by the administrative authorities and the City of Paris.

The facts speak decisively on this question, so that there is no need for further discussion. The seventy-year experience in France is nothing unusual, but is matched by that in Britain. Robert Owen's system, which was also based on the organisation of producers' cooperatives, has completely failed. Attempts now under way to revive this, including the efforts of our comrades of USTICA, are based on the same principles. On the excuse that all this is quite practicable in theory, our comrades try to convert these principles to reality, drawing on teachings they have picked up in Germany.

What they do not say, what they never say regarding the producers' cooperatives in Germany, which are organised as guilds, is that, although they have brought some benefits to the German petty bourgeoisie and have enjoyed a certain profitability, this is due only to quite temporary conditions caused by the eight-year pause in the construction industry. Some means had to be urgently found to house the abundant population. However, as soon as there is a return to normal conditions, the celebrated profits of the German guilds

13. Henriet is referring to the Marseilles Conference of 1879; see p. 575, n. 6.

will fall, just like the profits of the capitalist companies with which they are competing. Comrade Beatrice Webb, who has studied British cooperatives, has shown how, under certain circumstances, they fell, one after another, into the hands of the capitalists or disappeared entirely, leaving behind a fatal disappointment for the working class and the class struggle.¹⁴

The bourgeoisie adopted this theory. When you study it closely, you realise that a cooperative movement that must engage in competition with capitalism cannot arrive at the results predicted by Charles Gide. This theory nourished the working class with illusions for 25, 30, 40, or 50 years – but this was merely a period of grace granted by capitalist society. The dream of Charles Gide has now been taken up again by our reformist former comrades.

Communist comrades should therefore not go down this path without first taking facts and experiences into account.

I have asked to speak not only on this subject but also on the social role of the cooperative movement. Lauridan has just said, in line with the theories of Jules Guesde, that cooperatives cannot be of use to society – or at the most that they can give their members some collective social education or offer a certain degree of support to the party and to revolutionary action. I do not share this opinion. I believe that the cooperative movement is an enormous force for social revolution. But I am not a partisan of cooperatives and do not adhere to the teachings of Charles Gide. He believed in a wonderful dream, that all capitalists and workers would unite in consumer cooperatives and, bit by bit, with the help of the funds accumulated in these cooperatives, they could transform the world, banish the economic antagonisms between producers and consumers, and, in short, create a communist society.

The dream of Charles Gide was indeed beautiful, but it was no more than a dream.

When the Socialist Party of France decided in 1910 to enter the cooperative movement, decking out this decision with a few revolutionary phrases, it was merely adopting once again the thesis of Charles Gide. The Socialist Party itself may not have been too concerned with this, but there are comrades that have since recognised the importance of joining the cooperative movement. They did this and have now become the keenest advocates of the theories of Charles Gide. They demand political neutrality, putting the working class to sleep.

Lauridan: You as well! It seems that you just said that the party has no business being involved in the cooperatives, that you do not share Gide's ideas,

14. See Webb's *The Cooperative Movement in Great Britain* (1899).

and that you see no possibility for the cooperatives to provide ammunition for the party. We must come to agreement on this point.

Henriet: I am saying that the comrades in our old party recognised how important it is to join the cooperatives. But not in order to obtain financial support for the Party, which, by the way, is not at all forbidden in the cooperatives. They did it to get away from the political struggles, crises, and tempests that are the daily business of our political groups, and to obtain a pleasant and quiet post and always be able to eat at a well-provided table.

On the other hand, during the War, after the all-round betrayal, those who were in the cooperatives had no need to grasp the value of the cooperative movement in order to take control of all its leading posts. For they felt strongly that the cooperative movement could provide them with considerable financial support. Under the mask of political neutrality, they quietly supplied financial aid – even from the Communist cooperatives – to serve the policies of the Dissidents, the Social Democrats, and reaction. In France, the national association, which receives the sum of 336,000 francs from cooperative members, publishes a newspaper with a run of 150,000 copies.¹⁵ This paper, which is ordered by the cooperatives, adheres strictly to the policies of the unconditionally reactionary reformists and neutralists – even though Communists too contribute to the expenses. In this way, while utilising the overall framework of the cooperative movement and even the ideas advanced by Jules Guesde, they carry out policies that are reactionary – if not openly so, then in concealed form. In the cooperatives we belong to, we face the same question, posed in the same manner.

We are not united in the cooperatives. In the general membership meetings there is seldom agreement. We agree on carrying out propaganda, on using the profits for an expansion fund or for social solidarity efforts or for communist propaganda, and this propaganda enables us to expound Communist principles in every way while continuing activity in the economic arena.

But that is only one side of the matter. If it was just a matter of giving the party financial support, that would not be sufficient motivation, for cooperatives also hold dangers. A membership meeting that approves expenditure for communist propaganda can just as easily also approve money for reformist propaganda.

Lauridan: It's up to us to carry out our duty in the cooperatives.

Henriet: I view the cooperative movement as another form of social action. So long as the capitalist system prevails, the cooperative movement cannot

15. The newspaper in question is probably the *Revue d'économie politique*, founded and edited by Charles Gide.

provide what we have just referred to. However, if it is a matter of a social system like that in Russia, where the proletariat has taken the political leadership, where there is a dictatorship of the proletariat, the situation is quite different. The goal of revolution is socialisation, which is far from meaning that, under communism, everything will be socialised. There is an immensity of economic organisms that remain on an individual basis and have not been socialised. It is easy to talk of socialisation with references to great estates and large factories, in which the workers are already organised, where there is already an attitude of taking over the leadership, and where there are workers' councils. However, the trade unions are not in a position to socialise small-scale industry, the peasantry, the craftsmen, trade, and commerce. That is precisely the problem. In the republic where we find ourselves, we have had dreadful experiences in the past because of a failure to deal with the cooperative movement. It was seen as superfluous and even suspected of being a possible barrier to revolution.

I have heard socialists refer in these terms to the example of the Basel cooperative, where the cooperative movement has reached the highest level of development in the world. The low prices at which goods are sold in this city's cooperative led to the degeneration of the working class, we are told, because they enable the employer to reduce workers' wages. No note is taken here of the workers' resistance against wage reductions. It is thought that an iron law depresses wages to the subsistence minimum.

The Russian Communists, who did not deal with the cooperative movement, had to experience its sabotage by the Mensheviks, who controlled it. At that time, the cooperatives delivered three-quarters of Russia's supply of foodstuffs. As a result of the resistance that found expression within the cooperatives, the Russians were forced to entirely dismantle the cooperative movement and limit it to the role of a simple distribution network, since the state had taken over the requisitioning of all foodstuffs. That resulted from a failure to understand this question.

That is why we have the NEP today, which could have been avoided if, instead of being forced to dismantle the cooperative movement, we had understood the role of the cooperative movement in the social organism and had succeeded in making use of this apparatus. Obviously, the cooperative movement is not a definitive social form; it is merely provisional in character. It makes use of capital but does not serve capitalism. Its essence is democratic. It gives the opportunity to vote to everyone who concerns themselves with the cooperative movement, without regard to the sum of capital that they have contributed.

The social worth of the cooperative movement is thus indisputable. This is especially true if profits are not distributed to each individual member, an

individualistic procedure that is the norm in many cooperatives, but, rather, used to construct a non-distributable collective capital fund. In this way, we achieve socialisation using indirect means.

Cachin: You're retreating back to the positions of Charles Gide.

Henriet: I understand this comment very well in the framework of the capitalist system, because competition makes it impossible for the cooperative movement to develop fully. In Italy, for example, the Fascists are burning down the cooperatives. In a system like that of Soviet Russia, however, where the revolution has been carried out and a dictatorship of the proletariat is in place, the cooperatives provide the only means to come to grips with the disruptive survivals of the capitalist system.

There is no other way to do it. There is no other force that can compel 100 million or 120 million Russian peasants to organise collectively. They must be engaged through methods other than force. This must be done through indirect means. In his work, 'I Do Not Accept Doctrine', Proudhon said – in a polemic against Marx – that Marx thinks of revolution only as the act of a fully formed world proletariat in the context of large-scale industry.¹⁶ But this was absent then from Paris, whose small manufacturers were represented by Proudhon.

This observation supplied the basis of his false social doctrine, which aimed to socialise through producers' cooperatives. Although Proudhon went wrong in the context of capitalist rule, I am convinced that the soviets are not wrong. With the introduction of the New Economic Policy, the consumer and producer cooperatives have been reorganised in a manner that excludes the development of a capitalist economic system through competition among these cooperatives.

What has the Soviet government done to this end? It provides the cooperatives with funds and the necessary equipment, making available everything needed to enable them to grow stronger and develop. When we gathered at the first [cooperative] conference, the secretary of the Moscow soviets came to say that he was glad to see Communists coming to grips with the cooperative movement. If they [in Russia] had succeeded in organising the cooperatives, he said, and if this institution had been in the Communists' hands, the New Economic Policy could have been avoided.

As Lenin said, we must traverse a period of transition. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not enough to bring about a communist world. We did not pass through this transitional period at the outset of the revolution because

16. No work by Proudhon of that name has come to light. Damjanović (ed.) 1981, 5, p. 584, n. 448 suggests as a possible source Proudhon 1858, pp. 281–4.

we had too many other irons in the fire, and many things had to be destroyed to prevent them from destroying us.

However, if you have enough intelligence to utilise the means available to you, you will avoid the stupidities we have fallen into, and you will be able to organise communism. After the dictatorship of the proletariat, you will socialise the major means of production and make the cooperative movement the foundation of all the remaining economic organisms that will still exist on a capitalist and an individual foundation.

That is the meaning of the Communist cooperative movement. (*Applause*)

Chair: Since no further speaker has asked for the floor, we will now hear Comrade Khinchuk, who – as agreed – will give the summary.

Khinchuk (Russia): The polemic between Lauridan and Henriët actually has no relationship to the question before us, with the result that the question itself was not addressed.

Comrade Lauridan is wrong to criticise us for having forgotten the producers' cooperatives. Our resolution does not take up this question because we have not yet studied it. This was discussed at the conference of Communist cooperative members, and we adopted a resolution whose Point 11 states:

The production and credit cooperatives are almost always associations of the petty bourgeoisie and therefore incapable of conducting the struggle against capitalism. These cooperatives are therefore fated either to collapse or to be converted into capitalist corporations.¹⁷

I have read to you only one part of the resolution, Point 11. You see that we are familiar with this phenomenon.

The fact that we did not undertake to address this point here in our resolution is because this congress of the Communist International is too large to address a question that has received such insufficient study. We refer this question to the fifth international congress, where we will present a special draft resolution.

Henriët is wrong to say that we have a NEP because we did not previously have a cooperative movement. The purpose of the NEP is to develop state capitalism, and cooperatives cannot contribute to that goal.

Henriët is right to say that, if Communist cooperatives had been properly developed before the Revolution, it would have substantially eased the Revolution's tasks. Nonetheless, the NEP would have been unavoidable. The cooperative movement could not have changed that reality.

17. For the draft resolution, see 'Communism and Cooperatives', *Inprecorr*, 2, 90 (20 October 1922), pp. 688–9.

Lauridan referred to the fact that the unity of the cooperative movement must be protected. He is entirely right about this. We are supporters of unity, and we spoke about that in the resolutions of the Third Congress. At the Fourth Congress, we did not speak about that, because we cannot just continue repeating the same things.

Nonetheless, we in Russia are now doing all in our power to generalise the cooperative federation and to extend it to Bulgaria, which does not belong to it. We also agree with you that Communists should stay in the cooperatives and win them, just as they must win the trade unions. We have no right to turn over to our enemies the power inherent in the cooperative movement. The attempt to create a separate cooperative movement, as in Egypt, for example, can never succeed. The movement must be won as a whole.

Communists do not yet fully understand the importance of the cooperative movement, although it is an enormously powerful and useful instrument. We saw that the Soviet government was forced in 1919 to distribute products with the aid of cooperatives. They were then in the hands of our opponents. Instead of focusing on the distribution of products, we were forced to conduct a struggle against our opponents, put them in jail, and so on. This devastated the work of the cooperative movement. People were discontented and received nothing. If you wish to avoid difficulties of this sort, you must achieve control of the cooperative movement before the seizure of power.

Adjournment: 9:40 p.m.

Session 24 – Monday, 27 November 1922

Communist Work among Women

Speakers: Clara Zetkin, Hertha Sturm, Smidovich, Kasparova, Murphy

Convened: 12:40 p.m.

Chairperson: Neurath

Clara Zetkin (*Greeted with loud applause*): Comrades, sisters and brothers: I will preface my report on the activity of the Executive's International Women's Secretariat and the development of Communist work among women with a few brief but necessary comments. They might, in themselves, seem superfluous, for they merely repeat what is firmly established and decided. Nonetheless, they are necessary, because we face the fact that misunderstandings regarding our work still prevail in the ranks not only of our opponents but of our own comrades, both men and women. These misunderstandings concern the nature of Communist work among women and the related tasks that fall to bodies of the national sections and the International. These misunderstandings represent, in some cases, the obvious continuing effect of relics of an older, earlier outlook. But, in many other cases, they have been freely encouraged by those who, in the final analysis, are not sympathetic to the cause itself, and indeed, in part, reject it quite decidedly.

The International Women's Secretariat for Communist work among women is not, as some imagine, a combination of independent women's organisations and movements. It is, rather, an auxiliary body

of the Comintern Executive. It carries out its work not only in constant contact with the Executive but under its immediate direction and leadership.

What we conventionally term the Communist Women's Movement is not at all an independent movement of women and has nothing in common with any women's rights currents. It signifies methodical Communist work among women for a double goal. First, with respect to women who already embrace the idea of communism, to integrate them ideologically and organisationally into the different national sections of the Communist International and to make them into active and conscious collaborators in and contributors to the entire life and work of these sections. In addition, with regard to women not yet imbued with communist ideas, it involves winning them and drawing them into all the actions and struggles of the proletariat.

Masses of women producers must be mobilised and made effective in such struggles.¹ There is no work, no struggle of the Communist parties in any country where we as women do not feel that our first and noblest duty is to share in labour and combat. What is more, we have the ambition to stand in the first ranks and to withstand the harshest hail of bullets in the labour and struggles of the Communist parties and the International that unites them, and moreover also to lead with enthusiasm in the most modest daily work.

One thing has been clearly established. However much Communist work among women must be firmly linked ideologically and organically to the life of each party, we nonetheless need special bodies to carry out this work. Of course, Communist work among women must be not women's business, but the business of the totality, of the Communist party of each country, of the Communist International. But, if we wish to achieve this goal, it is necessary that party committees be available everywhere to carry out and lead Communist work among women in a unified and methodical manner and maintain the focus on this goal – whether these bodies are called women's secretariats, women's divisions, or whatever.

Certainly, we do not deny the possibility that, under particularly favourable conditions, a single strong personality, whether a male or female comrade, may be able to carry out such Communist work among women in a locality or an entire district. But, however much we look with admiration on

1. Here and elsewhere, 'producers' translates the German word *Schaffende*, which means both 'producers' and 'creators'. The term is often used by Zetkin, who defined it in a 1923 speech as referring to 'all those whose labour, be it with hand or brain, increases the material and cultural heritage of humankind, without exploiting the labour of others' – a definition that encompasses women working in the home. Puschnerat 2003, p. 346.

such individual achievements within the party, we must also always be aware that if instead of the methodical work of an individual we have the methodical collaboration of several, it is beyond question that the outcome, the effectiveness for communism, will be much greater. For that reason, our method for Communist work among women must be the collaboration of many for a common goal inside the party and the International.

In this process, it has emerged as a requirement for expediency and for a practical division of labour inside the party that women should be called on first and most often for activity in the special committees for Communist work among women. The reasons for this are surely evident. There is no getting around the historical fact that the broad masses of women today still live and work under special social conditions. We cannot escape the historical fact that the special position of the female sex in society has also created a special female psychology. What nature has bequeathed as sex merges with what history has created in terms of social institutions and conditions. Just as we must reckon with the specific psychology of the masses of poor peasants, based on their specific living conditions, so we must also reckon with the special psychology of the broad masses of women.

It follows from this that, in general – and I underline the phrase ‘in general’ –, women themselves are the quickest, most astute, and most effective in recognising the key issues in the life of working women, where they begin their Communist work. In addition, women are also generally better at discovering the most promising methods and forms of Communist activity among the layers of women that are deeply oppressed and are striving upwards. Of course, that is true only on a general level.

As Communists, we consider it our duty and our right to take part in every party activity, from the most inconspicuous work, like distributing leaflets, to immense and decisive battles, and we consider it an insult if anyone regards us as inferior in taking part in the entire broad, historical life of our party and the Communist International. In the same way, every man is welcome to take part in the special Communist work carried out among women. That applies to our committees as well as to our entire activity in its various expressions and arenas.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: during the past year, the importance of women’s committees for Communist work among women has been demonstrated both positively and negatively. The experience has been positive in countries where the Communist sections of the International have created these special bodies. This is the case in *Bulgaria* and *Germany*, where women’s secretariats work to carry out the task of organising and educating Communist women, and of mobilising women producers and leading them in social

struggles. Here, the Communist women's movement has become a force and a strength of Communist party activity as a whole.

There is no doubt that, in these countries, we have many women who belong to the party and are active in it, and growing masses of women outside the party who are our comrades in struggle. The same is true in the country that I am naming last but which stands first in importance, Soviet Russia. Here, the women's committees of the Communist party, in constant collaboration with the party and under its leadership, have shown how important and indispensable the collaboration of women is, particularly at this moment, a difficult time when economy and society are being transformed under Soviet power to communism.

What our Russian women comrades have accomplished and are accomplishing through the women's committees, with the help and in accord with the Party and under its leadership, is extremely important. The masses of working women and peasant women are being drawn into all arenas of the economy and of social life. They are being drawn into collaboration in building new relationships and in overcoming the difficult challenges that arise, for example, with respect to unemployment or food shortages – problems that are bound up with social transformation under the given historical conditions. They are being drawn into collaboration in reorganising society in a Communist direction. In my opinion, what the women's committees of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia have achieved and are achieving in work among women sets an example and indicates the direction we must take.

One thing we know. Soviet Russia is the first model we have before us as the agency of this colossal social transformation. The very challenges and tasks that arise there for the Communist Party and the proletariat will some day – and, we hope, it is quite soon – be the challenges and tasks, under other circumstances, of the Communist parties and the proletariat in countries that today still suffer from capitalist class rule. That is why there is exceptional importance in what Comrade Smidovich will soon tell us of the work of the women's committees of the Communist Party of Russia.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: I will now speak of the negative examples that show how necessary it is for Communist parties to have special bodies for work among women. These examples are found in the meagre participation of women in Communist party life and of the female proletariat in the struggles of their class in countries where women's secretariats do not exist or have been dissolved.

In *Poland*, the Party has so far refused to create special bodies for work among women. The Communist Party there considered it enough that the most effective women fight in the rank and file and that women be present as

participants in mass movements and strikes. But the conviction is growing that this approach is inadequate to enable the Communist movement to reach the depths of the female proletariat. We hope that a women's secretariat will be created in Poland very soon, as the starting point for methodical work among the broadest layers of working women. Then women producers will play an entirely new and different role in the Communist Party of Poland, driving it forward in this country whose past is filled with such glorious struggles. The most recent parliamentary elections showed that the right wing and its deception of the masses had the greatest success among the masses of women who are not enlightened and have not embraced Communist ideas. That must not be repeated.

In *Britain*, party bodies for the necessary and systematic activity among the female proletariat are almost completely absent. Making reference to the weakness of its material resources, the Communist Party of Britain during the past year has again and again abstained from or postponed establishing the structures required for systematic work among proletarian women. The stimulus and the warnings of the International Women's Secretariat in this regard have been in vain. No genuine women's secretariat was established, although one woman comrade was named as an overall party agitator. Women comrades in Britain, acting on their own accord, have used their very modest means to hold events for the political education of Communist women and to link them strongly to the Party. These events have achieved such good results that they should provide a model for the Communist Party in holding similar educational events. The conduct of the British Communist Party executive is explained, in my opinion, not merely by its financial weakness but, in part, also from its youth and the resulting organisational weaknesses. I will not enter into a criticism of the Party here, all the more since its most recent congress showed that it is firmly on the road, in firm unity with the Communist International, to advance both organisationally and politically, working and fighting to evolve into a revolutionary mass party.

We have evidence of the Communist Party's firm will and practical success in the form of its victories in the recent elections in Britain.² But this victory, and the political activity and reorganisation now decided on by the Communist Party of Britain, is bringing it out of cramped little meeting rooms of a small party oriented mainly to propaganda and into the masses of the working class. This requires the Party to take up the struggle for the soul of proletariat women.

2. For the British CP's electoral gains, see p. 475, n. 31.

The British section of the International cannot ignore the fact that many millions of proletarian women there are organised in associations for women's rights, in old-style women's trade unions, in consumer and other cooperatives, and in the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party. The task of the Communist Party is to struggle with all these organisations for the mind, heart, will, and deed of proletarian women. For this reason, the Party will feel a need – growing over time – to create special working bodies through which it can organise Communist women, educate them, and win proletarian women outside its ranks as dedicated women fighters of their class. The International Women's Secretariat, as a delegated auxiliary body of the Executive, will, of course, help the Party in this task.

Special mention must be made of the dubious circumstances in *France*. The Marseilles Congress [December 1921] took a great step forward in creating a revolutionary and proletarian women's movement. For the first time, the revolutionary forces arising there in the world of women were drawn together organisationally, and this occurred in the Communist Party. The congress decided, as did the first conference of communist women, also held in Marseilles, to incorporate women of Communist views into the Party and create working bodies of the Communist women's movement: a women's secretariat linked to the party leadership and a women's publication.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: unfortunately, the Paris Congress [October 1922] destroyed the beginnings that had been made. We hope this is only temporary. Because of the Party's internal crisis and its effects, the party leadership decided to disband the women's secretariat and cease publication of *l'Ouvrière* [Woman Worker], the women's newspaper. We are convinced that as the crisis in the French Party is overcome, so too we will see a satisfactory resolution of the challenge of creating the special bodies needed by a vigorous and determined Communist Party to win the broadest layers of proletarian women to share in the work and struggle of our International.

In *Italy*, during the past year, and without any great difficulty, women were incorporated into the Party, and the special bodies were created that are needed to lead broad and deep layers in the world of women – those without property and the exploited – into the influence of Communist thinking and the struggles of the proletariat.

Comrade Hertha Sturm will give you some specific information regarding what I have described in general terms, namely the present state of the necessary working bodies that we must have nationally and internationally in order to enable the Communist women, the proletarian women, to become the driving forces of the class struggle and the revolutionary upsurge of the exploited and oppressed masses.

Organisationally, we succeeded in the *Netherlands*, with the help of the International Women's Secretariat, in dissolving the separate women's organisation that existed there. In addition to Communist women, it included anarchist and near-anarchist forces. The Communist members have joined the Communist Party of the Netherlands, and they are active in collaboration with the male comrades. In general, our experience confirms that the integration of Communist women into the party, their systematic party work, and their activity among the masses, has been successful and fruitful.

In *Norway*, the recruitment of Communist women into the Party has not been carried through so completely as is indicated in the principles and guidelines of the Communist International. This results from the general character of party activity in Norway. The separate organisation of women is related to the organisational structure of the Norwegian Communist Labour Party, which even today calls itself Social-Democratic. It is based organisationally not on individual membership, but on membership in the trade unions. We anticipate that with the reorganisation of the Party, the separate organisation of women will also come to an end, and forms of work will be found that permit us to spur on all women who are now striving to advance Communist ideas to greater activity and greater collaboration.

Much of this applies also to the Communist International's section in *Sweden*, although there is no crisis in the Party and the organisational structure is different. Here too, there are still separate organisations of Communist women. By the way, in Norway as in Sweden, these separate organisations are survivals from the past of the movement for women's rights, which was strong and, to some degree, had ongoing effects on the Social-Democratic movement. These organisations will disappear as the other ideological survivals of the Social-Democratic past are overcome and strictly Communist views prevail.

What, then, is the extent to which our Communist work has achieved influence among deep and extensive layers of exploited women? Has this work expanded to a notable scope? I will begin my report on this point with a fact of extremely wide-reaching historical significance. In the *Near and Far East*, the wives of the heavily burdened toilers are beginning to awaken and gather around the Communist banner. Comrades, brothers and sisters: we cannot overestimate the importance of this fact. What is the situation? The task there is to awaken and win masses of women weighed down by prejudices that are centuries and even thousands of years old. A long and deep-going capitalist development, which creates nothing new without destroying the old or bringing it to the point of death, has not yet fully destroyed these prejudices. It is true that capitalism has made its entry there and subjected the masses of

women, above all, to its exploitation and subjugation. That is what we see in Japan, India, Transcaucasia [Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia], and also in China. Nonetheless, it has not destroyed the old social enslavement of women, but rather harnessed it to its purposes.

In the countries of the East, women live and work overwhelmingly under patriarchal and precapitalist forms of social life, bending under prejudices grey with age, oppressed by social institutions, by religion, customs, and habits. And, yet, despite all this, the women begin to awaken, begin to adopt a Communist mode of thinking, to revolt and to speak of liberation. What does this tell us? That capitalism and its world are losing their last reserves, the countries with a precapitalist civilisation or incomplete recent capitalist development, which are subjugated to the rule of immense capitalist states or are being stalked by capitalism's greed for exploitation as future colonial possessions.

These territories, with their rich and still poorly exploited potential, gave the bourgeoisie the resources – through despicable and inhuman plunder of the popular masses there – to throw rebellious workers in the old capitalist countries – wage slaves in mutiny – beggar's crusts of bread in the form of minor concessions and reforms. The impulse for freedom and the hate of capitalism and its rule is alive in these countries, and the women, the most oppressed of the oppressed, are rising up, striving to work and struggle under the Communist banner. All this is testimony to the fact that capitalism is approaching its end with giant strides. What Comrade Kasparova will tell us about the activity of the Executive's International Women's Secretariat in the East is thus particularly significant. In growing numbers and with devoted determination, the women of these countries are beginning to gather around the banner of communism – the only saviour from exploitation and subjugation.

In many countries, especially in Latin countries, we are assured that no significant work can be done among women. The influence of the Church's outlook and of the traditions handed down in the family and society are too strong, too overpowering. In vain do we strive to bring the masses of women out of the grip of domesticity and lead them as fellow fighters onto the field of historical struggle between capital and labour.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: what is possible in the East is a signal to us in the West that we must not pass by this historical milieu thoughtlessly, but must devote our attention to it. These gains are also a sharp reminder of what can be achieved by the human will. Reference to the materialist conception of history is not always appropriate, when it is used to excuse weaknesses and deficiencies. The historical framework is mighty indeed, but not almighty. Our understanding and our will can master it and change it. If we did not

have this conviction, we would not be Marxists and revolutionary fighters. What did Marx write in his debate with Feuerbach, which was the starting point for his conception of history? 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.'³ In the soviet republics of the Caucasus and, following their example, in Iran and Turkey, women are announcing that they are resolved on winning their freedom as Communists.⁴ Given this fact, I believe it is inappropriate to say that the difficulties of Communist work among women in the Latin countries are virtually insuperable. No, when there is a will, there is a way. We have the will to world-revolution, and we must therefore find the path to the broadest masses of exploited and enslaved women, regardless of the historical conditions that may obstruct this task.

During the period covered by this report, there has been great progress in reaching broad masses of women through agitation and propaganda and, above all, through the deed – through work and struggle. This is true both in the countries under capitalist rule and in the proletarian state of Soviet Russia and the other soviet republics. Wherever the proletariat has set about the struggle to resist the general offensive of the employers, wherever the masses have taken up the struggle against inflation, against the burden of taxes, against the lengthening of the working day, in a word, against the worsening of proletarian living conditions; wherever the proletariat is standing up to the offensive of capitalism that aims to make the broad masses of exploited carry the costs of the War and reconstruction, women have taken part in these struggles to a gratifying extent and with vigour and energy.

Everywhere, we see a growth in the masses of women who are helping to sustain the campaigns of the Communist International and its individual sections. Wherever they have been were summoned in the name of the Communist International, they have responded. That has been particularly evident in two international campaigns.

One of these is *International Women's Day*. It took place this year to a much greater extent, with more unity, and including much broader masses of proletarian women than had been the case in the previous two years. And this celebration highlighted the fact that it is not a separate women's event, not a women's issue, but an issue for the party, a party campaign, a declaration of war by communism against capitalism, a beginning of the struggle for which

3. See 'Theses on Feuerbach', in Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 5, p. 8.

4. The soviet republics of the Caucasus included the independent soviet republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia (in Transcaucasia), and also, in the North Caucasus, the Daghestan, Mountaineers', and other autonomous republics within the Russian Soviet federation. In December 1922, the three Transcaucasian republics merged into a federal state, which then joined as a constitutive unit of the Soviet Union.

an army of millions of exploited and oppressed must be gathered, armed, and made ready. Almost everywhere – more in some areas and less in others – it was carried out as a campaign of the Communist party as a whole.

The same holds true from the other international campaign in which we were involved: the *International Workers' Aid for Soviet Russia*.⁵ This was carried out in every country with outstanding initiative and involvement of women. From Norway and Finland down to Switzerland and Italy, from the west to the east, it was the women, acting in accord with their Communist party, who were the most vigorous propagandists, canvassers, and organisers of the International Workers' Aid. In this process, they demonstrated a consciousness of proletarian solidarity in a truly generous, skilled, and forceful manner.

One thing must be emphasised with regard to both International Women's Day and the International Workers' Aid for Soviet Russia. In both campaigns, the specific purpose provided a starting point for political activity and political goals. For International Women's Day, we linked up with special demands that women of the working people advance as housewives and mothers to combat painful social afflictions. In the aid for Soviet Russia, we linked up with proletarian solidarity. And, in both of these cases, we also pursued the goal of awakening broad masses of women to political thought and political activity. Both the demands of women for the protection of mothers and children and also the practice of solidarity with Soviet Russia were heightened into political action, political struggle. That is precisely the goal of Communist work among women. The economic and social afflictions of women and their demands for a culturally satisfying life are utilised as the starting points toward the most advanced activity possible, in conducting the most intense struggle possible against bourgeois society.

Communist women in each country, in accord with and under the leadership of their party, have, of course, utilised every opportunity and occasion to arouse the proletarian masses of women, to win them, and to lead them into struggle against the capitalist order. So, for example, in *Germany* the struggle against the so-called abortion paragraph provided the starting point for a very extensive and successful campaign against bourgeois class-rule and class justice and against the bourgeois state.⁶ This campaign won for us the sympathy

5. See report on International Workers Aid, pp. 634–47.

6. Communists in Germany campaigned against paragraphs 218 and 219 of the criminal code, which illegalised abortion and punished women who underwent abortion. The Communist Women's Movement considered abortion as a symptom of social evils related to women's poverty and subjugation. But the movement held that the anti-abortion laws brutally punished innocent women, including through the dreadful toll of illegal abortions. They demanded women's protection by abolition of

and support of broad circles of women. Yet the question was approached not as a women's issue but as a political issue, a cause of the proletariat.

All our campaigns and actions have been carried out under the banner of the proletarian united front and of the slogan provided to us by the Third Congress of the Communist International: 'To the masses'. Because we are inspired by the correctness and necessity of the proletarian united front, we recognise the full importance of developing heightened and more intensive work in the specific fields of the trade unions and the cooperative movement. In order to carry out such effective and systematic work in these two arenas, it is decisive that we be capable of involving the broadest layers of women and making them effective in struggle. For working women, this can be done through the trade unions; for women who are not employed, for housewives, proletarian and petty-bourgeois women, through the cooperative movement.

Conditions are particularly favourable to bring together around the banner of communism larger numbers of non-proletarian women, both employed and housewives, for the struggle against capitalism. The decay of capitalism has generated a small number of newly rich and an enormous mass of newly poor – not only in Germany but also in Britain and other bourgeois states. The middle class is proletarianised, or, at least, is headed more or less quickly in that direction. As a result, the distress of life strikes with dreadful cruelty at the purse and the heart of many women who, until now, had enjoyed somewhat secure and pleasant chances for existence under capitalist rule.

Thus female employees, especially intellectuals such as teachers and office workers of various types, are growing rebellious against this, the 'best of all possible worlds'. Under the pressure of inflation, of the glaring discrepancy between income and the cost of living, more and more housewives, including bourgeois housewives, are awakening to a recognition that present conditions – the continued existence of capitalism – are incompatible with their most basic interests in life.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: we have to utilise the ferment, the motion, that is visible in these layers of women, arousing tired hopelessness into bright sparks of rebellion that will ultimately take fire in revolutionary understanding, will, and action. Our Communist work among women in the trade unions and cooperatives can make a very great contribution to these goals. In both fields, women can not only be important contributors to the united front – no, they can do more, as pioneers of the united front in many movements.

all anti-abortion laws. The Communist campaign is analysed by Ketty Guttman in 'Zum internationalen Kampf gegen die Bestrafung der Abtreibung', *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*, 3, 5 (1923), pp. 959–68. See also Grossman 1998.

I have referred to how pitilessly the attacks of life's sorrows are affecting the conditions of millions of women, so that they begin to awaken. Until now, we have felt with distress the political backwardness and dullness of women in their masses. But, under the pressure of enormous suffering, these characteristics can promote our cause and ease the path of awakening women into the Communist camp. The soul of women is not as politically and socially defined as that of men. It is less adorned with the false and deceptive slogans of the Social-Democratic reformists, the bourgeois reformers, and the like. It is, very often, an unwritten page. It will therefore be relatively easier for us to pull the previously indifferent masses of women directly into our struggle, without passing through women's rights, pacifist, or other reformist organisations. This will not immediately be in a struggle for the final goal of proletarian revolution – I would like to warn against that illusion – but will, rather, be in our defensive struggle, striking back against the bourgeoisie's general offensive. They will surely take part in this, in large numbers and with great energy.

I believe that our comrades in *Bulgaria*, to whom we are grateful for all their stimulus and their effective work inside the Communist International, have shown us a path we can follow: during our defensive struggles, we can establish organisational bastions among these masses of women for subsequent struggles with a more advanced content and more ambitious goals – in short, we can prepare for decisive struggles.

Our Bulgarian women comrades have founded associations of women sympathisers. These groups do not merely supply preliminary schooling before entry into the Communist Party, but are also solid organisational strongholds that draw masses of women into all the Party's activity and campaigns.

Our women comrades in *Italy* have set out to follow this example. They have founded groups for 'sympathising women', which include women who still have misgivings about joining a political party or attending political meetings. I am convinced that this initiative will bear fruit. The example provided here deserves to be studied and applied by those who deal with Communist work among women in every country. This will not only result in a strengthening of the Communist sections of our International, but will have two other good effects: the extension of Communist influence among the broad proletarian and non-proletarian layers of the population, and also ferment, discord, and division in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, that is, a weakening of our deadly enemy. Every weakening of the bourgeoisie signifies a strengthening of the proletarian forces in struggle to bring down capitalism and overthrow bourgeois class rule.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: I will not go into the details here of how we conceive of Communist work to win women through the trade-union and cooperative movements. This will be done by Comrade Hertha Sturm, who is speaking after me. I will say only that we must take care in our work not to awaken deceptive illusions. Rather, we should destroy all illusions that the trade-union and cooperative movements could, within the capitalist order, destroy the laws and preconditions for the existence of capitalism for the greater good of the proletariat. No, however useful and essential the achievements of trade unions and cooperatives may be, they are not capable of undermining and overthrowing capitalism. They achieve full effectiveness only after the conquest of political power by the proletariat, after the establishment of its dictatorship. Then, the trade unions and cooperatives will become not only a means of destroying the survivals of capitalism but also agencies to build the new and higher life of a Communist society.

In view of the decisive importance of proletarian dictatorship for the nature and activity of trade unions and cooperatives, we must again stress how this makes Communist work among women in the soviet republics different from that in countries that are still ruled by capitalism. In countries under capitalist class-rule, both organisations come to the fore as instruments for defence and struggle of the broadest masses. The trade unions do this for the masses as producers; the cooperative movement does so in the struggle against capital in commerce, lending, and the black market. In the soviet countries, by contrast, the tasks of both types of organisations in education and construction are predominant.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: I must point out that our work in the past year has indicated the special importance of work to bring women under the influence of the Communist International and to win them as its supporters. Communist women and women sympathetic to them play this important role wherever illegality is our only form of activity and struggle, as well as where underground organisations must function beside the legal associations working above ground. In *Finland*, *Poland*, and other such countries, the collaboration of determined and devoted Communist women has proven to be extremely useful, indeed, I must say it is indispensable. It is now possible that the advance in many countries of blackest reaction, of fascism, will confront us with the need to struggle illegally, to respond to force with force, to answer the bourgeoisie's break with the rule of law with our own disregard and disdain for bourgeois legality. In such conditions, the male comrades will not make headway unless they have the women at their side. Proletarian women in *Turin* showed that, where fascism grows strong, we can count on the support of women willing to make sacrifices. In the most recent large proletarian

demonstration against Fascism in Turin, armed proletarian women marched under a red banner with the inscription, 'Rosa Luxemburg'. This fact must have given pause to the bourgeoisie; it certainly raised the spirits and the readiness for struggle among the worker ranks.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: in order for our Communist work among women to fulfil all the tasks that I have indicated here only briefly, in general outline, one thing is necessary. We and you must all pose ourselves the question: are the Communist women in the International's sections sufficiently rich in knowledge, will, and efficiency, to carry out their duty to the fullest extent?

And we must not lose sight of the fact that both Communist women and also Communist men – for, on average, we are no worse and no more stupid than you – are often lacking in the necessary fundamental theoretical and practical education. The immaturity and weakness of women in the political movement is only a reflection of the immaturity and weakness of the Communists as a whole. It is caused above all by the newness of our sections. Serious work will overcome this weakness, one that we must take into account, along with the many advantages of our movement's youthfulness.

It is extremely important, brothers and sisters, that we quickly overcome immaturity and weakness among those who are to carry out Communist work among the female proletariat. I therefore give you all an urgent warning: take care that the women in your ranks are assigned to the party's practical tasks in what I would like to call an individual fashion, bringing them in and assigning them personally. Take care that all possibilities for education and that all existing institutions for the theoretical and practical education of the membership are open to them. Take care that, where a common rounded education is not possible, the necessary educational vehicles for women are created in the form of courses, lectures, and appropriate publications and literature for women. Comrades, part of your own educational work is to assure the thorough and practical education of women as Communist colleagues in struggle. This is, beyond any doubt, an important and essential precondition for your success.

Especially now, I consider it particularly necessary to be concerned with the clearest, deepest, and most fundamental education of women. In this transitional period, the ship of communism will sail out over the broad ocean of decisive revolutionary struggles by the masses in all their strength for the conquest of political power and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. Two dangers threaten us. On the left, the ship is in danger of breaking up on the reefs and cliffs of an adventurist and romantic putschist policy, while, on the right, lies the danger that the ship will run aground on

reformist sandbanks and get stuck in the stinking and decaying waters of opportunism.

There is only one thing that can overcome the dangers from both right and left. That is the greatest, heightened activity of the will, a will that becomes reality, that is guided by clear insight into the historical situation, the nature of the present world crisis and the conditions for overcoming it – namely the conditions of revolutionary struggle.

Danton in his day called out to the vanguard fighters of the French Revolution, ‘Audacity, audacity, and again audacity!’⁷ Yes, comrades, sisters and brothers, we want to say that every day to women who wish to struggle for communism. Heretofore, they have been to some extent a passive force, and everything is pressing them to become decidedly active. Therefore: Audacity, audacity, and again audacity! But we must add to these words others, called out again and again by Comrade Lenin: Clarity, clarity, and again clarity! Wisdom, wisdom, and again wisdom! Not as an expression of fear or of vacillation. No, rather as a precondition for carrying out the deadly blow against capitalism with a sure touch.

Comrades, sisters and brothers: we must take this to heart. Everything that you have heard so far at this congress has showed us how rightly the Communist International evaluated the world situation at its previous congress. All the signs of the times tell us that society is objectively ripe, indeed overripe, for capitalism to be swept away and overthrown. In the past, it has not been shown to be ripe in the historical sense of the proletariat’s will, the will of the class that is called on to be the gravedigger of the capitalist order. But, sisters and brothers, this historical situation is like a landscape in the Alps, where great masses of snow lie stored on high peaks, which have defied all storms for centuries and seem ready to defy the influence of sun, rain, and tempests for several hundreds of years to come. Yet, despite all appearances, they are hollowed out, brittle and ‘ripe’ to come cascading down.

It may be enough for a little bird to move its pinions and touch these snows with the tip of its wings, to bring the avalanche into motion and bury the valleys down below.

In the present situation we do not know how far we are as men and women from world-revolution. That is why every hour and every minute must be utilised in work to make us ready for the world-revolution and ready to carry it out. World-revolution means a worldwide act of destruction of capitalism, but it means also a worldwide act of creation, the creation of communism.

7. Georges Danton spoke the words, ‘Il nous faut de l’audace, encore de l’audace, toujours de l’audace!’ to the French National Assembly on 2 September 1792.

Let us be imbued with the meaning of this word! Let us be ready, and let us make the proletarian masses ready, to be world creators of communism.
(*Loud applause*)

Hertha Sturm (Germany): Comrades, the task of the Communist party toward the women's movement is to draw the broadest masses of working women into the proletariat's class struggle, organise them for it and school them. On the journey to this goal, the greatest part of the road still lies before us. If the majority of the proletariat, by and large, has not yet been won by the Communist party, this applies even more to the masses of proletarian women. They are affected not only by the general factors making it difficult for the working class to come to communism, but also special factors: women's social backwardness and her much lower politicisation, which is also expressed in the very low number of women that take part in other political parties.

If we wish to measure our influence on the masses of proletarian women today, we have a certain gauge in the number of women members in the Communist parties. Women today make up more than half of the proletariat. After the War, in the age range of twenty to forty-five years, which is the most important range for political purposes, the numerical excess of women compared to men is rather significant. Nonetheless, women do not make up the fifty per cent of the Communist parties that they should provide, from a purely arithmetical point of view, but a much lower percentage – as a rough average, perhaps ten per cent. Nonetheless, a closer look reveals great discrepancies among the individual parties. The larger a party's membership and the better organised it is, the greater is not only the absolute number of its female members but also the percentage that they represent of the membership as a whole.

Let me explain this with a few examples. In Czechoslovakia, 36,000 women members represent 20% of the total; in Germany, about 35,000 women make up 11%–12% of the total; in Norway 15,000–16,000 women are 15% of the total. In contrast to this, we have another group of parties, among which France, Italy, Britain, and Belgium will serve as examples. In France, 1,800 female members are 2% of the total; in Italy, 350 to 400 are about 1.5% of the total. In Britain, the number of female members is very hard to determine, but here too both the absolute number and the percentage of women is very low. In Belgium, there are 30 women members in all, representing 6% of the entire membership.

I would like to make this example more explicit by pointing out that there are large discrepancies inside individual parties, depending on the degree of thorough organisation, concretisation, and activism in different districts. So,

in Germany, in the largest local group, Berlin, women are about 20%, compared to the national average of 12%. On the contrary, there are districts that are organisationally weak and where there is little political clarity and firmness, in which the proportion is below 6%.

Similarly, in Czechoslovakia, the German district of Aussig [Ústí nad Labem], which has long had a well-organised women's movement, has a 50% proportion of women members – the highest level – while the national average is 20%, and the figure in some Czech and Slovak districts is much lower.

From these examples, we can see that the more intensive the Communist party's work is, the firmer and better educated the party as a whole or sectors of it, the broader is the influence that the party achieves among the masses of women. This is reflected in the extent to which women are linked organisationally to the Communist party.

But there is another tendency to be noted, namely, in the countries where the Communist party is the strongest workers' party, where it has taken large masses with it out of the old Social-Democratic parties, the numerical proportion of women members is favourable.

This is particularly clear in the examples of Czechoslovakia and Norway. Women who were already politically active in the Social-Democratic movement were led over organisationally into the Communist movement. In the new and weak Communist workers' parties, however, every member must be gained individually, so to speak, either by being won away from the reformist party or by being lifted up from the mass of women who previously had not been politically organised at all.

The very low figure in France – 2% – despite the favourable situation regarding the Social-Democratic party, reflects a factor that has created unfavourable conditions for the Communist women's movement, just as it has in Italy. That is the ideology of the broad masses of the working class, which reaches deep into the ranks of the Communists. This ideology found its classic expression at an international congress in London, a year after the founding of the First International. A dispute unfolded there over whether the word 'worker' should be interpreted as including women workers.⁸ The representative of the French delegation then coined a phrase: the man looks after work and the study of social problems; the woman cares for the children and the beautification of the worker's home.

8. The London gathering, held 25–9 September 1865, was termed a conference rather than statutory congress; no published proceedings are available. A historian notes, 'Except for a number of trade-union problems, the agenda of the conference was entirely devoted to questions of international politics'. Steklov 1968, p. 55.

This ideology, which is still very widespread in France and Italy, and which we must combat with all our strength, is partly responsible for the fact that the number of women members of the organisation is so small. Of course, we do not ignore the fact that this ideology has its economic causes, namely that in France, Italy, and Spain large-scale industry has not yet torn the broad masses of women out of the peasantry, out of the narrowness of the petty-bourgeois household and into public life. It has not yet brought them together in giant factories, as it has in the countries of large-scale industry. This factor, of course, strongly influences conceptions of women's role in political life.

As for the proportion of women in countries where the party is illegal, no exact figures are available, for obvious reasons. Nonetheless, it appears that, as a rule, women are drawn more strongly into the general party work in these parties than is the case elsewhere.

What can we conclude from the facts that I have presented, and what are the implications for our work? The numerical data shows, first of all, how enormously difficult it is to win women for communism and integrate them organisationally into the party.

It also follows that the task of organising proletarian women does not hold first place among those addressed by the Communist parties. Rather, a tenacious struggle must be waged inside the party for this task to be recognised and addressed.

And a second conclusion can be drawn from the manner in which female members are won. In part, they are women militants with little education, who are not workers but, in their majority, housewives, the wives of our comrades who have come to the party more by being persuaded than from their own deep conviction. These members are naturally bound to be more passive in their approach. They do not have the experience and schooling for the work and, above all, they do not have a broad organic tie to the masses of women workers in the factories and trade unions, which is the most important consideration.

All the more urgent, as a result, is the necessity of engaging our weak forces systematically, of utilising them rationally, through the creation of bodies that enable us to achieve the most work with limited forces.

It was with this in mind that the women's committees in the Communist parties were created.

The first task of the International Women's Secretariat, since its centre was moved to Berlin at the beginning of the year, has been to help bring into existence in the International these organisational strongholds, made necessary by the character of the work itself. And we can say that this initial precondition for winning the broad masses on the outside has been achieved to some

degree. At the least, we have achieved one thing, namely that, ideologically, the idea that it is necessary to create special bodies for women has won acceptance. I grant you that much must still be done to create these committees in practice, and here I must remind you of a few points that Comrade Zetkin has already touched on.

I refer to the fact that, in Britain, an exceptionally important country for the international proletarian struggle, to this very day, no central women's committee has been created in the headquarters of the party leadership, in order to lead the work systematically across the whole country.

I refer to the fact that, in all of France, to this day, only about fifteen women's committees have been formed, despite the existence of hundreds of local party branches. Even the central women's secretariat in France was endangered and actually dissolved as a result of the Party's crisis.

I also refer to the fact that, in Czechoslovakia, which has a party that is generally strong and well organised, when the women's secretariat in Prague sent out a questionnaire, the results were as follows: only one-seventh of the local branches considered it necessary to respond; only one-tenth have women members; and only two per cent – forty-seven branches in all – have women's committees.

If work among women is organisationally so weak in this large and relatively good party, it is not surprising that in smaller parties, such as in Austria, the Netherlands, and Denmark, such work is practically limited to the country's main city, where the party executive is located.

In order for the proletariat's struggle to be waged in the coming period on a wide scale across the entire country, it will be urgently necessary to build out the women's committees until they reach the last of the party branches.

What are the tasks of these committees?

The most immediate and fundamental task is that these women comrades, who are not much engaged in activity, undertake themselves the work that we are all anxious to do. They must be 'maids-of-all-work'. To start with, they must organise across the entire country; they must speak, write, give instructions for specific areas of work in all branches of political life. But it would be wrong for their work to be limited to that. It is impossible for the small core of active women comrades to master the enormous range of tasks that we now face.

These women comrades must direct their main attention to those who are already members of the party but not yet experienced. These comrades must be schooled for the work and engaged around specific tasks. From this point of view, it is important – and this is the case for all the Communist parties that undertake this work seriously – that the women comrades set up evening

women's discussions, courses, and circles, in order to prepare them for their work among the masses outside the party.

It is a sign of strength in the British Party, or at least of a positive beginning, that women comrades there, guided by correct instincts, have taken the path of starting up the work, by creating the small party school for women comrades of which Comrade Zetkin spoke. There are parties such as the Czechoslovak that have a numerically large female membership but whose female members are still revolutionary only in their feelings but have not been systematically schooled. In such parties, I believe it will be necessary to provide such opportunities for schooling not only in individual districts but in the country as a whole, and do so systematically under the leadership of the women's secretariat and with the support of the party executive. This can activate a large number of women comrades, teach them what it means to be a Communist, and what duties and tasks they have to fulfil as Communists.

However, the third task is the most important. It consists of establishing women's committees across the parties as a whole, and rooting in the party's overall activity the work among the broad masses of the female proletariat, so that work among women does not remain the concern of only a small handful of Communist women. The task is to utilise every opportunity and all party actions to make the work among women part of the movement as a whole, so that this work is supported and carried out by all party's organisational and political agencies and backed by the full authority of the party as a whole and all its component bodies.

We are still only taking the first steps in this field, and attempts to push this principle through have not always been carried out in the best way. In particular, in the Latin countries, where women comrades have to carry out a strong fight against the petty-bourgeois attitudes of their own comrades, we note some feminist impulses.⁹ We are all familiar with this point of view from the early days of the women's movement, when male and female comrades were at odds with each other. The women comrades complain that male comrades do not recognise their work and do not support them. The male comrades, for their part, complain that the women do not contribute enough to the work and must take personal responsibility for that failing. Comrades, these are childhood disorders, initial stages that we all go through at some time. We find such articles in the French women's publication *L'Ouvrière*, although it is

9. Sturm uses 'feminism' as shorthand for what Zetkin elsewhere termed 'the bourgeois women's movement', whose demands result 'primarily in reforming the capitalist order for the benefit of wives and daughters of the possessing classes', while 'the women of the toiling people, still unfree and exploited, are abandoned, their humanity stunted, and their rights and interests neglected'. See 'Theses for the Communist Women's Movement' (1920) in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 978.

in general quite well maintained, and now and again in the Italian women's publication *Compagna* [Woman Comrade].¹⁰ In these articles, women comrades explain to male comrades that women are human, after all, and are beings with rights equal to men and with a claim to political activity and defence of their rights.

Even on International Women's Day, there were articles of this sort on the first of the women's pages in *Communist*, articles that had nothing to do with winning the broad masses to revolution and that failed to link up with the wants and needs of British working-class women. Instead, these articles expressed the struggle of the Communist Party to achieve an understanding of itself. In my opinion, this is a weakness. Nonetheless, at that time, we greeted this article in *Communist*, because we perceived it as a beginning of a process of clarification, leading toward male and female comrades inside the Party collaborating on the same party work.

But to what extent have we succeeded in reaching the masses of women outside the Communist party and integrating them into the struggle of the proletariat? We must concede that this has happened only to a very small extent. The two international campaigns mentioned by Comrade Zetkin – International Women's Day and the campaign to aid Soviet Russia – were carried out relatively well. But there were specific reasons why we achieved some success here in mobilising masses of women and winning them to or interesting them in the ideas of communism.

In the case of International Women's Day, the reason was that it already had been somewhat established as a revolutionary tradition in the Second International. Even parties that still carry with them echoes of the Social Democrats and are, in many ways, passive in attitude held their own in this arena.

As for the campaign to aid Soviet Russia, there were two reasons for its success. First, that women had strong organisational support from the national aid committees, which were unified in spirit and tightly organised. Second, there was an objective factor: this campaign had a strong inherent tie with – and was able to link up successfully with – the best instincts of femininity and motherhood. These instincts found here an opportunity to express themselves beyond the narrow limits of the individual household in the form of solidarity with the entire proletariat, with the vanguard of the world proletariat in Soviet Russia.

But in the week for workers' children, which we tried to carry out together with the international Communist youth, it was clear that we enjoyed some success only where the youth organisation was functioning well. In countries

10. The German text gives the publication's name as *Campagna* [Countryside], an apparent misprint.

where this was not the case, as in Czechoslovakia, this campaign was a downright failure.

These experiences lead us to definite conclusions. At the conference of the international women correspondents in Berlin,¹¹ the activity of the International Women's Commission came in for criticism. It was said that we had not succeeded sufficiently in initiating international women's campaigns. If this was true, it was not due to a lack of insight or to passivity on our part. It was not that we failed to see what issues were posed on the international agenda. It was not as if we did not understand how these issues could have been systematically taken up by common actions in different countries. Our conduct was rather justified more by the simple recognition that our structures in the women's movement were still too weak to carry out international women's campaigns on a broad scale, unless the entire Communist party, with all its resources, stands behind these campaigns.

It would have been quite conceivable and highly necessary to conduct campaigns for women's right to vote, for example, in France, Bulgaria, and other countries. We could and should have initiated and led campaigns for the defence and extension of laws to protect women workers; against inflation that is intensifying in every country; taking up the issue of the poverty of children, which is rising beyond measure; to combat the growing danger of war; to combat white terror, which victimises wide layers of proletarian women, whose husbands are held in prison, and so on.

But we know that, under the conditions we face today, it is more essential and fruitful to start by drawing women into the general campaigns of the Communist parties that are posed for action in each country. In Britain, for example, we must place the emphasis on mobilising unemployed women along with the jobless as a whole and winning them to our ideas. In every country, we must engage women in the struggles for a united front against the capitalist offensive. In Germany, we must in particular get women involved in the factory-council movement.

In a word, we must strive everywhere to integrate women of the working class into the overall struggles of the proletariat. If we succeed in this way in convincing the parties to recognise how essential it is to involve the proletarian masses of women, it will be much more possible in the future to win the

11. The conference took place in January 1922 and was attended by delegates from nine countries, representatives of the International Women's Secretariat, and many guests. The 'correspondents' were the women assigned in each national party to communicate with the secretariat. For an account of the conference, see *Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*, 2, 3–4 (March–April 1922), pp. 477–87. For the structure of the Communist women's movement, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 977–98. See also Bayerlein 2006.

support of the entire party for campaigns that have special importance for women. An example of such a campaign was already mentioned by Comrade Zetkin: the struggle against the so-called abortion clause,¹² which has so far taken on significant scope only in Germany but will probably soon be on the agenda in Czechoslovakia, Austria, France, and Britain.

Regarding the question of unemployment in Britain, I would like to point out that the British Party is still far from clear on the question of drawing the jobless women into this movement. We have been pressing the British Party on this point for half a year, and we hope that the Comintern Executive will also press in this direction, and that the Party will seek to arouse masses of women by employing special means, such as a leaflet distributed to the masses. We hear reports from Britain of severe unemployment in Dundee, a city with a very strong industry that employs women – the jute industry, where there are seven women employed for every man. What is needed here is to approach these women workers and show them the interrelationship between their unemployment, the capitalist economy, and British imperialism. For it is the development of the jute industry in India, where the colonial workers are paid such low wages, that has caused the women workers of Britain to be thrown out onto the street.

The most important task before us in enabling the party's national sections to integrate women workers into their ranks is our work in the factories and trade unions. As soon as the women's committees were sufficiently organised, we shifted the emphasis in the International to the task of organising the collaboration of these committees with the trade-union structures established by the parties to reach out to and educate the masses in the factories and trade unions. This was no accident; it resulted from a conscious plan of the Communist International's Women's Secretariat.

From this point of view, our Italian sister party took a very providential step in recent weeks in moving the women's commission, which had been based in Rome, to Turin. For there is not a single female member of the Party in Rome, and industries based on women play no significant role there. By contrast, in Turin – in Piedmont, in the north of Italy and close to industrial Lombardy with its very extensive textile industry – there was a possibility of reaching the masses of employed women in the factories and trade unions.

And, further, coming back once more to the question of Norway, the reason why we press for the dissolution of the league of women and also the women's associations in Norway is not that we insist, out of some organisational fetishism, that the same line must be carried out everywhere – that is, the integration of women in the organisation as a whole. Rather, we do this for

12. See p. 846, n. 6.

the sufficient and objective reason that the organisational independence and isolation of the women's associations cuts them off from the general life of the party. The existence of these women's associations has so far been a barrier to reaching beyond these small circles to the mass of women workers in the factories and trade unions.

It is also no accident that Bulgaria, which has the closest to a model party in the International – relatively speaking, of course, as Zinoviev says – is the country where the organisation of women workers in the factories and trade unions has been carried out most successfully. Special structures have been created here inside the parties and the trade unions, which, in Bulgaria, are totally under the Party's influence. Collaboration between party and trade-union committees is precisely regulated by statutes and guidelines. All the major tasks that the Communist Party is to carry out with regard to mobilising women in the factories and trade unions are formulated with great care and attention to the needs and the special situation of women workers.

The trade-union work plays a special role in the countries where we must function underground. I am referring to the fact that in Finland, Romania, and Spain, for example, where the party cannot function openly and cannot approach women workers through special women's structures, the trade unions are, so to speak, the only terrain in which it is possible to reach out to women workers and influence them in the direction of communism.

The difficulties of trade-union work among women are closely related to those experienced by the parties in trade-union work in general. We are all aware that trade-union work among women will progress to the degree that union work as a whole is carried out well. In Britain, the Communist Party is too weak organisationally compared to other worker organisations to enjoy much influence in the unions. It is, of course, understandable that almost nothing has been done there to reach out to women workers.

In France, the Communist Party is still carrying out discussions in its own ranks as to whether and in what way the Party should conduct political work in the unions. We see a reflection of this weakness in the movement of women workers there. It is extremely difficult for our few active comrades in France to carry out successful work in the unions, given that they have to struggle in the party leadership for the maintenance of their women's secretariat and their women's magazine. And, at the same time, in the trade-union discussion, they have to struggle to establish the basic principle that the Communist Party is obliged to win influence for communism among the masses in the unions.

In Czechoslovakia, where we have established the influence of the Red International of Labour Unions [RILU] among large masses of workers, we

have not succeeded in schooling these masses in communism, be it for lack of time, of forces, or of activity. The Czechoslovak women comrades have rightly called on the Executive, the International Women's Secretariat and the RILU to see to it that their supporters in Czechoslovakia in their union federations – for example, the rural workers' federation alone has thirty thousand women members organised in the union – take up much more intensively than before the struggle for the demands of women workers.

Comrades, the urgency of mobilising women workers compels us to build up trade-union work itself. Communists must absolutely take part in this, the most important sector of party work as a whole. There is no way around the fact that all the special plans and organisational proposals that Communist women are making to win the women workers in the factories and unions to revolution will come to nothing, unless the basis for this work has been laid through the construction of Communist cells in the unions and factories. This example, in a field where we have until now had little success, provides the clearest evidence of how strongly the Communist women's movement will flourish or perish along with the Communist movement as a whole. The very fact that we want to establish influence among women workers means that we, as Communist women, must set about the task in all Communist parties with the greatest energy and attention to systematically build solid Communist cells at the base. The more quickly and thoroughly this task is resolved, the sooner will the structures entrusted with special tasks regarding women workers be able to meet these challenges. And, while building these cells, we must also integrate the Communist women who are union members and set them the task of representing women workers' demands. Communist women in the unions must maintain close contact with the women's committees in the party. They must exchange experiences and consider together how to advance in educating the mass of women workers and leading them deeper into proletarian struggle.

Now, a word on the consumer cooperatives. They differ from the trade unions in that, here, we have not only working women but, in addition, large numbers of proletarian housewives. This therefore offers us an arena in which we can reach new and broad masses that are not present in the factories and unions.

There is also a second aspect to work in the cooperatives at the present time. That is the fact that given the rapid inflation and mass poverty that prevails in almost all countries, the consumer cooperatives are the appropriate structures to throw their weight on the scale, together with the trade unions and workers' parties, to counter the process of impoverishment affecting the proletariat. The educational work that we carry out among women in the consumer cooperatives will be a revolutionary factor strengthening the

proletarian united front in the peripheral regions, among women workers who do not take part in the production process.

Comrades, a final word regarding our press. Our press is one of the most effective means to reach the broad unorganised masses and influence them in the direction of communism.

We have a rather extensive women's press in the International, and, in addition, it is possible for us to bring our questions to the masses through the general press. We must recognise that, organisationally, the women's press has not yet achieved the goal of penetrating into the widest circles possible. There is a whole number of countries where the women's publications are not yet published with a press run sufficient to reach all of the women members of the party. There are contrary examples – Bulgaria and, this time, Italy – where we have succeeded through the women's press in reaching broader layers that were not already organisationally linked to the party. That must certainly be our goal everywhere.

As for the contents of our press, they reflect, of course, all the weaknesses of the Communist women's movement, as of the Communist movement in general. I would like to stress two main errors that can be said to represent extremes.

One extreme was probably most strongly expressed, particularly at the outset, in the Dutch women's magazine *De Voorbode* [*The Herald*]. The magazine is theoretical, extremely clear and error free with regard to principles. But it was so weak in linking up with the concrete and immediate cares and afflictions of proletarian women, it made so little reference to specific conditions especially in the Netherlands, it fit in so poorly with the understanding of uneducated women, that it could not develop ties of deep feeling with these women. This magazine has however now adjusted much better to the needs of the masses.

The other extreme was most clearly expressed by the Brünn [Brno] district magazine *Žena* [*Woman*] in Czechoslovakia. It sought greater popularity by giving up the clear and fundamental position of communism, linked up uncritically with the petty-bourgeois attitudes of proletarian women, and adapted to the need of the masses for sensation by writing on all kinds of topics that have nothing to do with communism.

It is perhaps useful to mention in this regard the French press as well. The editors in charge of *L'Ouvrière* have defended their positions very well. But it must be stated here, by way of providing moral support, that, from the founding of the magazine at the Marseilles Convention to this very moment, they have had to contend with currents inside the Communist Party that wish to convert the publication into a fashion magazine and a publisher of recipes.

We must stress before the International today that we cannot afford such a luxury. Our publications are there to carry out Communist propaganda among the women workers and nothing else!

Recently a problem has arisen with regard to our press that is linked to the financial weakness of our Communist parties. There are indications that we will be forced to dismantle our women's publications to some degree. *L'Ouvrière* will die, and something else must take its place. We must press all parties to insist absolutely that, in carrying out the decisions of the women's conference last year and the World Congress, women's supplements must be added to all party publications. Moreover, these must not appear only from time to time, according to the whim of the responsible editor or secretary, but on an absolutely regular basis. And we must also seek to position work among women so prominently in the party's work as a whole that we also get coverage in the columns of the local branch and in all the other party publications, in special publications, trade-union newspapers, scientific journals, newspapers for the rural workers, and whatever else is available. Our women's movement will only be strongly anchored in the party as a whole and will only enjoy the party's full support when an understanding of the necessity of working among women has been fully established through a uniform handling of all these questions in our press as a whole.

I will now conclude. The prospects for the women's movement are favourable. They grow with the development of the Communist International as a whole. As the movement goes forward, the Communist parties will clarify their views, grow firmer, and intervene more actively for the tasks posed by the class struggle. And, we can say with confidence, that the massive tasks posed before the Communist International today, as well as the struggles among the masses against the capitalist offensive and for the united front, have created a more solid basis on which to unite all forces in the party, as well as in the proletariat outside our own ranks, and to draw the broadest masses into the struggle.

We know that, at the previous congress, with respect to the Communist women's movement, we still had to concede that everything remained to be done. Today, we are able to establish that a beginning has been made, and foundation stones for women's work have been laid. At the next world congress, we must be able to say that we have succeeded in linking women's work with the party's work as a whole so tightly that we can register a success. Along with the proletarian masses that we have led into the current of the revolutionary movement, we will have also reached and mobilised broad masses of women, struggling in the ranks of the united front for the victory of the proletariat over all its enemies.

Smidovich (Russia): In Russia, agitation among the women workers is carried out by special sections of the Communist party committees – unless these women are particularly backward and a special approach is needed. These sections work with the same rights as all other sections of the Communist party committee.

The women's sections are occupied in leading the activity of working women in carrying out practical and specific tasks corresponding to the desires and demands of the working class. This method of encouraging working women in practical activity has enormously raised the influence of the Communist Party among women workers and peasants.

In each Communist factory cell, a comrade is assigned to the political work among women. This position is called 'organiser of working women'. The working women of each factory meet two to three times a year in a general women's assembly and elect delegates to a conference called by the women's sections. There are about seventy thousand of these delegates in Russia as a whole. The delegates' assemblies have become a kind of practical political school. Reports are given on all questions of political and economic life. In this way, delegates are led to take their first steps in the arena of social activity. The delegates are sent to do practical work in various commissions and institutions of the Soviet government. All delegates are obliged to submit a report to the women who have elected them. In this way, an organisational link is established between the Communist Party and the broad masses of women workers outside the Party.

During the soviet elections, it became clear that the delegates are very active. They take part in the elections, vote for Communists, and a considerable number of them become Communists, members of the Communist Party of Russia.

The Communist Party membership includes 29,773 working women.¹³ This figure is not very high, but you must bear in mind that the Communist Party of Russia insists on regular work by its members.

The number of women in the trade unions grows every year. We have about 1.5 million women workers who are members of trade unions.

A significant number of women workers are members of factory committees and the trade unions' administrative councils. There are also women members of the unions' central committees.

The New Economic Policy posed us with the challenge of preventing the dispersal of women workers who had become unemployed as a result

13. Women at that time made up about ten per cent of the Russian CP's membership.

of factory layoffs.¹⁴ The women's sections showed great energy in this matter. On their initiative, unemployed women formed cooperatives of women without jobs. In this way, thousands of women workers remained under the Party's influence. The women's sections carried out Communist agitation and propaganda among the members of the women workers' cooperatives.

Delegates of these cooperatives take part in meetings of delegates led by the women's sections. In all our cities and villages, we have cooperatives for knitting, weaving, sewing, and lacemaking, among other things, which were formed on the initiative of our women's sections. Organising women in the cooperative movement makes up an important part of the work of our women's sections under the present economic conditions. In this way, we are trying to unify women working in the home, who are dispersed across the country, and bring them under the influence of the Party.

This is also a way to unify the interests of women workers of the city and the village. The cooperative also improves the conditions of the worker family. In the capitalist states, all attempts to build a new society with the aid of cooperatives are not only condemned to failure but also serve to enable reformist illusions to strike roots. In a state under a proletarian dictatorship, by contrast, cooperatives can be utilised rationally in order to assist women workers with their household duties.

Under the present conditions of the New Economic Policy, the Soviet state is temporarily deprived of the resources to come to the aid of mothers. Cooperatives are, therefore, precisely the social form that is needed to develop the activity of working women in this field. In Petrograd, twenty-four thousand mothers belong to the 'Mother and Child' cooperative, which forms part of the network of consumer associations in Petrograd. This cooperative provides the mothers with the necessary foodstuffs at prices they can afford. In the future, this cooperative aims to found children's institutions.

Similar cooperatives exist in the province of Pskov, in some district capitals, and in the communities. Since International Women's Day this year, the women's sections have the right to send women workers to be students in the cooperative administration. A certain number of these women are already working in the cooperative institutions. Women workers and peasants are often members of the administrative boards of cooperatives in the villages, and so on. Among other things, a significant number of women workers are attending instructional courses given by cooperatives. We view our work in

14. With the introduction of the NEP, Soviet enterprises were obliged to rein in expenses and adhere to cost accounting. The resulting wave of layoffs affected women disproportionately. In 1922, women, about a quarter of the employed workforce, accounted for approximately sixty per cent of the unemployed.

the field of cooperatives as a means to unify the interests of women workers in the cities and villages, and draw them under the influence of the Party.

Political agitation and propaganda among the peasant women is rooted in their interests in agriculture and in the cooperatives. To this end, we convene conferences of peasant women in each community or each district. We also attend to individual propaganda and draw the most advanced women into agricultural courses and schools.

I cannot refrain from giving you an example. In Ryazan province, among the fifty peasant women who graduated from agricultural school, twenty joined the Party and became outstanding activists. In Samara province, fifty per cent of the students in agricultural schools are peasant women. We instruct them in various questions regarding the protection of mothers and infants. Even in the districts furthest removed from the centre, peasant women take part in the foundation of day care centres. A significant number of peasant women have been sent to instructional courses in the protection of mothers and infants.

The number of women elected in the recent soviet elections, according to current and still incomplete reports, was two thousand. Among them are some who have been elected presidents of their community soviets.¹⁵

The Soviet Central Executive Committee includes among its members nine women.

The battle against the famine won the sympathies of the broadest layers of women workers in city and countryside,¹⁶ and the women's section hastened to draw advantage from this by bringing new layers of working women into party and soviet work. With the greatest imaginable energy, they hastened to aid the unfortunate, and that was indispensable to vanquishing the dreadful misery.

They took the children of the hungry into their family circle and worked to found children's homes in the provinces in the grip of famine. It was they who replaced the mothers of the unfortunate little ones. The women workers have devoted all their diligence to sew clothes and underwear for these children during the *subbotniki* [Communist Saturdays],¹⁷ and have even contributed continuously to the unfortunate from their scanty wages.

The women's sections do everything in their power to draw women workers and peasants into adult education. We organise preparatory courses for

15. Community soviets, elected by all working people in a given locality, were the Soviet equivalent of a municipal governing council.

16. The Comintern and its affiliates organised an international campaign in 1921 to alleviate a severe famine in Russia. See the report by Münzenberg, pp. 634–47, and the resolution on pp. 1069–71.

17. The subbotniks were days of voluntary labour for economic reconstruction, held mainly on Saturday [*subбота*].

them. In the workers' faculties (*Rabfak*), 3,683 women are studying, and a significant number have entered the Communist University, where they receive schooling.¹⁸ The Communist Party Central Committee publishes two magazines for women workers. In the provinces, there are several newspapers and about sixty women workers' newsletters. I simply want to stress that these newspapers have several hundred correspondents who are women workers and peasants.

This enormous activity among the masses of working women is possible only under the proletarian dictatorship. The Communist Party knows how to value the importance of special forms of agitation and propaganda among the working women, if these contribute to drawing the masses into the ranks of proletarian fighters. The first steps toward work among women were taken back in 1905–6. The bourgeois advocates of women's rights made an attempt to extend their influence among Russian women workers, but the class instincts of these women, led by the Party, helped them to form an accurate opinion of the bourgeois content of feminist propaganda, and they laid their fate without hesitation in the hands of the Communist Party.¹⁹

At the same time, the first club for women workers was founded in Petrograd, and was soon shut down by the police. Reaction forced the workers to continue their struggle in the underground. In 1914, the Party made a new attempt to carry out agitation and propaganda among working women in half-underground fashion. We started publishing a magazine, *Woman Worker*, which also served as a centre around which the fighting women workers gathered. Samoilova, Kudelli, Yelizarova, Menzhinskaia, Rozmirovich, Armand, Krupskaya, and Stal', who all went into exile during this period, were members abroad of this editorial board. But this attempt failed because of repression. The women fighters were arrested and the publication was banned.

Under Kerensky, when the Communist Party was forced to go partially underground, work was resumed among women. The Party was quick to pay tribute to the participation of women workers in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1917, the *Woman Worker* was again published in Petrograd, while a review appeared in Moscow, called *Working Woman's Life*. At the same time, the Moscow committee of the Communist Party organised a commission for political propaganda among women workers and peasants. The women workers gathered around this commission became fighters, and

18. The workers' faculties in Soviet Russia prepared workers and peasants who lacked secondary education for entry into post-secondary institutions, including the Communist University.

19. By 'Communist Party', Smidovich means the Bolshevik wing of the RSDLP. Regarding bourgeois feminism, see p. 856, n. 9.

a significant number of them played an important role in the October [1917] events.

The October Revolution radically changed the status of women workers and opened broad perspectives for them and ultimately also for peasant women. There is no arena in the Soviet state today in which the Russian woman worker has not demonstrated her rather remarkable capabilities. Moreover, there is no longer a single front in which worker and peasant women have not been shown to be outstanding comrades. Thousands of women workers have fallen in our struggle, without even leaving their names for history.

The awakened working woman displays a thoroughly communist outlook. She has dedicated herself with devotion to achieving the desires and demands of the working class, and she demonstrates an energy in communist construction that knows no bounds.

The Communist party has known well how to honour these characteristics of the woman worker. It has known how to employ effective methods to create a firm basis in the depths of the working class, which has made no small contribution to consolidating the new social order.

With deep conviction, I call on the comrades of other Communist parties to conduct agitation and propaganda among the women workers with the greatest energy. Their participation in the proletariat's united front is an indispensable condition for its effectiveness and for success in the final and victorious struggle.

Kasparova (Russia): Comrades, brothers and sisters: in the great struggle for proletarian revolution, the Communist International has always devoted very special attention to the national-revolutionary movement against imperialism, which has recently embraced the working masses, including worker and peasant women, of all colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East. The Communist International has supported this movement, to the degree that it advances the interests of the broad working masses of the East. In doing so, it cannot pass over the participation of masses of women in this revolutionary movement, for, as Karl Marx stressed in his time, without this participation no social revolution is possible.

The Second World Congress of the Communist International established principled guidelines in the colonial-national question in the epoch of struggle between imperialism and proletarian dictatorship. Since then, the following events have taken place in the East.

- 1.) The struggle against imperialism has developed in all the colonial and semi-colonial countries, such as Korea, British India, the Dutch Indies, Egypt, Syria, China, and Iran, and the movement has extended to embrace the masses of women. In addition, Turkey has regained its independence.

2.) A proletarian class movement has begun in almost all countries of the East, starting in capitalist Japan, and Communist parties have been formed in almost all these countries.

We also see that active participation in this movement by women, *who suffer from particularly oppressive subjugation, is greater and greater*, above all in the countries of the East where large-scale industry has begun to develop.

In Japan, the statistics are as follows: 3,047,902 male and 3,225,363 female workers among a population of 28,042,395 men and 27,918,145 women.

In British India, in 1911, the working population numbered 101,825,424 men and 47,359,582 women, among a total of 320 million inhabitants. In industry, a total of 11.5 million men and 6 million women were active. The number of women engaged in weaving establishments *alone* was 1,764,193; in spinning, 1,215,714; in food businesses, 2.2 million; in garment, 1,071,310. And then there are the workers in shops, who number 12 million women and 13 million men.

In Egypt and Syria, the number of women working in cotton- and silk-spinning mills and in the tobacco industry is rising. Even in China, where industry is less developed, more than 200,000 women are in the factories. The constantly growing involvement of masses of women in industrial production brings about their ever more active participation in the workers' movement as a whole. We see that in the strikes in Japan in 1918 and 1920, in which large masses of women were involved, as well as in China in the great weavers' strike of 1921.

In India, after the weavers' strike in Bombay [Mumbai] and Ahmedabad in 1916, we had the strike in the Madura Mills factory in Madras [Chennai] in 1920, involving seven hundred women, and then the strike in a porcelain factory in Bombay in 1922. An all-India trade-union federation of women workers was founded in 1922 in Bombay. And so on.

In addition, we see that in colonial and also in semi-colonial countries of the East where no large-scale industry yet exists, as in Iran and Turkey, post-war economic conditions are making women more and more indispensable as a factor in production. In all the Eastern countries where there is a strong national-revolutionary movement, as in Korea, India, Egypt, and even in Turkey, women are taking part actively.

In almost all these countries, there are revolutionary women's organisations, legal or underground, which are influenced by the national bourgeoisie but often encompass broad masses of worker and peasant women. In all the countries of the East, the economic conditions of worker and peasant women are very poor. As cheap labour, they are defenceless victims of exploitation by European and Japanese capitalism.

The development of women in their masses in the Eastern countries has thus created a fruitful terrain for Communist propaganda and agitation. The experience of Communist propagandistic activity in the Soviet Transcaucasia and Turkestan can be applied in most cases to the other regions of the East, especially where Muslim women are concerned. We direct the attention of Communist parties and groups in the Eastern countries, as well as the Communist parties of Britain, France, and other countries that possess colonies, to the particular importance of work among women during this revolutionary epoch. In this work, close attention is needed to the different objective conditions in each country. In countries where we have already organised Communist parties and where a workers' movement already exists, as, for example, in Japan and, to some degree, in China and India, Communist parties can establish special structures for work among the masses of women. In countries where we have primarily a national-revolutionary movement embracing the broad masses of working women, the party must make use of this movement in order to establish closer ties with the masses, free them from the influence of the bourgeoisie, and lead them with revolutionary-democratic slogans in struggle against foreign imperialism and toward proletarian revolution.

In the East, where the Communist parties' tasks consist of deepening and expanding the national-revolutionary struggle by establishing contact with the national-liberation movement, Communist women's groups must draw women's organisations into this struggle – both cultural and educational associations and also women's rights advocates. In this way, Communist women's groups will broaden the scope of their activity and crystallise the cadres for an intelligentsia of revolutionary women.

Neither the anti-imperialist united front nor the united front of women workers can be *realised* without *drawing in* the broadest masses of women. (*Loud applause*)

Chair: First of all, comrades, I would like to point out that the Presidium went far to accommodate the women by deciding to devote an entire day to discussion of this point. The Presidium cannot do better than that. You must consider that we will complete the Congress only with great difficulty. I assume that it is not your intention to stay in Moscow until the end of the year. But, if we continue to proceed in this fashion, I see no possibility of finishing any sooner.

For this reason, the Presidium has decided to concede to the women that there would be four reporters, but then to refrain from any further discussion. An English woman comrade has asked to speak. I have asked her to withdraw her request. She has not withdrawn it. I therefore once again ask the British delegation, or rather Comrade Birch, whether she withdraws her request to speak. Otherwise I will have to put the question to the Congress.

Murphy (Britain): The British delegation is willing to withdraw her request. However, it wishes to point out to the Presidium that, in future, when the intention is to permit no debate, the reporters should be instructed not to raise questions that may provoke a dispute.

Chair: It should be noted once again that we would, of course, have been glad to give this comrade the floor. But, obviously, this would have required a response, and we could not then have denied the floor to other women comrades.

We come to the vote on the *resolution*, which I will now read for you.

Work of the International Communist Women's Secretariat

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International approves the activity developed in Berlin by the International Communist Women's Secretariat, an auxiliary body of the Executive. In all countries where there is a revolutionary movement, the International Communist Women's Secretariat has worked to integrate Communist women into the sections of the Communist International and to school them and draw them into the party's work and struggles. In addition, it has worked for the expansion of Communist agitation, propaganda, and organisational work to embrace the broadest masses of women, and to pull them into the struggle for the interests of the productive masses and communism.²⁰

The International Secretariat of Communist Women has set its sights on linking together the work of organised Communist women among women in each country, that is, with the work and struggle of the Communist parties and the Communist International. Working in accord with the Communist parties, it has succeeded in expanding and reinforcing the international connections among Communist women who belong to these parties. All of its activity has been carried out in continuous and close accord with and under the leadership of the Executive, in line with the principled and tactical guidelines and decisions of the world congresses of the Communist International and the Second International Communist Women's Congress in Moscow.²¹

The special structures set up on the basis of these guidelines and decisions (women's secretariats, women's divisions, etc.) and the special methods utilised for Communist party work among women have been shown to be not

20. Regarding 'productive masses', see p. 838, n. 1.

21. The Second International Communist Women's Congress, attended by 82 women delegates from 28 countries, took place in June 1921 in Moscow. For its resolutions, see *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*, 1, 5–6 (1921), pp. 203–12.

only useful but indispensable to enable Communist ideas and slogans to achieve influence in broad layers of working women.

In the countries still under bourgeois class-rule, the first priority of systematic Communist work among women producers and proletarians has been the struggle to defend the bare essentials of life against capitalist exploitation, the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish a proletarian dictatorship. In the soviet states, by contrast, the main emphasis has been the effort to draw worker and peasant women into all arenas of the economy and social life for construction of the proletarian state, and their schooling to carry out the resulting tasks. The international significance of Soviet Russia as the first workers' state created by the world-revolution lends great importance to Communist work here among women producers. It stands as an example to all sections of the Communist International in countries in which the proletariat must conquer political power as a precondition for the communist transformation of society. The necessity and value of special structures for Communist work among women is also shown by the activity of the women's secretariat for the East, which has carried out useful and successful work under new and unusual conditions.

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International must recognise that, unfortunately, some sections have failed partially or completely to carry out their duty to systematically promote Communist work among women. They have, so far, failed either to take measures to organise Communist women in the party, or they have failed to create the party structures that are indispensable for work among the masses of women and for close links with them.

The Fourth Congress emphatically instructs the sections in question to make up for these omissions as rapidly as possible. It also urges all sections of the Communist International to drive forward Communist work among women with all the vigour appropriate to its great importance. The proletarian united front can only be achieved through the conscious and energetic participation of women and their organisational integration. If the Communist parties achieve a correct and strong tie to women producers, the latter can, under certain circumstances, become pioneers of the proletarian united front and revolutionary mass movements.

The Communist International must unite and develop revolutionary consciousness among all forces of the proletariat and the productive masses, without exception, for the work of constructing communism and for the struggle to shatter bourgeois class-rule.

Chair: Does anyone wish to speak on the text of this resolution? That is not the case. We come to the vote. The resolution is unanimously adopted.
(*Applause*)

Adjournment: 4:20 p.m.

Session 25 – Tuesday, 28 November 1922

Educational Work; Versailles Treaty

Educational work. The Versailles Peace Treaty. Telegram of greetings to the All-Indian Trade-Union Congress.

Speakers: Hoernle, Krupskaya, Cachin, Gennari, Šmeral, Radić

Convened: 12:30 p.m.

Chairpersons (alternating): Neurath, Marchlewski, Clara Zetkin, Carr

Hoernle (Germany): Comrades, brothers and sisters: the commission on education has come to the conclusion that the entirety of Communist educational policy cannot be dealt with here at the Congress. We can take up only the question of the Communist educational work being carried out by the party itself – that is, the political education carried out by party members and functionaries among the broad masses outside the party.

Communist politics is distinguished from that of the bourgeois and reformists not only by its goal but also by the fact that it has a strong scientific foundation, which is based on careful analysis of the historical situation and on knowledge of the social forces at work in capitalism. The method applied here is that of Marxist research, of historical materialism.¹

1. Engels described 'historical materialism' in 1892 as the 'view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of these classes against one another.' Marx and Engels 1974–2004, 27, p. 289. See also Bottomore 1991, pp. 234–9.

The Communist International can therefore only fulfil its task to be leader of the revolutionary proletariat and tribune of the broad masses of all oppressed and exploited if its policies have a firm Marxist foundation. For this reason alone, it is necessary for Communist parties to undertake careful theoretical schooling of their members and functionaries.

Political education work is also important because the Communist parties are all young. They are young in two senses, not only because most of the parties have existed for only a few years, but also in a quite physical sense with respect to age – at least the political age of the great masses of its members. The majority of Communist party members still suffer today, for the most part, from the after-effects and survivals of old petty-bourgeois and reformist attitudes and ideology.

The situation in which we are fighting today, especially at this moment, is constantly posing new and challenging tasks to these young and often rapidly growing parties. In particular, the united-front tactic demands a high level of intellectual flexibility, dexterity, and agility of thought, linked with firmness in principles – not only from the leadership but from the members. So it is all the more essential that the parties' Communist educational work begin among the broad mass of members and not be limited to the further schooling of a small circle of functionaries.

In direct contrast to the reformist parties, the emphasis of Communist party work is not on a small number of leaders, but on the masses of members. They are viewed not merely as electoral pawns, fillers of seats at meetings, and holders of membership cards, but as those who carry out responsible party work. The way in which the party carries out its work through fractions and cells demands that each individual member have a minimum of political understanding, Marxist schooling, and also formal skills such as eloquence, debating skill, know-how in holding a meeting, organisational capacity, and so on.

Communist educational work is fundamentally different from that carried out by the reformist parties. Reformist educational work leads the worker away from the class struggle by awakening illusions that even today, within capitalism, despite all the exploitation and poverty of the proletarians, it is possible, at least on the plane of knowledge and culture, to achieve equality and freedom of the entire human race within capitalism.

Reformist educational work is directed above all to individualist egoism. It gives the individual worker an opportunity, limited as it is, to lift himself personally above the average of fellow members of his class and so achieve a better existence at their expense. He does this through personal diligence, by listening to various lectures on popularised academic themes, and by education in particular fields.

Communist educational work has exactly the opposite goal. It aims to educate a revolutionary class fighter, to train every individual in greater class solidarity, and to raise and fortify the party's strength in struggle, agitation, and organisation. The outcome of reformist educational work is a heightened dependency of the working class on bourgeois ideology. Communist educational work, by contrast, aims to free the worker from the spell of bourgeois ideology. It shows him how every ideology is dependent on the social and economic basis, and that intellectual freedom is impossible in conditions of economic and social subjugation.

By and large, reformist educational work delivers to the worker a finished package of poorly popularised knowledge. It seeks to present the dubious fruits of bourgeois science and culture, fobbing off the worker with poisoned crumbs, but always awakening the illusion that it is delivering real bread. Communist educational work shows the proletarian how all bourgeois knowledge is shaped by class conditions and declares an intense war on all bourgeois science, art, morality, and religion. It shows how bourgeois tendencies find expression everywhere – not only in the social sciences, not only in politics, but in the apparently neutral sciences, in fields that are apparently far removed.

In this way, in critical debate with bourgeois science and culture, bourgeois morality and religion, it creates the foundations for construction of a new, proletarian, and socialist culture and lifestyle. And it is utopian to think that a new proletarian culture can arise in any way other than through a critical debate with bourgeois science and culture carried out in the service of the class struggle and proletarian revolution.

The proletariat is without property today because it lacks not only material assets but also the intellectual assets – it has been intellectually dispossessed. In this, the proletarian revolution is essentially different from that of the bourgeoisie. In the bourgeois revolutions, precisely during the revolutionary period, the bourgeois intellectuals achieved great, powerful, and lasting works of art and breakthroughs in scientific achievement. They could do this because the bourgeoisie had already eaten to its full before its political revolution; it already possessed the material and intellectual means of production. For the proletariat, the reverse is true. The proletariat can only come into possession of the material and also intellectual means of production when it has conquered power. The first pioneer intellectual work of the proletariat, viewed historically, consists of the fact that while in full struggle, the proletariat forged the mighty weapon of historical materialism. While still in its infancy, it inspired the minds of Marx and Engels to create the mighty structure of Marxism.

Because it is strictly at the service of the struggle, Communist educational work must therefore accept certain limitations. It is quite impossible for financially weak parties, locked in a most difficult political struggle, to take up any field of knowledge that suits them, which might well be quite good and useful in itself but does not have any direct link with the tasks of struggle. There must be a certain selection. It must limit itself to what its members and its staffers require directly for the struggle.

For example, it must introduce its members to the history of the revolutionary workers' movement and to the basic concepts of Marxist economic and social teachings. It must familiarise them with the principles and policy guidelines of the Communist International. In regions where the broad masses are still highly dependent on the clerics and are imprisoned in religious church ideology, it must go further, familiarising them with the history of nature's evolution and with the rise of religion and its role. Moreover, in countries where the broad masses of the proletariat are still illiterate, that is, where they lack even the most elementary education, there are circumstances where the Communist party must impart basic education, at least to its members, in order to enable them to act as the party's propagandists, agitators, and reporters. This must be done, simply because they could not otherwise carry out their political and revolutionary tasks.

So, you see, the task is always posed in terms of what will best heighten the party's capacity for struggle, agitation, and organisation.

But, in addition to this general educational work among the broad masses of its members, every party that seeks to fulfil its duty must carry out specialised education for its functionaries. The Communist party has to carry out work in the trade unions, the cooperatives, the tenant organisations, and among women and youth. It has to work in parliament, in the communities, and so on. It is, therefore, necessary that the staffers have a certain degree of specialised knowledge for their specific field of work.

It is impossible to manage without a certain degree of specialisation. General knowledge of the fundamentals is far from sufficient to supply everything that the individual must know for his specialised field of work. If such intensive, systematic, and organised educational work does not take place, the danger may well arise, just as in the reformist parties, that the members fall into an intellectual dependency on their leaders, and are thus prevented from maintaining the necessary democratic mistrust of their leaders, and subjecting them to the necessary criticism. They will then fall victim to the vacillations of their leaders.

But it is not enough to carry out Communist educational work among the staffers and members of the party. Communist educational work must also

address the masses outside the party – the sympathisers, the reformist workers, and the broad masses who remain indifferent. That means that the most important Communist parties must not carry out their agitation with general catchwords but must carefully found it in science and Marxism and – despite this scientific framework – present it in a genuinely popular form that is understandable to the masses.

An eminent philosopher coined the phrase: there is no greater art than saying profound things in the simplest way. Most Communist agitators will endorse this statement. Nothing is more difficult than to present the scientific results of Marxist research in very simple, popular manner, linking up with the understanding of the broad, indifferent masses, with their prejudices and limitations, with their small daily interests, and leading toward great and profound goals.

The Communist parties must therefore set great store on ensuring that their propaganda and agitation utilise new methods, methods that stimulate, that make it possible to seize the attention of the indifferent masses and awaken their interest. Observe how the skilled the bourgeoisie is in dominating the masses through means such as films, slide shows, and the pomp of religious ceremony. Communist parties too must learn to utilise these methods – slide shows, films, artistically designed celebrations, theatre performances, political propaganda plays, and so on – a field that has so far been very neglected in Western Europe and that must be systematically developed.

The Communist parties must also enter the proletarian educational organisations that are outside the party, that are independent or sympathise with the party. Such proletarian educational organisations exist in almost every country. I recall, for example, the German proletarian freethinkers. In other countries, the movement is called 'proletkult'; in Britain, the 'Plebs League'.² Communists are already working in most of these organisations, but their activity is not yet led by the Communist party in centralised fashion. It makes a great difference whether an individual works in such a proletarian educational organisation as he sees best, or whether this work is unified through fractions and led by the party.

In many other countries, there is a network of municipal or state institutions for popular education, so-called people's universities, and the like. Here, too, under certain circumstances, there is a possibility for revolutionary

2. Proletkult (proletarian culture), a division of the Soviet commissariat of education, was associated with strivings to create an entirely new, proletarian culture – efforts criticised by both Lenin and Trotsky. See Lenin 1960–71, 31, pp. 316–17; Trotsky 1972a, pp. 41–54. The Plebs League was an association for workers' education in Britain, formed in 1908 and influential among revolutionary-minded workers in the 1920s.

activity by the party. To some degree, such institutions for popular education are attended by broad masses, and the party is failing in an important task if it is not present everywhere where masses of workers seek to quench their intellectual hunger. It must, therefore, carefully investigate to what degree it is possible to gain influence in the leadership of such people's universities, to what degree their curriculum can be influenced, possibly in a roundabout way through the municipal administration.

The party must attempt strengthen its influence and that of proletarian struggle organisations as a whole in such educational institutions. It must attempt to bring the masses of workers who listen and learn there into opposition to bourgeois professors and teachers. It must demand that the methods of teaching through lectures be replaced by free discussion. It must have its best members intervene in such discussions and thus arouse an intellectual opposition against bourgeois influence.

It is obvious that, after the conquest of power, the educational task of a Communist party is quite different and much greater. For the Communist party, it is then no longer a question of educating only its narrow staff of agitators, organisers, editors, and so on. Nor is it simply a task for the party of bringing its membership up to a certain level of political understanding. Rather, in a country with a dictatorship of the proletariat, the Communist party obviously has the task of going further. It must assure that the communist spirit is predominant in all offices, factories, cultural institutions, schools, and universities, and that the entire cultural life in the city and community has a Communist leadership.

Communist educational work also differs from bourgeois instruction or reformist educational work in its teaching methods. In the bourgeois people's universities, the method that is mostly used today is the lecture. This makes the student a passive receptor for information.

Knowledge is imparted as something finished, a knowledge to be memorised by the student and if possible taken home in printed form. Such methods are absolutely inappropriate for Communist educational work. For us, what is at stake is not the transmission of information but, most of all, to convey to students the method of scientific inquiry, the Marxist method, so that they themselves learn to understand the economic and political situation. That makes them capable of intervening in discussions with reformists and bourgeois opponents, capable of discerning in the factory what is to be done, what motions to put, how to conduct themselves in action.

Instead of the lecture, Communist educational work must chiefly take the form of a working partnership between students and teachers, possibly in the form of a lecture linked with instruction through a seminar, a dis-

cussion format that is loosened up to enable the student to be active rather than passive.

Communist educational work is constantly subject to correction through the daily experience of struggle and party propaganda. It must therefore be carried out in close contact with daily practice and struggle. Under no circumstances may educational work be permitted to be conducted parallel with the political struggle. Rather, it must be subordinated to political viewpoints and daily interests. This must find expression in a purely organisational plane in that the responsible functionaries for educational work in the party, the heads of educational work, should not be chosen from literary figures, aesthetes, or writers, who lurk about the periphery of the party as what one might call revolutionary camp followers, but from the party's best political functionaries and fighters. In this way, the entire educational activity can be strictly subordinated to the political interests of the party in struggle.

This will then find expression in the fact that the scope of this educational work also varies depending on the situation. Let us say the party is in a campaign, which strains all its forces to the limit, and calls every member to the front, and the focus is on the street, the factory, and so on. In such a moment of excitement, the educational work, the quiet theoretical work, must naturally step back, in order then to be placed in the foreground in a period of ebb, in a time of quiet, so that the lessons of the struggle, the lessons of victory or defeat that the proletariat has achieved or suffered can be immediately utilised and recast into new knowledge and new vigour.

In a word, the minimum that must be demanded of the Communist parties today is educational work among their members that is centrally led and organised, and specialised educational work among the functionaries. In addition, their agitation must be more profound, scientific, and Marxist, and must be linked to propaganda that is genuinely popular in form and is supported by artistic, visual, musical, and theatrical material of every kind.

Even the weakest party can meet these modest requirements by creating a staff of party workers who are schooled in Marxism and can educate the rest of the membership. And the work among the members, the new recruits, the sympathisers, and the candidate members does not have to be carried out by great professorial luminaries. A good, proven comrade is capable of introducing new and still politically backward members to their tasks. It is often necessary to teach these members how to go about reading Communist newspapers, how to utilise the contents they have read in factory and trade-union agitation, and so on.

It would be a serious error to leave it to the initiative of individual persons or publishing firms to produce the textbooks, the curriculum outlines, and

manuals. Here, too, centralisation is needed in order to carry out work rationally and achieve the optimum with unified forces.

The party secretariat leading the educational work must collaborate intimately with the party's publishing firms and bookstores, seeking to produce writings and pamphlets that are of particular importance for the educational work. We must not overlook the creation of libraries. As the impoverishment of the working class makes it less and less possible for individuals to acquire the most important books – not only current writings but also scientific Marxist works – local branches of the party face an increasingly urgent duty to make good this deficiency by creating libraries.

Efforts must also be made to place Communist literature in trade-union and municipal libraries, thus reducing the party's expenses while still providing its members with what they need for their schooling. The central office that a party sets up to lead its educational work must seek, in addition to publishing curricula and instructional plans, to organise the available artists, actors, and writers who are revolutionary or sympathetic to revolution, to assist in Communist propaganda. Having these forces work individually, each on his own and in his own location, will not produce the results for the party that are possible when the forces are interlinked by a central office and the experiences in popular and artistic propaganda are exchanged.

Come what may, the Communist parties' educational work must encompass work among *young* workers and workers' children. The Communist youth organisation's independent educational work must receive the strongest backing from the party both financially and in the provision of instructors, books, and so on. Every member of the Communist youth must be drawn in without ado and must have access to all the party's educational events. And, together with the Communist youth organisation, the party must take up the revolutionary upbringing of proletarian children, which has been begun by our Communist children's groups.

The Commission proposes to the Congress – and we will submit a corresponding resolution to the Presidium – that a division be set up under the Comintern Executive to organise, lead, and supervise the Communist educational work of each party. It will coordinate, organise, and lead internationally the work of the educational secretariats of each party in their national framework.

The Commission also considers it extremely desirable that to head up the educational work as a whole a socialist college be created here in Moscow, the seat of the Executive, the place where all the threads of the International run together and comrades' international outlook is at its sharpest. What form this should take can be considered in further discussions. But we believe it is necessary that comrades in the different countries who are tested in action and

have received some degree of previous schooling receive the opportunity to get a truly Marxist and thorough education here in the seat of the Executive. All the parties in the West, except for the one in Soviet Russia, suffer particularly from the fact that we have a large number of capable revolutionary-minded comrades but very, very few who have an education in Marxism.

In every country, we suffer from the lack of a staff of comrades with a true education in scientific Marxism. A college here in this location would help remove this weakness.

Comrades, brothers and sisters: the form of this educational work will, naturally, be different in the parties that must work underground than in the parties that can work legally. The form will also be different in parties that already encompass broad masses and thus have more financial and material resources than the parties that are still quite small and weak and not yet firmly established. But the Commission believes that, if such methodical and centrally organised educational work is led from here, by the Executive, it will then be possible for this Communist educational work and theoretical schooling to significantly raise the fighting strength of the Communist parties and the Communist International. (*Loud applause*)

Krupskaya (Russia): Comrades, I would like to add a few words to what has been said by Comrade Hoernle. Our Russian Communist Party has very broad experience in the fields of agitation and propaganda. What distinguishes our party is the fact that every member within it must be an active member. That was always a consequence of the conditions in which the party existed. It was underground for a very long time, and joining the party brought with it, of course, the danger of losing everything, of being arrested. The Party provided no benefits and imposed very great responsibilities on its members. It followed that only active forces joined the Party.

But, theoretically too, the question had always been clear to us from the very beginning. In his pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?*³ Comrade Lenin developed twenty years ago the position that every member of the party must be active. At the second party congress in 1903, it was precisely this question of party membership that was the basis for the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Lenin then offered the formulation that every member of the party must be an active party member. He must not only accept the Party's programme but also be active in its internal organisation. Martov's formulation, on the other hand, consisted of determining that the party member must merely accept the programme and work under the party's leadership.⁴

3. See Lenin 1960–71, 5, pp. 347–529, and Lih 2005, pp. 673–840.

4. For proceedings of the second RSDLP congress, see Pearce (ed.) 1978.

At first glance, the difference does not seem great. And it did seem to many comrades at the time that the dispute concerned petty things and that this was not an important point. The Party's further history showed that the question was extremely important. Only thanks to this circumstance was our party able to win great influence among the masses. It was able to achieve victory only because its members were active party members.

The fact that every member is active affected our entire situation and our conduct with respect to agitation and propaganda.

It is one thing to take up theory and study various questions when this reflects merely personal interest. It is quite another matter when theoretical study and the striving for learning in the fundamentals are required by one's work. Every member of the party must work either in agitation and propaganda or in organisational activity. I will take up, above all, the question of agitation. Thanks to a correct understanding of agitation, it has been possible for the Communist Party, the party of the Bolsheviks, to succeed in maintaining very great influence among the masses at all times. Agitation deals with feelings, with the emotional side of things. It is through agitation that the broad masses are drawn into the Party.

The question of agitation was posed for us for the first time when we encountered a broad economic movement. We developed large-scale agitation for the first time in connection with the struggle to improve material conditions. It was the end of the 1890s.

Many comrades then became excessively preoccupied with that side of things. At that time, we had a particular tendency, that of the magazine *Rabochaia Mysl'* [*Workers' Thought*]. This current overestimated the importance of the immediate, elemental workers' movement. It became carried away by the enormous success enjoyed by agitation, and its supporters began saying that theory was not necessary at all and that only the elemental movement was significant. They even went so far as to make the notorious claim that Marx and Engels were not necessary and that the working class could reach socialism even without them. At that time, the Party carried out an energetic struggle against this current.

Another question that arose at that time was the manner in which agitation should be intensified. This happened at the same time; all these disputes arose for us twenty years ago. A section of the comrades then said that agitation should not be forced, and that we should restrict ourselves to the questions that interest the masses. At that time, the masses were concerned mostly with the economic situation, and a section of the party membership maintained that we should restrict ourselves to such themes. They said we should not advance and deepen our agitation but rather stay at the level that the working class had reached at this time.

We then had the so-called economist current, associated with *Rabochee Delo* [*Workers' Cause*], which claimed that agitation should not be deepened, that we needed merely to follow the working class. The group around *Iskra* [*Spark*] carried out an immense, fierce, and passionate struggle against this current, which it considered to be extremely harmful. And if the Party had, in fact, adopted the position of the economists, that would have rendered it incapable of leading the masses.

Marxism helped the Party to evaluate correctly the meaning of agitation. How did we conduct this agitation? We always established the focus of the agitation – and we devoted a very, very great deal of time to that determination. At the end of the 1890s, the focus was on economic agitation. Later, in 1905, it was on the fact that the working class was without rights. Finally, in the most recent period, during the World War, the War was the focus of all questions. But it was a matter of determining not just the central question but also the entire system of questions that made up the central issue. An entire staff of agitators came together in a collective that discussed all these questions.

Our party was capable of carrying out such a colossal task during the War only because throughout the entire previous period we had devoted extremely close attention to these questions of agitation. In speaking of forms of agitation, we must take a closer look at oral agitation. The success of agitation is dependent, not so much on the eloquence and skill of the speaker, but, rather, on the degree to which the question around which agitation is conducted touches the vital interests of the masses and affects them intimately. There was no lack of evidence on this point. Thus, during the War, when any soldier took the floor, even to say just a very few words, he had an enormous effect on the masses because he could express the feelings that filled their inner life. We had to pay close attention to this factor.

I will not go into local agitation, but I will refer to another form of agitation that achieved an enormous development during the War. I am referring to agitation with the aid of art. The worker, the masses of workers, think much more in terms of pictures than in logical sequences. For this reason, artistic agitation, through placards and music and theatre, always had an irresistible influence on the working people. And, when the task is to spur on the masses and draw them into the work, the use of art is extremely important. The Russian experience shows that this approach is particularly important in conducting the most basic agitation.

There is yet another tradition in our party. It was not only agitation and propaganda that played an important role in our party. Even before broad-scale agitation was utilised, we developed propaganda in underground groups. Usually, a Marxist would come to the group, present Marx and Engels there,

and lead discussions on current issues. Cultural history and political economy would be taken up. This tradition struck deep roots among our working class – not only the adults but also the young workers.

I myself was witness to this in a small and remote village, where students demanded of their teacher that she must absolutely take up the topics previously discussed by the group and instruct them in political economy and cultural history. It seemed to the children that there was no other way forward. However, after a short time, the workers' groups had to be broken off because of arrests, and the workers completed their education in exile and in the prisons.

In the traditions of our party, both prisons and exile became a kind of school and university, where workers who later became leading party functionaries received a good Marxist schooling.

The *Rabochee Delo* group, however, underestimated the importance of propaganda. In his polemic against them, Comrade Lenin referred to Engels's preface to his work on the peasant war, in which he emphasises that, in addition to the economic movement of the working class and to the political struggle, the elaboration of theory also has enormous importance.⁵ The Communist Party, therefore, never separated agitation and propaganda from their underlying task. Questions of agitation and propaganda always formed the essence of the Party's activity.

Following the seizure of power by the working class, the Party became legal, and our entire educational work and our activity in the trade unions became imbued by the same traditions. Every functionary in the central office carries out political education, wherever he may be active – in a school for adults or in a library – just as every trade-union functionary is obligated to carry out propaganda in keeping with the opportunities and with his abilities. The Party, together with the trade-union movement, now also leads political education among adults.

Along this path, such activities grew into an enormous force. Marxist education is under way everywhere in the country, and we see how our youth now devotes the greatest energy to learning. We can only welcome this striving to study theory. It was expressed with particular force at our most recent youth congress. Overall, we are witnessing a sharp turn. In the first years of the Revolution, our entire attention was focused on agitation at the fronts and in the rear. At present, however, now that we have turned our attention to the work of economic construction, questions of a more profound nature come to the fore. Interest in theory and in Marxism has increased remarkably. In the

5. See Engels's supplement to the preface, written in 1874, in Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 23, pp. 631–2.

central office for political education, where I work, we receive daily confirmation of the fact that the masses are now thirsty for this more profound understanding. And that is completely comprehensible.

The Revolution of 1905 aroused the masses and shook the entire country. Afterwards, we had the years of reaction, during which the courage of the intellectuals collapsed. It seemed to them that all the conquests of the Revolution were destroyed, that everything was lost. But the masses can never forget the Revolution. We learned that in 1912. Events on the Lena suddenly awakened the masses and showed the degree to which they had matured during those years.⁶ An enormous invisible inner process took place during this period that was invisible to the normal eye. The masses reflected on the impressions gained during the Revolution, and in 1912 they were already different from in 1905.

We see the same process today. We see that the masses are withdrawing into the realm of thought, withdrawing into themselves. Everyone's attention is now directed to creating a material basis for the conquests of the revolution. The need to create such a material basis is closely linked with changing the human factor, raising the masses to a higher level of culture, with a change in all methods of work and in the masses' entire psychology.

We happen to be living in a time when a deep and imperceptible inner process is going on. The working class and the worker youth of Russia are now devoting themselves with all their energies to study. And, by working to increase production, they are also, at the same time, working for their own personal development. That gives us grounds to hope that when the world-revolution blazes up, we will stand ready.

Chair: Comrades, brothers and sisters: The commission assigned to work through the question of political education has drafted theses that will be presented to the Presidium and then to the Congress for a vote.

We will now continue our deliberations. The next agenda point is *The Versailles Peace Treaty*. The first reporter is Comrade Cachin.

The Versailles Peace Treaty

Cachin (France): Comrades, our task is now to analyse the results of the Versailles Treaty and the other treaties that followed it.⁷

6. On 4 April 1912, an attack by soldiers on striking workers in the goldfields near the Lena River in eastern Siberia killed approximately 240 miners and wounded 270. News of the massacre provoked a wave of strikes and protest meetings across Russia.

7. The Versailles Treaty between the Allied powers and Germany (signed 28 June 1919) was followed by the treaties of Saint-Germain (with Austria), Neuilly (with

The first thing that must be said is that these treaties, and above all that of Versailles, were seen as something imposed arbitrarily and through coercion, something that has caused the most grievous damage to the world and Europe. It has now become commonplace to ask whether the crime of the Versailles Peace Treaty was not worse than that of the War itself.

The treaties display such an ignorance of current economic and political requirements that the Entente bourgeoisie has been forced for a third time to gather in Lausanne in order to modify texts that they had regarded as definitive – an attempt that will not be their last.⁸

We have now been informed of yet another conference that is to take place in December in Brussels,⁹ and it must be feared that the results of this conference will create major dangers for this now so pitiful peace.

I would like to speak to you above all regarding the actions of one particular country of the Entente that since 1918 has displayed exceptional greed combined with complete ignorance of current requirements – I am referring to France.

The rulers of France say it is the most consolidated country in Europe, the country with the least likelihood of social convulsions. The French bourgeoisie habitually makes a show of great confidence in soul and spirit. In reality, however, the economic and financial terms of the Versailles Treaty that it signed are steering it toward great difficulties. Its body is stricken by a bloody wound. This is the overwhelming debt, which cannot be repaid in any foreseeable time. Many outstanding representatives of French capitalism have concluded that it is now impossible to draw up a budget and fashion it in a normal manner.

It is calculated that, in the near future – three or four years – the point will be reached where the French budget will no longer be sufficient to pay the interest on the overall debt. The parliamentary report on this question stated that, in the budget of 1929–30, nothing will be left to pay the costs of government services. The billions upon billions collected in oppressive taxes will hardly be enough to pay the interest on the national debt.

Bulgaria), Trianon (with Hungary), and Sèvres (with Ottoman Turkey). For the Comintern's overall analysis of the Versailles treaty system, see the congress resolution, pp. 1143–8. For Radek's written report to the Congress on the Versailles Treaty, see Radek 1922b.

8. For Lausanne Conference, see p. 615, n. 38.

9. The Allied powers intended a conference in Brussels, principally to consider inter-Allied debts incurred during the war. Plans were changed, however, and a more restricted meeting convened in London on 9 December 1922. This conference categorically rejected a German proposal on reparations – a step toward French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923.

It is important to point to this fundamental crime of the French bourgeoisie, showing how this danger always weighs on it like a nightmare.

Initially, it was of the opinion – and its economic and financial experts had no better advice – that it would be able to extract sufficient sums of money from Germany to pay off the total sum of its national debt. Recall the incredible figures that were demanded of Germany up to the London Treaty of May 1921.¹⁰ The gullible French people were told that 300 billion to 400 billion [gold marks] would be demanded of defeated Germany and would be paid to the last penny. The finance minister declared that all the country's policies had to be directed toward one goal – getting Germany to pay the silver and gold.

In May 1921, they began to reduce the original absurd demands. Definitive figures were arrived at regarding what Germany should pay: 132 billion gold marks, of which 52%, that is, 80 billion, would go to France.¹¹

Right up to the present, this remains the single topic, the exclusive theme, of the republic's ministers, the servile press, and of public opinion as a whole, which has been deliberately won to this belief.

As it became clear that nothing was being paid, the original plan was gradually modified. Up to 1922, France had not received a single gold mark, that there had not been a single payment in kind. The German payments in gold, which amounted to just over one billion, were made to Belgium and Britain, and France received nothing from them. As these facts sunk in, public expectation that Germany would pay gradually diminished.

France has, so far, paid 80 billion as an advance to its war wounded. Since December 1918, it has maintained an army of 90,000 men on the Rhine, which has cost 12 billion gold francs.

Under such conditions, it is understandable that France, previously misled by nonsense from its official leaders, has now begun to lose confidence in the old dogma that Germany would pay.

This state of mind is reflected in the Lubersac agreement.¹² I will not go into the details, but rather merely stress that as those disabled in the War and

10. In January 1921, the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission fixed the amount of reparations to be paid by Germany at 269 billion gold marks, to be paid by instalments until 1984. On 5 May 1921, the Allied Supreme Council scaled back this total to 132 billion gold marks, or approximately US\$33 billion. A gold mark was then worth about US\$0.25. Among the many measures of the value of a US dollar (1922) in today's currency are: \$12.80 (purchasing power) and \$194 (share of US GDP). See: <www.measuringworth.com>.

11. The Allied conference in Spa had July 1920 had decided that 52% of German reparations would be paid to France, and this proportion was not changed by the May 1921 London Conference. The figure cited by Cachin, 80 billion, represents 60% of projected total reparations.

12. The deadlock over reparations payments obstructed reconstruction of the devastated regions of northeast France, which these payments were to finance. French

a certain number of politicians recognised the futility and fruitlessness of a campaign that had been definitively exhausted, they attempted to enter into direct contact with German industrialists in order to obtain payments in kind, since it was impossible to obtain payments in money.

This gave rise to the famous agreements that caused such a sensation. Behind these agreements can be seen the essential features of an entire series of negotiations between numerous French and German capitalists.

To what degree did these negotiations lead to something tangible? We have little information on this. Between these two countries stand excessive barriers – high customs duties, currency fluctuations, and a number of other difficulties, not just economic and financial but also political and moral in character – which made it impossible for these agreements to become reality. As a result, events are now moving in quite a different direction. It appears that the Stinnes-Lubersac agreement cannot be implemented at this time.

Capitalist France declares that it is in distress. Our worst chauvinists, the French industrialists, the capitalists, feared that the reconstruction of the northern region that had been reserved for them alone would now be taken from them. They launched a strong campaign against the Stinnes-Lubersac agreement.

The latest declarations of parliament and the bourgeois press reveal a determination to direct public opinion toward quite different goals. Thus, when the Senate recently took up for the hundredth time the reparations question, Lubersac had not the slightest success in his attempt to defend the rumoured agreements. He came under quite severe criticism. I understand that he stood rather alone in defending his views, and the government offered him no support. On the contrary, many members of the Senate took a strong stand against the agreements. One of them stated that the Stinnes-Lubersac negotiations, just like those attempted previously, could not count on the expected positive response in France today. He added that energetic and forceful action was required, and that the country must go back to the policies previously advocated by Poincaré.

The same state of feeling was visible in the [National] Assembly, as I will now show.

owners of damaged property sought a solution through direct negotiations with German capitalists. In September 1922, their representative, Guy Louis Jean de Lubersac, president of the Federation of Cooperative Societies of French Liberated Regions, concluded an agreement with German industrialist Hugo Stinnes, whereby the Stinnes group would deliver building materials for reconstruction, to be counted as part payment of reparations. However, French-German relations deteriorated rapidly in the months that followed, and the agreement was never implemented.

The person who had always stood against the Stinnes-Lubersac agreement and the generalisation of these economic accords, Loucheur, declared that it is necessary to go over to an energetic policy toward Germany through a permanent occupation of the left [west] bank of the Rhine.¹³

It thus appears that, at present, the outlook for the Brussels Conference is that capitalist France, giving up on the delusion of money payments and losing its hopes in payments in kind, will now direct its efforts toward achieving two specific goals.

The first is the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine: a declaration of permanent and unlimited occupation and also economic exploitation of this territory.

It must be noted that the left bank of the Rhine is understood to include also the bridgeheads on the right bank. We must also not forget that the Ruhr district is also understood to be included, and not just the part that is already occupied.¹⁴ One of the most influential men of France has stated that our armies have currently occupied a portion of the Ruhr that contains 44 blast furnaces, and that it would be sufficient to expand the occupied territory a bit on the right bank to have not 45 but 60 blast furnaces within the range of our rifles, tanks, and machine guns. He added that, if a customs barrier is erected on the far side of these 60 blast furnaces, the structure of German metallurgy will collapse and German heavy industry will be crippled. He added that as far as he was concerned, this solution would be decisive.

We must not lose sight of the following considerations. In the French bourgeois world, the opinion has gradually found expression that, after the Germans fail to pay, German industry must be broken and destroyed, naturally for the profit of the French metal industry. The idea of an unlimited occupation of the left bank of the Rhine is taking shape more and more firmly. Of course, as always, capitalist greed is concealed behind various pompous terms. They say it is necessary to protect France's security, and, given the failure of both Britain and the United States to provide the formal guarantee requested in 1919, France must achieve permanent security through defence by its army in a wide deployment on the left bank of the Rhine.

This formula, which is now voiced by diplomats, generals, industrialists, and the entire capitalist bourgeoisie, must be interpreted as meaning the separation from Germany of the entire territory west of the Rhine – not annexation, for there is no need to use this harsh word, but rather the safeguarding

13. The Versailles Treaty provided for occupation of German territory west of the Rhine by Allied armies for up to fifteen years, beginning in 1920.

14. French and Belgian troops had occupied two Ruhr cities, Düsseldorf and Duisburg, in March 1921.

of its independence through the political, military, and customs supervision by the French army.

That's where things stand regarding the attempt in 1919 to obtain from Germany the billions needed for French reconstruction. It is our duty to protest continually against this policy. We must, however, not merely stress the results of the Versailles Treaty. There is something else involved here, which is clear to all, and about which comrades from other countries will speak. Capitalist France wanted to obtain more from Germany than merely money and payments in kind. They want to dismember it. They also want to utilise their victory to secure their economic and political hegemony by devouring the small countries created in Europe after the War. These countries do not have an independent economic or free political life. They owe their existence to the moral and material support that they received from the Entente bourgeoisie. In this regard, there was a manoeuvre that revealed the obvious desire of French capitalism to achieve economic and political domination over all the Central European countries. Our comrades from these countries will report to you on the results of this development.

The demands arising from the Treaty of Versailles have contributed to a great degree for the present financial situation and the extreme devaluation of most European currencies. This shows the bourgeoisie's complete incompetence and recklessness, totally blind to the inevitable results of its policies. Even now, it is showing more and more that it is incapable of correcting its course in the slightest.

It would be tedious to enumerate the results of the Versailles Treaty, and the treaties that followed it, results familiar to all Communists. The essential point is that it is impossible for capitalist Europe to rise out of the rubble of so many ruins.

We must point to the decline of capitalist power in all the victorious states.

We must record the dismal fact that the bourgeoisie with a reputation for the greatest intelligence has shown itself to be completely incompetent to halt the collapse of currencies that is devastating the entirety of the bourgeois world, aggravating the social crisis, and worsening poverty. In response to these facts and results, the class struggle is, of course, constantly becoming sharper and more vigorous. For us, in France, from a class perspective, we must wage the most energetic struggle against the Versailles Treaty, pointing constantly to the steadily growing influence of the military authorities in our country, and demanding the immediate withdrawal from the left bank of the Rhine and the immediate liberation of six million Rhinelanders, who are held down by the yoke and the boot of our armies and are not even in a position to join a strike called in the rest of Germany.

It is necessary to align and interrelate more and more the campaigns of the two great proletariats that are most immediately affected by this situation, those of Germany and France. In the past, our ties have been weak. We met barely two or three times, and recently we in France were so taken up with our internal disputes that we did not devote the energy to the progress of this campaign that it absolutely required.

Coming out of this conference, we must have intimate and firm unity based on precise agreements between the delegations of representatives of German and French communism. It is necessary for demonstrations of every kind in the two countries to be more frequent, with more and more French comrades coming to Germany and German comrades to France, so that the propaganda in each of the two countries is clearly heard on the other side.

Recently, on 15 October, the French miners were threatened by their capitalists with a wage reduction. They decided to resist the reduction and declared they would go on strike before accepting the employers' offer. Many of them are Communists. They decided, in agreement with the Party, to visit their German comrades in the Ruhr district in order to work out with them a common battle plan.

The Ruhr miners were threatened not with a wage-reduction but with an extension of the working day. We thought that this offered a particularly favourable opportunity to unite the two proletariats in a common campaign, and we hoped that we could conceivably succeed in organising a simultaneous movement in the Ruhr territory, in the coal basin of northern France, in Pas-de-Calais, and in all our coal regions. We hoped for a successful campaign, which, with good leadership, could have had a considerable moral and material influence on both countries and the proletariat as a whole. It proved impossible to carry out this plan. However, I believe that this is precisely the direction in which we must multiply our efforts.

In our opinion, the Congress should be presented with a simple and clear resolution that is specific and practical. The delegations unified here must come to an agreement to make the necessary preparations for the severe impact that the Brussels Conference will have on all Europe. There is no escaping the obligation to prepare here for a massive campaign, a common movement against the Versailles Treaty, that can be proceed in all possible forms and with the greatest energy. This plan is specific and can be realised immediately, and I take the liberty of presenting it to the Congress.¹⁵ (*Applause*)

15. See the congress resolution on the Versailles Treaty, pp. 1143–8.

Clara Zetkin (*as Chair*): Comrades, brothers and sisters: I would like to make a most welcome announcement. Our Italian Comrade Gennari has just arrived, attacked and wounded by the Fascists. I believe you will all join the Presidium in welcoming him here with all our hearts and asking him to take his place in this committee. (*Loud applause*)

In Gennari's person we greet the brave, and persecuted Italian proletariat, suffering many wounds but yet preparing to gather its revolutionary forces in the face of the white terror and launch a new offensive against capitalism and for future victories. Comrade Gennari, we welcome you with all our hearts. Long live communism in Italy! Long live the Italian proletariat! (*Loud applause. As Comrade Gennari moves to the presidium table, the gathering stands, sings the 'Internationale', and breaks out once more in applause.*)

Gennari: Comrades, I wish to express my thanks especially because this declaration is directed to all comrades, all workers, all Italian revolutionaries, who have fought for years in the most terrible conditions. It is directed to those who have been mistreated and wounded, and still stand firm in the trenches of social revolution.

When the Congress takes up the conduct of the Communist Party of Italy, it will have to refer to mistakes that have been made. But it will, above all, have to recall the conditions in which the comrades in Italy have struggled.

In response to all comrades, I can express the assurance that, however much the political situation in Italy has worsened, the Party remains intact. Communists and revolutionary workers stand ready to fight on with you for the cause of proletarian world-revolution. (*Applause*)

Šmeral (Czechoslovakia): The Treaty of Versailles created the state of Czechoslovakia. As a result, a large part of the Czechoslovak population lives under the illusion that the Versailles Treaty is a force for historical progress and the foundation and surety of national self-determination and national liberation. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has worked since its foundation – and not without some success – and will continue to work to free the Czechoslovak proletariat from the prison of this illusion, which is nothing better than a bourgeois lie. All Czechoslovak proletarians must be made aware that when the Czechoslovak state was created in Versailles, the people's striving for freedom was not the deciding factor. The independence of Czechoslovakia was to be purely fictitious. In reality, it was to be a puppet state of the capitalist great powers, the Entente. It was to be a pillar of the domination of the Entente and especially of France.

When the Czechoslovak state was created, the decisive factors were not the national or economic interests of the population but, rather, military and imperialist interests.

It is no accident that the borders of the newly created Czechoslovak state included a disproportionate *population speaking other languages*, whose right to national self-determination received no consideration. The rulers of the Entente were guided by the slogan on which the power of reaction in the previous Austria-Hungary was based: 'Divide and rule'. Their plan was like this: 'If we include in the Czechoslovak state Germans, Hungarians, Poles, and Ukrainians making up almost a third of the population,¹⁶ we will be able to manipulate both groups, the rulers and the ruled. We will encourage national prejudices in both camps. We will use the one against the other. And, in this way, we will keep the country dependent on us. The Czechoslovak majority will have to anticipate irredentism among the national minorities. Therefore, it will restrict civil rights, maintain a reactionary government, build a strong army purely for internal reasons, and be forced to rely on us. A reactionary government and a strong army are useful not only against the national minorities but also against the proletariat and to reinforce the system that the capitalist great powers of the Entente are longing to create right across Europe. In case of emergency, Czechoslovakia's strong army will be at the disposal of the Entente great powers.'

In Versailles, only the military and imperialist needs of the Entente were given consideration. In forming the states of central and southern Europe, no account was taken of the economic factors that should have been decisive from the point of view of capitalist society. The World War resulted from the fact that the limits even of the largest countries had become much too narrow for the growth of the productive forces. And this war concluded in central and southern Europe not with an economic unification but with the Balkanisation of the entire region.

Under the influence of the Entente, all the small states in this part of Europe were set up in isolation. Each of them strives for complete economic independence. Each of them tries to introduce every branch of industry inside its borders, even branches for which the natural conditions are not at all favourable and whose products could be obtained much more advantageously through planned international trade. This results in great wastage and a shackling of production at a time when the world, impoverished by war, is in so great need of production.

A number of states are experiencing a severe crisis as a result of the lack of industrial products. And, at the same time, in Czechoslovakia, there is a technically advanced industrial structure that can meet the consumption needs of seventy million people, in a country with only fourteen million inhabitants.

16. An additional national minority in Czechoslovakia was the Slovaks, destined ultimately to establish a separate state.

The governing clique of bourgeois rejects the road out of isolation – toward the east and Russia – and, instead, on command of Entente capitalism, is preparing to dismantle at least half of the already installed and technically advanced productive apparatus, to destroy it forever. They take no heed of the fate of the masses that have gathered to live close to the factories that have now been shut down. The Versailles Treaty thus has as its direct consequence the dismantling of the existing means of production. This fact is clear evidence that capitalism is not capable, with its methods, of resolving the problems that inevitably arise within its bosom. In this period, every attempt of the bourgeois class to maintain its existence runs counter to the development of the productive forces.

The structure of the Versailles Treaty did not establish the bourgeois principle of self-determination for the national minorities in Czechoslovakia. Nor did it even resolve the national question for the now-dominant Czech nation. Nationalist circles of the Czech bourgeoisie are now beset by feelings of insecurity regarding the future destiny of the country and the nation. The bourgeoisie feels that using the methods that are today the main weapons of reaction and counter-revolution may lead the little nation into a dead end, fighting against the current of historical inevitability. They feel they may be crushed by the tide of great social tempests that even now assume dangerous proportions and that will determine the future pattern of Europe and the world as a whole.

The Treaty's structure serves only the military goals of the Entente, taking no account of the real needs of not only the workers but the bulk of Czechoslovakia's non-proletarian population. This leads naturally to the result that, once the artificially created illusions are overcome, it will no longer be possible to sustain the structure of the Czech state on the basis of democratic principles. Even today, the foreign, French influence is exerted to maintain a clique in power that has relatively weak social and political roots. As this clique more and more loses its influence among the population, it offers its services to the imperialist and counter-revolutionary currents of French capitalist politics with fewer and fewer reservations, in opposition not only to Germany, which is breaking down under the weight of reparations, but also against Austria and especially against Soviet Russia. We must be prepared for the possibility that the foreign influences that hold Czechoslovakia within the framework of the Versailles Treaty will also drive internal relationships in the country toward an openly minority government, an undisguised bourgeois dictatorship, a government of a fascist type.

Czech workers are already beginning to recognise, and will do so more and more, that the Versailles Treaty has not resolved the national question

and simply represents a misfortune for them as a class. The phrases mouthed by the bourgeoisie about the 'rights of nationalities', which the Entente gave out as the political goal of the World War, are nothing but empty words and lies. Communist workers in Czechoslovakia must be aware that national conceptions are not primary for us. We, too, are not indifferent to national strivings and struggle. It is absurd to say that the Communist International has no other thought but to rob the small nations living under capitalism, including Czechoslovakia, of their so-called national independence.

However, we judge every national movement in terms of its specific form. Our attitude to it depends on whether the specific national movement assists our line of march, the social revolution, or whether it is a tool in the hands of world counter-revolution.

Thus, the national aspirations of the Czechoslovaks could be considered as promoting historical progress, as long as they aimed at destroying Europe's previous structures, including feudal and dynastic Austria-Hungary. It must be viewed as a counter-revolutionary force to the degree that the influence of the Czech bourgeoisie tied it to the Versailles Treaty and to the counter-revolutionary conspiracy of the capitalist great powers of the Entente. From that moment on, the nationalism of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie became an ally of reaction in its every form across Europe.

The national question will be resolved only when the forces of capitalist anarchy and of competitive production, which necessarily lead to conflict and war, are surmounted. The new ordering of Europe will introduce the planning of production and a genuinely free and confident coexistence of peoples. It will arise on the rubble of the Versailles Treaty. It will not take the form of the isolation and so-called sovereignty that now is merely a cloak for the vassal-like dependence of small states on the large. Rather, it will mean a universal federation of the soviet states of the world. This slogan offers the only way out of the current anarchy, one that is not merely economic but also political. It has urgent meaning above all to Central Europe and the Balkan countries. It is the opposite of a return to the earlier Austria-Hungary, whose revival conservative and clerical groups in France and Britain are now instinctively led to consider, as a result of the desperate conditions of capitalism and the bourgeois class. Only the ruthless, coordinated, international, and revolutionary action of the workers and poor peasants can defeat the monarchist and counter-revolutionary forces that are gathering here. In order to resolve the national question for the small nations of Central and Eastern Europe, there is an obligatory precondition – the great struggle of our class and the victory of social revolution.

Radić (Radovanović, Yugoslavia): The numerous conferences of Entente powers since 1919 have shown clearly that the Versailles Treaty and the related peace treaties that were supposed to assure the hegemony of French imperialism in Europe and of British in the Near East and over the oceans have proven to be unworkable. They are now in a process of dissolution.

In elaborating these treaties, the Entente powers were guided by their imperialist inclinations, flowing from the iron logic of economic development. The reparations that the defeated states were to pay went far beyond their financial and economic potential. New countries were created, and boundaries were drawn without regard to whether the new states would be viable or whether their boundaries corresponded to economic requirements and national considerations.

In this fashion, Europe as a whole and especially the Danube basin was placed in an impossible situation. The Balkans and the Danube basin form an economic whole, inhabited by a remarkable mosaic of nationalities. They are divided into many states, each of which contains large national minorities. The difficult economic conditions in each of these states, whose peoples had lived together for hundreds of years, and the amputation of territory by foreign elements results in extremely tense relationships among these states, which threatens to break out into armed conflict at any moment.

The nationalist ailments are arising once again, and the bourgeoisie, especially that of the newly formed states, is seeking to present its imperialist lust for booty and class interests as the cause of the nation as a whole, in order thus to win the entire nation to the defence and maintenance of the situation created by the Versailles Treaty. With the same slogan, the bourgeoisie seeks to neutralise forces possibly hostile to the state. It is unleashing harsh political and social reaction, directed mainly against the revolutionary proletariat.

The national struggles that were previously on the agenda for resolution in the Danube basin and the Balkans are still urgently posed. Not only have the national problems not been resolved by the treaties of Versailles, Neuilly, and Trianon; on the contrary, they have become more complex and acute. The new states, which include quite large national minorities, are conducting a ruthless policy of forced assimilation that degrades them to the status of second-class citizens. These minorities are barred from benefiting from the agrarian reform. Their cultural needs are not considered. Even the most harmless opposition to the government is met by severe repression. As a result of these policies, pursued by all the states of the Little Entente against their national minorities,¹⁷ these minorities' resistance is growing, expressing itself

17. The 'Little Entente' was an alliance among Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania, concluded in 1920–1. All three governments were aligned with France.

in different ways. In Macedonia, for example, the Bulgarians and Albanians are waging armed struggle against the imperialist policies of the Serbian bourgeoisie. In all the new states, Germans and Hungarians defend themselves against these policies with passive resistance and systematic sabotage. The states in question utilise these conditions to strengthen irredentism, and relationships between neighbouring states become more and more untenable.

All these treaties aggravate relationships not only between different nationalities but between tribes within the nation. Yugoslavia offers a classic example. Serbs and Croats form part of a single people, yet their conflict has grown to such proportions that the strongest Croatian parties are advancing the slogan of full independence. The reasons for this are not only internal to the country but also related to foreign policy. The Serbian bourgeoisie is committed to the unlimited implementation of the treaties of Versailles [with Germany], Trianon [with Hungary], and Neuilly [with Bulgaria] because of the reparations that have been guaranteed to Serbia. As a result, the Serbian bourgeoisie goes hand in hand with France, blindly following French imperialist policies. The bourgeoisie of Croatia and other Yugoslav territories outside of Serbia have no immediate interest in the reparations question and stand in sharp opposition to the government. That was shown most clearly during the Genoa Conference, which the Croats addressed with a separate memorandum.¹⁸

All these new states, in large measure financed and founded by France to defend its imperialist interests, are fully dependent on French capitalism and find themselves in the position of French colonies. Through these states, France conducts its policy of hegemony in Europe, seeking to maintain the Versailles Treaty. Poland and Romania defend French interests against Soviet Russia. Yugoslavia confronts Italy as the guardian of French interests in the Near East. Czechoslovakia plays this role with regard to Germany.

A common dependence on France, a common interest in the unrestricted implementation of the peace treaties, and the danger from Hungary that threatens them all – these were the reasons why Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania formed a tight military alliance. This took place under a French protectorate, which finances these states' military expenditures but also organises them, supervises them, and in effect has them at its disposal. Poland too has a close relationship with these states. Despite the alliances among them, they are divided by disagreements that often come to the surface. The Banat region remains an apple of discord between Yugoslavia and Romania. The issue of Teschen [Těšín] aggravates relationships between Poland and Czechoslovakia. All evidence is that the new state alignments are untenable.

18. For the Genoa Conference, see p. 120, n. 4.

These states, however, are the most avid champions of all the treaties, whose modification would impose on them severe territorial and economic sacrifices. That is why they are willing to maintain this untenable situation through a high level of military expenditure that goes beyond their financial and economic strength. The bourgeoisies of all these states is attempting to create, out of what was once a single economic whole, several such entities. Within the boundaries of each of them, the local bourgeoisie secures its monopoly.

A glance at the Balkan peninsula and the Danube basin clearly displays the total absurdity of all the peace treaties since 1913 touching on this region. Thus, Fiume, for example, which is the best and almost the only outlet to the sea for north-western Yugoslavia and Hungary, is under *de facto* Italian occupation,¹⁹ and this has led to extremely tense relations between Yugoslavia and Italy. The same is true for Salonika [Thessaloniki], which is the best harbour for the entire Balkan peninsula. It is now in the possession of Greece, along with its tiny hinterland – even though it has no importance for Greek trade.

Austria, an industrialised country, is completely cut off from the regions from which it drew foodstuffs and raw materials, has therefore become unviable. And so on.

These illogical arrangements, however, flow from the very essence of capitalism and lead to inescapable clashes between the concerned states.

The role of the Little Entente with respect to Soviet Russia was always clear, and its irreconcilable stance is characteristic. Not only do Poland and Romania, whose territorial proximity gives them a keen interest in their relationship to Russia, have a hostile stance toward Soviet Russia; Yugoslavia as well is led by its role as a vassal of France to confront Russia with hostility. So we find in Yugoslavia today, despite all denials by the Yugoslavian government, the remains of the former Wrangel army,²⁰ fully armed and organised. Counter-revolutionary Russian military academies are located there, and an ambassador named by the Kolchak government is still active there as representative of the Russian government.²¹ This entire counter-revolutionary army, together with its schools and other institutions, is financed by Yugoslavia and France and constitutes a state within the state. The purpose of this army is to go into action against Soviet Russia as well as to promote reactionary tendencies that

19. For the occupation of Fiume, see p. 387, n. 10.

20. White general Piotr Wrangel headed the counter-revolutionary army based in the Crimea until its evacuation in November 1920. He then made his way to Yugoslavia, where he sought to unify and lead exiled White forces.

21. Kolchak led a White government in Siberia 1918–19, which was recognised by White armies and anti-Soviet powers as the government of Russia.

are in harmony with the imperialist interests of France, as was the case for example the case in Bulgaria.²²

The role of the Little Entente is also clearly expressed in all conferences as well as all measures undertaken against Soviet Russia. But even though the Little Entente governments pursue a hostile policy toward Soviet Russia, the mood among the popular masses is quite different, and they have great sympathy for Soviet Russia. The unresolved agrarian question is a major factor here.

The most recent crisis in the Near East has demonstrated the Little Entente's complete dependency on France. Yugoslavia has received a special role as a spokesperson of French imperialism in the Near East. At the outset of the crisis, it still sought to refer to its own particular interests and to defend the British position. Thus, Britain was against the return of Turkey to Europe, fearing closer territorial contact between Bulgaria and Turkey and their possible alliance against Yugoslavia.²³ At the same time, Yugoslavia attempted to make use of this crisis to seize Salonika. All these attempts at independence were frustrated by Yugoslavia's protector, France. By and large, this crisis was also influenced by France's orientation against Russia.

The destruction of economic unities; strong antagonisms between the Little Entente states and other states of the Balkans and the Danube basin; antagonisms among the states of the Little Entente; strong national struggles within each individual state; ruthless forcible assimilation and oppression of the national minorities; reaction; emergency laws for the working class in all these states – all of this, plus a strong military establishment beyond the economic means of these states, leads to an unavoidable breakdown and dissolution of the Versailles Treaty, the other treaties, and the state of affairs they created.

Under such circumstances, the Communist parties must have the task of mobilising the entire revolutionary proletariat for the struggle against the imperialist peace and imperialist wars. In this struggle, the Communist parties must utilise all the contradictions just mentioned, particularly the national conflicts. The proletariat and semi-proletariat in the Balkans and Danube basin must be told that their national, political, and economic liberation can only be achieved through revolutionary struggle under the banner and leadership of the Communist parties. The only guarantee for peace, normal development, and the resolution of all the disputed issues in the Balkans and the Danube basin is a federated soviet republic of the Danube and Balkan countries.

22. In March 1922, the Bulgarian CP obtained documents showing that officers of the Wrangel army were conspiring to overthrow the Bulgarian government, then headed by radical peasant leader Alexander Stamboliski. Protests by the CP and Soviet government secured the expulsion of Wrangel forces from Bulgaria.

23. See report and discussion on the Eastern question in Sessions 19 and 20.

The Balkan federation of Communist parties in the region has been working for some time for this goal, and it needs to heighten its activity, in collaboration with all the other Communist parties, toward the goal of ultimate victory. (*Loud applause*)

Chair: It has been proposed to send the following telegram:

Telegram to the All-Indian Trade-Union Congress, Lahore²⁴

Comrades, the proletariat of the West sends you its enthusiastic good wishes in the struggle that you have been waging during the past year to improve the economic conditions of the Indian working class. The Fourth Congress of the Communist International sends you its heartiest greetings. Comrades, while assuring you of our sympathy and promising you our utmost support for the victory of your cause, we must also remind you that yours is a very great task, which must not be restricted.

The Indian working class is not merely struggling for 'a wage corresponding to the work carried out'. The economic liberation of Indian workers and peasants requires the political freedom of the nation. No improvement of living conditions is possible in the context of imperialist exploitation. For this reason, you will play an important role in the struggle for national independence. Prepare yourselves for this historic role. The advanced proletariat of the fifty-two countries represented in this congress is with you! Beware of the false friendship and the misleading advice of the workers' leaders who promote imperialism.

With fraternal greetings,

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International.

(*Adopted unanimously*)

Adjournment: 4:15 p.m.

24. The All-India Trade-Union Congress, India's main labour organisation, held its third 'session' (convention) in Lahore, 24–6 March 1923.

Session 26 – Wednesday, 29 November 1922

Versailles Treaty; Austria; Executive Reorganisation

Versailles Peace Treaty. Declaration of the Austrian commission regarding the Geneva Convention. Report of the commission on reorganising the Executive.

Speakers: Murphy, Keller, Connolly, Friedländer, Béron, Eberlein

Convened: 12:45 p.m.

Chairperson: Marchlewski

Murphy (Great Britain): Comrades, the Versailles Treaty is inseparable from the imperialist struggle over world power. It is not a peace treaty but a treaty for war, which transfers the military conflict of 1914–18 into the arena of economics and politics. Seeking to analyse this phenomenon from any other point of view would entangle us in the same difficulties as the leaders of the Second International. Their position on the Versailles Treaty has demonstrated simply that they are tools of the Allies' imperialism. For example, Ramsay MacDonald, explaining the policy of Labour as expressed in the Amsterdam and Frankfurt Conferences of 1921 and 1922, made the following assertion:¹

1. A conference of the Standing Committee of the Second International, held April 1919 (not 1921) in Amsterdam, discussed proposals to be submitted to the Versailles peace conference. A joint conference of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals in Frankfurt/Main, 25–7 February 1922, prepared proposals on the reparations question for submission to the Geneva Conference. Damjanović (ed.) 1981, 5, p. 987.

Labour's policy on the matter of reparations is based, in brief, on the following principles:

- 1.) The amount and the form of reparations must be limited by two sanctions: first, of justice; and second, of economics.
- 2.) The sanction of justice must be restricted through the negotiations preceding the armistice.
- 3.) The sanction of economics must be restricted not merely by the question of what Germany can pay but also by the consideration of what we can receive without doing damage to our own people, and by what forms indemnity can take without danger.

This is the language of liberals among the capitalists of the victorious states, and not at all that of the working class which, in both the victorious and the defeated countries, must suffer all the consequences of the Treaty. It is also based on the assumption that Germany alone was responsible for the War, a theory that is already obsolete, even for the leaders of the Second International.

Demonstrations that the guns fired off all on their own may certainly be of interest, but they provide no help with regard to the conflicts arising from the Versailles Treaty. These disputes can be viewed only as a continuation of the imperialist war, and the Communist International has no choice but to confront the treaty with the same unwavering opposition as it offered to the War. Just as it is the task of Communists to turn imperialist war into civil war, so too it is now the Communist International's task to utilise all the political and economic results of the Treaty as a rallying force among the masses and as a tool to develop international mass actions not only against Allied imperialism but against world imperialism as a whole.

The justification for this policy is easily found. The war of 1914–18 began with Germany and Britain, the main contestants for world domination. The military conflict ended in 1918, as new protagonists appeared on the battlefield. Britain now faced not only defeated Germany but also victorious France, America, Japan, and the proletarian revolution, as contestants for world domination.

Then Wilson appeared, clad as the dove of peace, and offered the olive branch, but this did not modify in the slightest the predatory instincts of the Versailles Treaty's authors. The greatest thieves were Clemenceau and Lloyd George, who made short work of Wilson's dream of a League of Nations under American hegemony, and created instead a caricature of a League of Nations that, in fact, served the Allied Supreme Council in deluding the dreamers and deceiving the workers regarding their true goals.

Having dispensed with idealism, they took measures of defence against revolution. To this end, they 'Balkanised' Europe and created an array of small states that they called a 'cordon sanitaire' to prevent the Russian Revolution from spreading toward Western Europe.²

Then, Lloyd George forced the pace in the interests of the British Empire. He secured the transfer of the German colonies in East Africa and the British mandates over Palestine and Mesopotamia. Australia secured the German possessions south of the equator, and New Zealand took the island of Samoa.³ All these things are not incidental to the Conference, but the deliberate pursuit of a policy that had taken clear form in the minds of the leaders long before it took place.

If we can just grasp the meaning of these mandates and these transfers of territory, we can take the measure of the efforts made to bring the great dreams of British imperialism to fruition. These actions opened the road not only for the Cape Town to Cairo railway but also for the Cairo to Calcutta railway, through which the African continent would be linked with Asia, and the new markets of the East would be brought nearer, markets on which both the United States and Japan and the nascent capitalism of China have set their sights. Coincident with this expansion is the development of industrial capitalism in India, and also the difficulties that British capitalism finds itself faced with at home.

The last twelve months witnessed enormous exports of capital to India and the rapid growth of its industry. During these twelve months, the manufacturers of textile machinery have raised their exports to India by four hundred per cent, while British papers announce that Cammell Laird, well known in Britain as a giant of steel production, will establish facilities in India to produce the cheapest steel in the world.

This evolution is proceeding in two different directions, one leading to the markets of the East, the other directed immediately against the proletariat of the West. The East offers untapped markets in the Malay Archipelago, while to capture the markets of the West, it is necessary to utilise the cheapest labour. Where could cheaper labour be found than in the countries of the East? And, while the living standard of the proletariat in Britain and Europe

2. The French statesman Georges Clemenceau originated the term 'cordon sanitaire' (quarantine line) to describe the hoped-for alliance of small states bordering Soviet Russia to block the westward spread of communism.

3. Among Germany's colonies in the Pacific, Australia was awarded German New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and Nauru; New Zealand gained Samoa; and Japan received the islands north of the equator: the Marshall Islands, the Carolines, the Marianas, and the Palau Islands.

is undergoing continuous decline, we see capital streaming to the East, not in order to conquer new markets but to lay siege in this fashion to the proletariat in the home countries.

But that is not the whole story. Britain is not the only imperialist state. France and the United States are offering resistance. Britain must turn toward the grain fields and cotton plantations of Egypt and the oil wells of Mesopotamia to achieve independence from the United States with regard to grain, cotton, and petroleum.

Yet another actor is looking to the East, seeking to prevent the realisation of British imperialism's dreams of expansion. Clemenceau, the champion of French imperialism, is also looking to the East and continuing the struggle that has been going on for many years, since Britain wrested parts of India from French control and seized the Suez Canal for itself. The present crisis of the Near East and the Lausanne Conference are the current form of the difficulties that reach back to the time of the first battles between French and British imperialism.

In 1875, the British government purchased a large quantity of shares in the Suez Canal. The canal then became virtually the property of British imperialism and its key to the East. The *Times* of 26 November 1875, declared:

It is impossible to separate in our thoughts the purchase of the Suez Canal shares from the question of England's future relations with Egypt, or the destinies of Egypt from the sword of Damocles that threatens Turkey.... Should insurrection or aggression from without or corruption from within bring a political as well as a financial collapse of the Turkish Empire, it might become necessary to take measures for the security of that part of the Sultan's dominions with which we are the most nearly connected.

On 18 September 1914, Britain declared Egypt to be a British protectorate. And, when we then came to the Versailles Treaty, France, which was resisting the development of British imperialism and also sought oil, secured the mandate for Syria, thus creating new difficulties for the development of the British Empire.

But the mandate for Syria was not the only response to the mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia. Britain's achievements in the oil fields of Mesopotamia led to negotiations between France and Turkey and to a re-establishment of the Turkish army, the annulment of the Sèvres Treaty, and the restoration of Turkey in the Near East. In this fashion, the Lausanne Conference continues the conflict that was deepened by the Versailles Treaty.⁴

4. Regarding the Treaty of Sèvres and the Lausanne Conference, see p. 673, n. 31, and p. 615, n. 38.

This struggle in the Near East to expand borders and to obtain sources of oil and markets is closely linked to the struggles among the countries of the West. Thus, France not only secured a mandate for Syria through the Versailles Treaty but also gained Alsace-Lorraine and Morocco.⁵ The resulting events will show that the power being accumulated in French hands will make the struggle between France and Britain more acute in both the West and the East. They declare to the world that they are great friends and brothers-in-arms, but it is easy to see that France and Britain are now, in fact, deadly enemies. But Britain cannot yet break free of this alliance with France and with the Entente without providing itself with points of support in Europe from which it could draw strength in the event of an open conflict with France. In addition, it cannot leave France exposed to the unrestricted influence of the United States. It therefore pursues a policy of friendship with France and works within the Treaty, while fighting for modifications and seeking new points of support in the North and the East.

As a result of the Versailles Treaty, France is gradually becoming a country of industry as well as of agriculture. It now has the prospects of becoming the second-largest steel-producer in the world – following after the United States. As a result of expansion of its industrial strength, it is becoming a force in the world market, replacing Germany as a strong competitor of Britain.

The Versailles Treaty has therefore emerged as a treaty posing many questions besides that of reparations. It continues the energetic and bitter struggle among the imperialist powers, each seeking to overthrow the others, while simultaneously striving to oppress the working class on its road to revolution.

These movements and struggles cannot fail to leave their imprint on the masses of the population. As a result of all these enormous changes in recent years, the East has awakened and come into closer contact with the proletariat of the West. That poses for the Communist International the important task of converting this unconscious process into a conscious one and awakening among the workers of the West and East a consciousness of their unity and their common interests. We must bring all these forces of the East closer to the West, seeking to create a situation where it is possible to take joint action against imperialism.

But there is more. The repercussions of implementation of the Versailles Treaty in the Western countries gave rise to powerful mass movements. Cachin spoke of reparations with respect to France and Germany and of the

5. Morocco, except for its northern coast, had been a French protectorate since 1912.

need to bring the German and French Communist Party into closer contact with each other and to mount campaigns around the reparations.

Merely reviewing the events of the last twelve months will enable us to see how large, how immense, and how vast are the effects of this treaty.

By the terms of this treaty, Britain robbed Germany not only of its naval fleet but also of its merchant marine. It then sold two million tons of shipping on the open market for £11 a ton. The shipbuilding industry, which charges £25 a ton, could not compete with that. There then followed an enormous pressure on the living standards of European workers.

The impact of coal delivered as reparations was equally harmful. According to the Treaty, Germany has to deliver two million tons a month to France. That had as its immediate result that France was inundated with coal. British coal exports collapsed. Then came a furious attack on the coal miners, imposing on them horrific social conditions. And, following the collapse in Britain and the drastic reduction in miners' wages, what do we find in France? Mine closures, attacks on wages, and the whole market gutted with British and reparations coal.

Nor does it end there. As soon as the miners had been devastated in France, Britain, and Germany, an attack on them followed in the United States. There are no limits to the effects of this treaty, either with regard to world economic disintegration or to the development of a world mass movement.

Far from preventing the expansion of the revolution, the Balkanisation of Europe has only set the West European masses in motion and awakened the peoples of the East. The Communist International must grasp this opportunity. It must expose the outrage of reparations and educate the masses regarding the Treaty's basic character and its relationship to imperialist struggles. On the one hand, the Versailles Treaty whips the imperialist powers onward in their fierce race for oil, land, and markets, a wild rush that will culminate in an enormous war. On the other hand, it is creating a situation that enables the Communist International to lead the masses to revolution. The Versailles Treaty brought peace, in order to lay the groundwork for destroying it, because it is leading to either world war or world-revolution. We must, therefore, reaffirm that the struggle against the Versailles Treaty cannot be separated from that against imperialism. To end the Treaty means ending imperialism, and the only weapon through which imperialism can be ended is world-revolution.

Keller (Fiedler, Poland): For many generations and throughout the nineteenth century, the name of Poland was a synonym for insurrection. The struggle against tsarist tyranny and for Poland's independence were slogans of Western European revolutionary democracy.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were passionate supporters of Poland's reconstitution. It was a meeting in London in 1864 called to express sympathy for the Polish rebellion that gave expression to the idea of founding an international association of workers – the First International.

Subsequently, a new revolution was made in Poland as a result of capitalist expansion. The possessing classes, with the large-scale bourgeoisie at the head, abandoned the traditional currents for national independence. Their slogan was to adjust to the economic and political conditions in each of the three countries that had divided Poland.⁶ The old impulse for national defence vegetated in the form of remnants in individual layers of the petty bourgeoisie and the intellectual classes.

When the modern workers' movement in Poland was formed some years later, these patriotic currents responded to it in clearly reactionary fashion, aiming to separate the working masses of Poland from a common struggle against tsarist rule conducted in solidarity with the Russian proletariat.

Against this petty-bourgeois patriotic ideology, the revolutionary proletariat of Poland posed the struggle for socialism, which would liberate the working class of Europe, and thus also abolish the national oppression of the Polish people.

Only after the overthrow of tsarism, after the first proletarian government had been established in Russia, and after a revolutionary uprising in Germany had brought down the Hohenzollerns, did the possessing classes of Poland – until then, slavishly loyal to the tsar and the two emperors – hurry to erect a bourgeois, reactionary, and independent Polish state, in order to isolate Poland from the revolutionary fires on its east and west.

The Entente had done nothing about the Polish question until the victory of the working class and peasantry in Russia. However, it now hastened to take as its own the new programme of the Polish bourgeoisie. For the Entente, the question was how to erect a wall or a barbed-wire fence separating Soviet Russia from the rest of Europe. For France, the goal was above all to find in the form of a Polish vassal state a substitute for the collapsed empire of the tsars, one that would be prepared, now that Germany was subjugated and thrown to the ground, to come to France's aid.

In addition to the expeditionary corps sent by the Entente against Soviet Russia, in addition to Kolchak, Yudenich, and Wrangel, the Entente turned Poland into a powerful instrument of war against the Russian Revolution. The entire equipment the Polish army – from cannon to airplanes to the

6. Poland was partitioned in three stages, between 1772 and 1795, by Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

soldiers' boots – was delivered by France or Britain, and a French general was placed beside Pilsudski himself.

The French bourgeoisie knew very well how dangerous it would be to have their own soldiers march against the Russian Revolution. But they stood ready to combat this revolution until the death of the last Polish soldier.

After the defeat of all their military endeavours aimed at toppling the Red giant, the Entente abandoned these methods for the moment. The plan for intervention against Russia, however, did not vanish from Pilsudski's programme.

Pilsudski and his friends see the only real guarantee of their fatherland's independence in the fragmentation of Soviet Russia, the partitioning off of Ukraine, White Russia [Belarus], and Caucasia; and the creation of a chain of states reaching from Finland through Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania to Georgia, independent in name but under the hegemony of a mighty Poland in the centre. The bourgeoisie hates Soviet Russia as its class enemy. Pilsudski, the petty bourgeoisie, and the social-patriotic party, which has succumbed to delusions of grandeur – all fear Soviet Russia as the embodiment of the principle of proletarian rule, and also as a supposed threat to Polish independence and to its role as a great power.

The Polish big bourgeoisie is prepared to unleash war against Russia at the command of the Entente. Pilsudski's foreign policy is dominated by the dream of freeing Ukraine and establishing a federation from Finland to Georgia. The concept of a war against Russia also acts as a lightning rod in two senses – both against the workers' movement and against the peasantry, which since the War has been robbed of the possibility of emigrating. More than ever before, they suffer from lack of land and threaten to initiate a determined struggle against the large landowners.

The Versailles Peace Treaty that created the Polish republic also set it about with numerous sources of conflict. The districts of Teschen [Těšín], Upper Silesia, the 'Corridor', the Free City of Danzig, Eastern Galicia, Lithuania – all of these together form a chain, each link of which can at any moment become a theatre of war.

It also follows naturally that Poland has been converted by its leaders and protectors into an enormous military camp. In numerical strength, the Polish army is second only to the French on the European continent. This is making Poland more and more dependent on the bandits of the Entente. Six months after the Treaty of Riga, the foreign debt of Poland amounted to 4,000 billion Polish marks, and since then this figure has grown astronomically.⁷

7. The Treaty of Riga, signed 18 March 1921, ended the war between Poland and Soviet Russia. In 1921, the US dollar exchanged for about 6,000 Polish marks.

French capitalism, which has assured Poland that it could occupy Upper Silesia and tolerated its permanent occupation of East Galicia, took possession of the Silesian mines and factories and the Galician oil wells as payment. It also had tens of thousands of Polish workers sent to work in the mines of northern France, where they are despicably exploited.

Within the borders of imperialist Poland, 40% of the population is now made up by non-Polish peoples: Germans, Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians, White Russians. As a predominantly militarist state with a centralised administration, Poland oppresses these peoples. It carries out a bitter war against every tendency toward independence, following the worst practices of the former oppressors of the Polish nationality.

The relevant paragraphs of the Versailles Peace Treaty offer handsomely phrased guarantees for minority language groups, but they have remained a dead letter.

The criminal bonds set up by the Versailles Treaty between Poland and the main shareholders of the Entente were strengthened by the special military treaty that France imposed on Pilsudski in February 1921.⁸ This recent treaty definitively converted the Polish bourgeoisie into a tool of France.

Cancellation of the Versailles Treaty and the French-Polish military alliance has therefore become the central goal of the foreign policy of Poland's revolutionary proletariat.

Far removed from assuring the Polish nation of independence, the Versailles Treaty and the French-Polish Treaty convert it into a colony. They make Poland into a tool to oppress national minorities, into a constant threat against peace and the freedom of its neighbours, and, in addition, they double the forces available to the leaders of Poland for the suppression of the proletariat.

The French ambassador in Poland regularly intervenes in all the country's internal affairs, always with reactionary purpose.

The working class of Poland is simply serving its own elementary interests by joining the proletarians of the entire world in the struggle against the Versailles Treaty and all its consequences.

The Polish proletariat, however, has an additional reason to unite its forces with those of the world proletariat in the struggle against the Versailles Treaty. The Entente created the Polish bourgeois state above all in order to be able to launch an enormous army against the great Red Soviet republic. Although the first attempt to strangle revolutionary Russia using Polish soldiers ended in

8. The Franco-Polish Treaty of February 1921 included military alliance for mutual assistance against attacks by any third country.

defeat, it caused great losses, costing Russia dearly and delaying its work of reconstruction.⁹

After the conclusion of peace, Poland continued to instigate counter-revolutionary plots. It tried on its own to perturb Russia through the bands of Savinkov, Petlyura, and Bulak-Balakhovich. For the Polish proletariat, the struggle against the Versailles Peace Treaty and the French-Polish Treaty is a struggle to defend Soviet Russia.

A Polish government that had the courage and power to break the ties linking Poland to the Entente and France would thereby accomplish a revolutionary action with great consequences. In this way, it would free the oppressed national minorities and shake off the yoke of unlimited exploitation that weighs on the working masses of Poland. This would logically lead it toward a rapprochement with Soviet Russia and would encourage the revolutionary movement among all the peoples on its borders. This could only be done by a revolutionary formation. In fighting for the cancellation of the Versailles Treaty, the Polish proletariat is not only carrying out its revolutionary duty, it is also fighting for its own liberation, its own revolution.

Connolly (Ireland): Ireland's relationships with the Versailles Treaty are purely negative in character. For, although the Treaty altered the status of some oppressed nations in Europe in the interests of its originators, it left the status of Ireland untouched. We all know that the moral basis of the treaty was President Wilson's celebrated Fourteen Points,¹⁰ the main item of which was the 'right of all nations to self-determination'. We also know that this formula was converted into a tool not to free oppressed peoples but to promote the imperialist and reactionary projects of the three great victorious powers, Britain, France, and the United States. For this reason, there could not be any thought of applying this universal remedy to the peoples groaning under the yoke of British and American imperialism.

When the Versailles Treaty was drafted, the Irish national-revolutionary movement was gathering strength. It had not yet launched a decisive struggle against British rule in Ireland. The movement's petty-bourgeois leaders believed, to some extent, that the question could be resolved in a peaceful, pacifist fashion by referring it to the League of Nations, which, it was hoped,

9. The Polish government launched an offensive against Soviet Ukraine in April 1920, which was decisively repulsed in May and June.

10. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (8 January 1918) outlined broad principles for a postwar settlement, including arms reductions, freedom of trade, freedom of navigation on the seas, open diplomacy, and consideration of nationality and the wishes of inhabitants in settling territorial claims. The treaties signed in 1919–20 ignored most of this. Wilson used the term 'self-determination' in two speeches in 1918, but did not include it in his Fourteen Points.

would really apply the right of self-determination everywhere in the world. They believed in the power of justice and in the Fourteen Points. They could not grasp the imperialist character of the powers united in the League of Nations and of the Versailles Treaty, which was then being drafted. They also did not understand the Irish question could therefore not be resolved by the five great powers then gathered in Versailles.

They sent their delegates to the Versailles Conference, in order to plead the cause of freedom together with the other oppressed peoples of the world. From Korea in the east to Ireland in the west, all representatives of oppressed peoples begged for their independence. But the Irish national representatives in Versailles soon realised that any hope of winning a promise of national independence from the Supreme Council was in vain. And, to a certain extent, the Irish nationalists lost their illusions.

This has special importance, because the Irish national revolutionaries thereupon decided that if they could not receive their freedom by appealing to the humanity of the great powers, they would seek it through utilising force against British imperialism in Ireland. For this reason, the Versailles Treaty was followed by two and a half years of intensive national war. The passionate struggle of the Irish revolutionaries led Britain to unleash barbaric terror, which however had to be given up because of the resistance of the Irish revolutionaries. After a determined effort to subjugate Ireland, which lasted for two and a half years, Lloyd George came up with the idea that he could perhaps win through diplomacy what was not possible through force of arms. Lloyd George was the main originator of the Versailles Treaty that had safeguarded imperialism in East and West. He now concluded that perhaps in Ireland, as well, imperialism could best be placed on a firm and secure foundation through a peace treaty.

That is why he negotiated with the leaders of the Irish revolutionary movement. The result of these negotiations was the famous British-Irish Treaty of 6 December 1921.¹¹ This treaty, however, did not resolve the Irish question. It merely won the upper layers of the Irish bourgeoisie for Britain, in return for receiving a share in the exploitation of the Irish proletariat and peasantry. The Treaty did not even free the Irish people from imperialism, for all of its provisions that were supposed to secure the freedom of the Irish people only chained them more securely to British imperialism. This was done through many exceptions and guarantees, such as the provision that executive power

11. The Anglo-Irish Treaty established the Irish Free State as a dominion within the British Empire, with limited autonomy, while providing for the six counties of Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom.

in the so-called Free State remained in the hands of the British king and the governor general, representing British imperialism.

In addition, the Treaty conceded Britain the right to retain a number of Irish ports, which could be used as naval fortresses or as wireless stations. The fact that the treaty conceded these rights in Ireland to Britain shows that it failed utterly to meet aspirations for complete independence. In reality, Britain does not need the rights conceded to it in the Peace Treaty, for the superiority of its navy, army, and armaments give it the capacity to occupy the naval fortresses and ports at any time even without the Treaty. But it is possible to show that even in formal terms, the Treaty signed by representatives of British imperialism and the Irish bourgeoisie did not correspond to Irish claims to independence.

The result of this treaty was in practice the same as that of the so-called Versailles Peace Treaty. Instead of bringing peace and harmony to the people affected by the treaty, it resulted in chaos, civil war, and the growth of revolutionary forces within the country. As a result of the treaty between Britain and Ireland, five months after the establishment of the Free State (which represented the way the treaty was to be applied), an outrageous terror is causing havoc in Ireland, a terror that the Irish bourgeoisie requires in order to carry out the peace treaty.

If this treaty responded in any way to Ireland's striving for national independence, no terror would be needed. But even the conventional means, which a bourgeois state employs to enforce its will, are ineffective in Ireland. Exceptional, extralegal measures are being employed, and a terror is being organised. These facts show that this treaty too is bankrupt, just like those of Versailles [with Germany] and Sèvres [with Ottoman Turkey]. The present civil war finds expression in an armed struggle between the Free State's army and the Irish republicans. If the Communist International is to look on this struggle against the Free State and the treaty as part of the struggle against the Versailles Treaty, it must have knowledge of which social classes are engaged in this struggle and which classes are represented by the different military organisations.

An examination of the situation in Ireland shows clearly that the Free State and its army are representatives of British imperialism, and that they enjoy the support of the landowners, finance-capital, and the Irish capitalists. On the other side, it can be said that the Republican army – although its social composition is harder to determine – enjoys the support of the great mass of landless peasants and of urban workers who still lack class consciousness. It is led by intellectuals and petty-bourgeois. That is, in brief, the social composition of the two sides.

It is particularly important for the Communist International to note that the Republican forces are composed of a large mass of land-hungry peasants and of Irish workers. This struggle justifies the belief that if it develops further, the workers and peasants will definitely express their demands through it. They will gradually transform it from a purely national struggle for independence and against the Free State into a class struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and an Irish soviet government. This is the main conception with regard to the Republican movement in Ireland. Support for this movement against the Free State must be an indissoluble part of the international struggle against the Versailles Treaty and its consequences.

Later, when the Commission has come to agreement on the Irish question, we will have an opportunity to discuss this situation again. Outside Ireland, little is known about the Irish question. It is therefore not possible to do full justice to this topic in a speech at the Congress that lasts only fifteen minutes. On the other hand, the Communist International must take immediate steps regarding the Irish question. The most recent news we have received here indicate that the terror has reached its peak. The Free State, the bourgeois state, has begun shooting the prisoners made during the Civil War. The Communist International, with its international forces and connections, is best able to give a specific form to the struggle against the Irish Free State and against the terror unleashed on revolutionaries and Irish workers. With this in mind, the Irish commission has written a resolution on the terror and the shootings, which the Presidium will review and later submit to the Congress.¹²

Austria

Friedländer (Austria): Comrades, there is no doubt that the developing situation in Germany is decisive for present economic and political conditions and for coming revolutionary developments in Europe. This is another reason why the struggle against the Versailles Treaty must be the focal point of the Communist International's perspectives and plans for struggle in the coming period.

However, we must not overlook the fact that there are other important and burning issues of European political and economic development that pose *tasks* for the Communist International. These arise chiefly in the territories affected by the other peace treaties,¹³ which if anything strike even more

12. For the resolution on Ireland, see pp. 1094–5.

13. The Versailles Treaty was one of several pacts imposed on the defeated states; see p. 887, n. 7.

harshly against the interests of the working people of Europe than does the Treaty of Versailles. To some degree, these treaties have, quite on their own, led to an absurd situation. Certainly, they did not create a lasting political equilibrium in central, southern, and eastern Europe, but, rather, an unstable situation in which revolutionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies intersect. We see this in Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Turkey.

For this reason, the Communist International, and particularly the affected parties, have to closely link their struggle against the Versailles Treaty and its consequences with a *systematic struggle against the other treaties* and their results, based solely on the interests of the working class, solely on a revolutionary point of view. This approach contrasts with that of the Social Democrats of all countries, whose policies are shaped from the standpoint of maintaining the bourgeois order within each of these countries and of creating an equilibrium between the bourgeois states. The Social Democrats tolerate or even support the unloading of all the costs of the World War and the treaties on the shoulders of the working class.

The peace treaties have brought about *economic* chaos, thus creating immense *political* confusion in Europe and around the world. To surmount these conditions, fraught with danger for the bourgeoisie, their governments have come up with a policy that seeks to cope with the economic crisis purely through political coercion at the expense of the working class. Where Social Democracy actively or passively encourages the reactionary bourgeoisie in this policy – and where is that not the case? – this brings the bourgeoisie momentary victories.

Both before, during, and after the conclusion of the peace treaties, the role of Social Democracy – both the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals – was to collaborate in this endeavour and in the establishment of new bourgeois states in Europe. Instead of utilising the acute revolutionary situation in Europe immediately after the end of the War to erect a dictatorship of the proletariat, above all in Germany, Austria, and Hungary, they systematically blocked this possibility. Since then, they follow a policy of fulfilling the terms of the treaties.

The situation in Europe has now changed significantly. The bankruptcy of the peace treaties is evident.

Austria stands as the classic example of this bankruptcy. The peace treaty of Saint-Germain has led politically and economically to an absurd situation. The financial catastrophe of the Austrian state had already some time previously progressed to the point that the celebrated League of Nations and a number of European states – above all France, Britain, Czechoslovakia, and Italy – felt compelled to intervene. Austria now has reached a decisive moment. And,

in turning the attention of the Communist International congress to Austria, comrades, I am not motivated by any considerations of local patriotism, but by the fact that what is now happening in Austria is of eminently international concern.

An international campaign for Austria is now in progress, which is in fact *an international effort directed against the Austrian working class*. The League of Nations' present treatment of Austria is showing us what it is, namely, concealed counter-revolution. The Austrian bourgeoisie itself called in the League.

For the victors over Austria and its creditors – who now number thirteen to seventeen countries – it was clear from the beginning that the peace treaties were, financially speaking, a fiasco. For better or worse, they had to set the time period for payment of Austria's reparations at twenty years. Mind you, foreign capital also was immediately able, just as in Germany and Hungary, to exploit Austria to the limit as a source of profits, driving down Austrian workers to the status of coolies. This created a deceptive expansion of production in Austria.

In the process, the Entente was *devouring its own flesh*, since it was creating an unfair competitor on the world market. This was also true to a much greater extent in Germany, since Germany is so much larger than Austria. Neither Austria's economy nor its working class drew any benefit from this deceptive expansion. But, at least, the Austrian working class was protected from unemployment. And in this country, so drained of food and raw materials, joblessness means starvation.

Various concerned Entente states have now considered the time to be appropriate to exclude Austria from the world market, in order to ease their own economic situation. Production in Austria, which is mainly directed to exports, has been devastated.

The Austrian bourgeoisie is led by the Christian-Social Party, which forms the government and is, above all, a reactionary peasant party. The bourgeoisie is going along with this in the hope of creating an enormous reserve army of the unemployed who are incapable of acting politically. It hopes to drive down the wages and worsen the working conditions of Austrian workers even more. In order to put into effect this plundering of the working class, a decisive blow is being dealt against democracy in Austria.

That is the purpose of the League of Nations' actions, which, supposedly, are to rescue Austria and provide it with loans.

Well, comrades, any idea of the victor and creditor states providing Austria with loans is quite excluded. The League of Nations has explicitly established from the beginning that its member states cannot even consider the possibility

of providing Austria with loans. The reason is clear: so long as conditions in Austria are not stabilised, no government has an interest in providing Austria with credit. The same consideration also determines their attitude to Germany and also to Russia with regard to loans.

So what is the League of Nations providing? A *guarantee* from Britain, France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia regarding loans that foreign private capitalists are to give to Austria. But for the same reasons that determine the attitude of the foreign governments, Austria can expect nothing from the private capitalists.

In addition, it is hardly likely that this guarantee will be ratified by the parliaments of the guarantor states that I have named. This applies in particular to Italy, where Mussolini has already clearly stated that he is not at all in agreement. Italy cherishes hope that it may be able to absorb a portion of Austria. In addition, Italy has already provided Austria with a small loan and has an interest in receiving payment. It therefore has no interest in providing Austria with another loan.

Why, then, the Geneva Convention on Austria?¹⁴ The Geneva Convention served not to provide loans but to *create the conditions on which these loans are dependent*. And these conditions mean that the Austrian working class, which has until now been placed in check by the Entente, *is now to suffer a definitive checkmate*. This working class has significant power not only in Austria but on a European scale, but has been held back with the support of Austrian Social Democracy. Now, Austria is to become a reactionary bastion and nodal point for the Entente. It is the geographical link between Bavaria and Horthy's Hungary, between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, between Italy and both Bavaria and Horthy's Hungary.

With the aid of the bourgeoisie abroad, Austria is to become a reactionary bastion and also a secure possession of its internal bourgeoisie, which is otherwise so weak.

What, then, are the political and economic conditions on which the guarantees of loans for Austria are based?

The essential political provisions are, first, the appointment of a League of Nations governor, who is to act as dictator for the internal and foreign bourgeoisie and above all for the guarantor states. He determines the laws and measures that the Austrian government has to carry out. He is assisted by a supervisory committee made up of representatives of the guarantor states. The Austrian parliament is removed from the picture for two years. The law and order required to exercise this financial dictatorship is to be maintained

14. Regarding the Geneva Convention, see p. 385, n. 9. See also the congress resolution, pp. 921–5, which discusses its terms.

by a strengthened police establishment, and, meanwhile, the Austrian army, which consists of proletarian elements and, in any case, is of negligible importance, is to be cut back.

The political measures, aiming to utterly strike down any workers' movement and abolishing Austrian democracy, result from the Geneva Convention's economic provisions. They would have every worker pay two million crowns in taxes, equivalent to the wages of more than six weeks of work. High protective tariffs and transport fees, far beyond international norms, are levied on the import of the foodstuffs and raw materials on which Austria is completely dependent. This signifies not only the destruction of export production but also an increase in the prices of all goods and foodstuffs. This will certainly obstruct an increase in production for the domestic market, since the purchasing power of the domestic population, already low, will be reduced even more. The results will be a massive downward pressure on wages and enormous unemployment. To that we must add the selling off of state-owned enterprises to private capitalists, a massive cutback in the public services, and so on. The entire collection of economic measures is directed against the working class. Every one of them would lead to a revolutionary movement of the workers in any other country, such as Germany, that is not so incapable of life and action as Austria.

The Communist Party of Austria considers that the only way out of Austria's present situation is to *block the Geneva Convention and take over property on a massive scale within the country*. It has advanced a programme along these lines, a proletarian redevelopment plan. The small Austrian Communist Party has already begun a campaign against the Geneva Convention. Last Sunday, as reported today in *Pravda*, it organised a substantial mass demonstration against the Geneva Convention, which was prepared by numerous meetings. It is continuing its campaign against the slave Treaty of Geneva. But it must be stressed that, in this campaign, the Party stands *completely alone*. It is true that Austrian Social Democracy has carried out a protest action against the Geneva Convention, but it has no intention at all of blocking it, although there is no doubt that is within its power.

Austrian Social Democracy has no choice in the matter. Immediately after the War, it collaborated in blocking the proletarian revolution in Austria. It took part in creating an Austria that was unviable and impotent, and it blocked Austria from joining with soviet Hungary. This party finds Austria to be ideal terrain for a typically 'independent' policy.¹⁵ In Austria, it could

15. Friedländer is comparing the policies of Austria's Social Democracy with those of its fellow member of the Two-and-a-Half International, the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD).

successfully voice revolutionary phrases, create institutions with an apparently proletarian character, and simultaneously declare that no serious revolutionary action, no struggle against the bourgeoisie is possible because of Austria's total dependence on countries abroad.

In the Geneva Convention, Austrian Social Democracy reaps what it has sown. The Otto Bauers and Friedrich Adlers have, through their very actions, conjured up the financial dictatorship over the Austrian proletariat. According to the latest reports, they will even form a sort of coalition with the bourgeois government in order to carry out the 'reconstruction' of Austria as desired by the League of Nations, in the form of an expanded governmental council in which they will be a hopeless minority.

It is now the task of the Comintern, and especially the Communist parties in the so-called guarantor states, that is, Czechoslovakia, Italy, France, and Britain, to convert the make-believe struggle of Social Democracy into a real one to block the Geneva Convention and thus to expose the League of Nations and Social Democracy. The Austrian proletariat has an interest in loans only if the conditions for them are not directed against it but only against the bourgeoisie, that is, if the burden is placed on the possessing class of Austria and Europe. That must be the starting point for the position of the Communist parties. No weight must be given to erroneous considerations, as has happened on certain occasions. Since the Communist parties, especially in Czechoslovakia, France, and Italy, are a force in their countries, a stronger force than Social Democracy, *they must intervene along these lines actively and intensively in their press, in parliament, in meetings, and elsewhere, in order to prevent Austria from being struck down economically and to support the small Austrian Communist Party now fighting alone against the Geneva Convention.*

What is happening in Austria must also serve as a *warning sign for Germany*. The Entente is gaining experience in Austria in order to pursue this operation on a vaster scale in Germany and, if possible, render the German working class harmless using the same methods and to the same degree as in Austria. The German bourgeoisie is just as prepared as the Austrian to mobilise the foreign bourgeoisie for this purpose.

And there is more. Austria is a powerless victim of international politics. As a state, Austria is unviable economically and politically. The ambitions of different victorious states, especially Czechoslovakia and Italy, extend to Austria. It can become the starting point of a new imperialist military conflict in Europe. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that the Comintern identify with the interests of the Austrian working class and commit all its resources, in order through concrete political action to counter the plans of international capitalist brigandage. The Communist parties can and must take the present

situation in Austria and the struggle against the Geneva Convention as the starting point in countering the reactionary efforts now focused on Austria by *driving onward the revolutionary development of Central Europe*. (Applause)

Chair: Comrades, an appeal regarding the Versailles Treaty has been drafted by a commission specially formed to take up the Austrian question. Because there will now be a campaign on this question, we present this appeal to be read out.

Béron (France): Comrades, the Austrian Commission established by the Presidium and composed of comrades Radek, Stern, and Šmeral, has drafted the following appeal.

Against the Geneva Convention on Austria

To working men and women of every country:

The Austrian proletariat is engaged in a difficult defensive struggle against the plans of international capitalism and world reaction for its enslavement. This situation demands the greatest attention from workers of all countries. Under the pretence of a readiness to aid the collapsing Austrian economy, the League of Nations – above all Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, and Italy, and a few smaller states, together with the ruling capitalist class of Austria – wish to rob the Austrian proletariat of the last remains of its freedom, even the make-believe bourgeois democracy, and erect in its place an open and brutal dictatorship of capitalism inside and outside the country.

The countries that are giving themselves airs as the saviours of Austria do not want to grant it any real help. They are not lending Austria a single penny. They are only graciously permitting it to seek private capitalists prepared to lend Austria something and are merely prepared next year, if their parliaments agree, to provide a guarantee for the repayment of these loans.

In return for that, and without regard to whether it ever really receives these loans or even these guarantees, Austria is to sideline its parliament for two years in a fashion not common even in Horthy's Hungary, levy more than four billion in new taxes on its workers, hand over state-owned businesses to private capital, carry out massive layoffs, extend the hours of work, heighten the exploitation of labour during those working hours, dismantle the proletarian army, build up in its place the reactionary police forces, and maintain law and order against the masses driven to despair with brutal violence.

At the same time, Austria is to convert itself voluntarily into the most abject of colonies. A League of Nations high commissioner is to rule Austria with

unlimited power, and the government, equipped with dictatorial powers over the masses, is to be no more than his obedient tool.

Working men and women of every country!

The realisation of this plan, the acceptance of the Geneva Convention, delivers over the Austrian working class to the most terrible despair. The Austrian workers would be easily able to prevent their own bourgeoisie from imposing plans of this type, but, in this case, its rulers are backed by the capitalists of other countries, and, in particular, workers of Britain, France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia, your capitalist governments.

It is therefore your obvious duty to come to the aid of Austrian workers and take every possible measure to prevent your governments, together with the Austrian bourgeoisie, from enslaving and plundering Austria in this fashion. What your governments are undertaking against the Austrian workers is nothing less than a war of conquest, in which your governments do not believe that they have to use the methods of bloody battle. Just as it would be your duty not to tolerate a violent war, so too is it your duty to oppose most vigorously this war of conquest, carried out through cunning and blackmail.

Not only the duty of solidarity but also your own interests demand that you do all possible to thwart the plans of your government and help the Austrian proletariat in its defensive struggle. It is significant that world reaction and international capitalism attach to the subjugation of Austria a much greater importance than one would expect, considering the small size of this country. In Austria, world reaction aims to win an important and significant bastion against the world proletariat and world-revolution. In Austria, the proletariat is still relatively strong in comparison to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie in Austria considered it necessary to respect a certain degree of democratic freedom. Austria is also the only country in which the army has a proletarian character and cannot be used against the proletariat. World reaction has a powerful interest in finally replacing an apparent democracy with more brutal forms of capitalist dictatorship.

This will build a reactionary bridge between Bavaria and Horthy's Hungary, between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, while, at the same time, preparing for the further reinforcement of reaction in Germany. If the plan underlying the Geneva Convention succeeds, then soon the workers of Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, and Italy will feel through their own experience that capitalist reaction has grown stronger and more secure on a world scale. Reaction would then have secured an important and significant bastion in the coming decisive battle between world reaction and world-revolution, a new and dangerous strongpoint, whose importance is much greater after the victory of

Fascism in Italy. The enslavement of Austria is also only the first preparatory step toward a similar enslavement of Germany that would be much more dangerous for the world proletariat.

World capitalism also knows very well that the capitalist collapse that is impending in all the capitalist states is much further advanced in Austria. This confronts it with the danger that the Austrian proletariat will be won to revolution more strongly than before, bringing new forces to the world-revolution and creating a new and dangerous seat of rebellion. The colonisation of Austria also brings the danger of new imperialist conflicts among the states that want to jointly subjugate it. As in 1914, Austria, positioned next to the Balkans, can readily become the starting point for a new, devastating world conflagration.

The threat to the last remnants of freedom of the Austrian working class poses such a danger to the international working class that even the Social-Democratic parties grasp that they have the duty of taking up the struggle against this attack by world reaction. The Social-Democratic workers understand the seriousness of this danger and are pressing for defensive action. But their leaders are incapable of waging a serious struggle. Their policies are one of the main reasons that it could come to this point. Never would things have gone so far if Social Democracy in Austria had carried out its duty in the November Days or at least at the time of the Hungarian soviet republic.¹⁶ At that time, when the bourgeoisie was powerless, the Social Democrats helped it regain its strength under the cover of democracy.

Now it stands with its boot on the neck of the working class. Social Democracy in Austria held the working class back from every struggle, be it only for a crust of bread, saying that such a struggle would jeopardise democracy, and that its strength must be saved for the moment of an attack on this democracy. This policy of constant retreat so emboldened the bourgeoisie that they now propose to do away with democracy. And now the Social-Democratic leaders declare that a struggle to defend democracy would expose the Austrian working class to the danger of starvation.

Nonetheless the pressure of the working class was so great that Social Democracy had to resolve on at least the appearance of a struggle. It was compelled to initiate a campaign in Austria, even though its greatest fear was that this campaign could possibly succeed. The Two-and-a-Half International

16. A workers' uprising in Austria in the 'November Days' of 1918 thrust aside the Hapsburg monarchy. However, a subsequent movement toward establishing a workers' republic was defeated, in part through the intervention of Social-Democratic leaders who favoured a bourgeois-parliamentary democracy. The Hungarian soviet republic ruled 21 March–1 August 1919.

called on workers of all countries to take a stand against Austria's enslavement by the Geneva Convention. But, already, the Austrian Social Democrats have toppled over and given up even this appearance of resistance. They are now ready to take part in a disguised coalition to carry out the Geneva Convention.

Working men and women of every country!

We knew then, and know well today, that the leaders of Austrian Social Democracy and of the Two-and-a-Half International, now breathing its last breaths, do not want a serious struggle. However, your task is to prevent these heroes from abandoning the struggle that they felt compelled to initiate – at least in form – before it is fairly begun, and to transform this make-believe struggle into a genuine one. Take these heroes at their word, show that you are ready to conduct with great determination the struggle that they themselves say is necessary, drive them forward, and – if they give way at the decisive moment – close ranks without them in united and unflinching struggle.

Working men and women of Austria!

The workers of other countries can and must come to your aid by preventing the bourgeoisie of other countries from aiding your bourgeoisie. But you yourselves must conduct the decisive struggle against your own bourgeoisie. You are strong enough to do it, if only you are willing. Do not let yourselves be deterred by the Social-Democratic leaders from taking up the struggle against enslavement with all your power. Recognise that only the Communist Party of your country is showing you the correct path. Fight together, without regard to party distinctions, against the common danger.

Working men and women of all countries! Above all, working men and women of France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia!

Recognise the duty of proletarian solidarity toward the Austrian working class now so sorely threatened. Understand that your own interests and those of the world-revolution are at stake. Do not permit your governments to pursue without hindrance their reactionary policy of brigandage. Commit all your forces to thwart the plans of the international capitalist class. Tear the mask from the face of the capitalist hypocrites, who lull you soft words of democracy, while, in Austria, they smash the last remains of democracy. Respond to them with a decisive 'No', and show that you are a power that must be taken into account. Against the international capitalist front of reaction, erect the international front of the revolutionary proletariat. Create the international united front of the proletariat.

Against the Geneva slave treaty!

Against worldwide reaction!

For international proletarian solidarity!

For the unity of the proletariat in international struggle!
 For the victory of world-revolution!

Chair: Comrades, we come to the vote on the appeal that has just been read. All those in favour, please raise your hands. Who is against? The appeal is unanimously adopted.

We come to the next agenda point: Reorganisation of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and its future activity. Comrade Eberlein has the floor for the report.

Reorganisation of the Executive Committee

Eberlein (Germany): Comrades, the commission charged with preparing the Executive's reorganisation and its future work has met. It will present its conclusions to you in theses. I would like to say a few things about these theses.¹⁷

For us, it was obvious that the Communist International's structure must be subjected to re-examination at every world congress, in order to determine whether the organisation and apparatus of the Communist International are up to their tasks. The Commission also had the job of aligning the Executive's organisational structure with the tasks that have been and will be assigned to it at this world congress. For this reason, in my opinion, it is necessary at every world congress to ask again the question: Is the apparatus sufficient? Is the Executive adequately organised to carry out its tasks? Or is there need for an expansion or a reorganisation?

This was the framework for the work of the Commission. We decided to propose to you significant changes in the previous structure. These changes all aim at a specific goal, and intend to pursue a specific path to bring us ever closer to that goal. And that means eradicating the still existing federalist spirit in the organisation, to create an Executive that can take in its hands the leadership of a truly centralised world party, and to eliminate all the errors and deficiencies that have been evident during the last year. It means creating a strictly centralised world party, in which the decisions of world congresses and of the Expanded Executive are really made into reality, so that it will be impossible for anyone or any section to sabotage the agreed-on decisions or to fail to implement them.

That was our goal in this work, and we hope that the proposals that will be placed before you will take us significantly closer to this objective.

17. For the final text of the theses, see pp. 1133–7.

The need for this work, and for the Comintern to become, more and more, a truly centralised world party is evident in recent experiences that still today cause us serious disquiet. In this respect, the Second International stands as a warning – an International that was federalist rather than centralist in structure. Its activities consisted mainly of regular or irregular get-togethers, in which ringing speeches would be delivered and ringing resolutions adopted that no one then applied in life. Each individual section could do what it pleased, each danced to its own piper. This will not do for the Communist International.

Here, the task is to accustom the parties more and more to view the central leadership of the International as truly a leading body. We must recognise that a number of events took place in recent years that indicated that we have far from fully achieved this goal. For example, in one of the disturbing moments of this congress, a delegate took the floor to say: 'If you do not do what we want, we will walk out of the Congress!'¹⁸ That is unacceptable in the Comintern. This must not happen again. We must ensure that this cannot possibly ever happen again in the Comintern.

During the last year, we also noted that the implementation of decisions of different congresses by individual sections was not being undertaken with the necessary energy and not always with the necessary good will. If you read through the decisions of the Second and Third World Congresses, and compare with them the work of the different sections, you will hardly find a section that implemented every decision fully. Even worse, there was not even genuine good will to convert these decisions into reality. The sections need to exercise a much stricter discipline, and the Executive needs to supervise more stringently and intervene more energetically, so that the decisions adopted by the Congress are not mere pieces of paper but are really transformed into reality.

We have also seen cases where appeals published by the Comintern in the interests of the movement as a whole have not been printed by the individual parties. These parties have refused to print the decisions because they were not in accord with their wishes, or the parties have published only excerpts from the decisions, and so on. This, too, constitutes a severe violation of discipline and should not take place in the Comintern. This should be avoided at all costs.

Another evil experienced during the past year is the fact that leading comrades of individual sections who were not in agreement with this or that decision of the International simply threw in the towel, resigned from their posts in the party or the International, and simply quit. These are intolerable actions,

18. See statement by Radić, 442–3.

which must be stamped out at all costs and using the most severe methods. If we want to be a genuinely united world party, an organisation of proletarian struggle, we need international discipline. And, in such an organisation of struggle, individual comrades must always subordinate their personal wishes to the interests of the International as a whole.

The Commission also took up the question of the sections' national conventions, and this gave rise to quite a debate. The Comintern took a decision through its Executive during the last year that national conventions of the sections in future should take place after the world congress. Some parties opposed this decision and demanded that the national conventions in the future take place in advance of the world congress. They explained that only the holding of national conventions before the world congress made it possible to present a clear picture of the thinking and working of each section at the world congress.

The Commission did not share this opinion. It supported the decision of the Executive and, in its theses, presents again the motion that [national] conventions in the future take place after the world congress, at least as a rule. It left the Executive a good deal of flexibility, however, by according it the right to agree, in particularly important cases or political circumstances, that one or another section can hold its convention before the Congress. But, in any case, this must depend on the decision of the Executive. The Commission came to this conclusion because it considered that in a truly centralised world party it is inadmissible for the individual sections to commit themselves on political and other questions before the decision of the world congress and then come to the Congress tied to fixed line of approach. Firstly, it is more difficult for the world congress to come to an understanding in individual questions if each party has already committed itself at its convention. In addition, it creates problems for the parties in question if the world congress, taking place after their conventions, takes decisions different from those of the convention. That then places the party before the alternative of either obeying international discipline and cancelling the decisions of its convention, or going against the International's decisions on the basis of what the party has decided.

Because international discipline holds first place and carries the most weight for us, we believe that the best solution for the future is that conventions of the individual sections take place only after the world congress. Those that advocate party conventions before the world congress base their position on the argument that without such a convention it is impossible to properly prepare the deliberations of the world congress. The Commission considers that this motivation is not valid in any way. It is certainly and obviously necessary that, before the Congress, the appropriate leading bodies of the individual sections meet – such as district conventions, national committees, and other

bodies and divisions of the sections, in order to take a position on the questions posed in the world congress agenda. We ask you to vote for our motion that party conventions in future take place only after the world congress.

Another abuse that came to light in the present world congress is that different sections send their delegations to the world congress with an imperative mandate. The Commission rejects this measure and asks you to decide that in the future, imperative mandates at the world congress will always be invalid. If some delegations appear at the world congress with an imperative mandate, all discussion, debate, and attempt at reaching agreement is in vain, since the delegates are bound by their party to vote in a certain way. This is impermissible and completely violates the spirit of the Communist International. We therefore believe that the Congress has no choice but to declare that, in the future, imperative mandates are invalid and are cancelled.

But, comrades, it is impossible to achieve a strict centralist leadership of the Communist International unless we simultaneously attempt to structure and assemble the International's leadership in such a way that it is a genuine leading body of the International, with men gathered here who are truly capable of assuming the work and the enormous responsibility of the International's leadership. The Presidium and Executive of the International should continue to be composed of representatives of all the various parties, as has been the case until now. But the Commission proposes that, in the future, these representatives not be delegated by the individual sections to take part in the Executive, as before, but that they be elected here by the world congress. All representatives elected to the Executive are then truly responsible collaborators and leaders of the Communist International.

It is also necessary that changes be made in the form of delegation, so that it is no longer left to each party and section to send the representative that it wishes and then recall him when it suits them. If the representatives are elected here, then they can truly function as responsible collaborators in the Presidium and the Executive of the Communist International.

This decision is not taken for agitational reasons. It is not taken because opponents of the Communist International are always gossiping about how the Communist International's leadership is actually controlled by the Russians and the International really only carries out the decrees of the Russians in the different sections and countries. That is not at all the basis for this motion. On the contrary, we are convinced and say quite openly that obviously the Russian comrades enjoy the strongest influence in the Presidium and the Executive, because they are the ones who have gathered the greatest experience in the international class struggle. They are the only ones who have genuinely carried out a revolution. In terms of what they have experienced and learned,

they are far superior to the other delegates. For that reason, they must enjoy significantly greater influence in the Communist International.

But it is necessary that other parties more and more adopt the practice of sending their best and most effective representatives here, so that the central committee of the Communist International is assured of a truly international composition. We also hope to be successful in considerably increasing and expanding the interest of individual sections in international affairs and in the Communist International as a whole. It is, in fact, a significant weakness in many of our sections that our best comrades live closed within these sections and work only for their party, without taking sufficient interest and possessing the necessary knowledge for the international work as a whole. Individual sections need to take more interest than before in the entire international work and stand ready to collaborate in it. We hope this will be done.

On the basis of these considerations, we propose that the leadership of the Communist International be composed in the following manner.

We propose the election of a president and an executive of twenty-five members, including two representatives of the Youth International. These twenty-five representatives will be elected here at the world congress. Obviously, the individual sections will have the right to make nominations, but the final decision will be made here by the world congress. Situations may arise where one or another of these members of the Executive must return to his section for important political reasons or must be sent by the Communist International to work in other sections. We therefore propose that, in addition to these twenty-five regular members of the Executive, ten candidates should be elected, who will remain in their countries, until they are summoned to serve as replacements.

In addition, the Commission proposes that the expanded session will elect a Presidium of this Executive.¹⁹ The number of members of this Presidium has not yet been decided, but it will probably have between nine and eleven members. The Presidium, which should also be viewed as a kind of political bureau, has to resolve the political tasks of the International. It sets up an Organisational Bureau, probably composed of seven members, subject to a condition that two of them are members of the Presidium.

The tasks of the Organisational Bureau are entirely new. Previously, they have been very little addressed by the Communist International and its leading bodies. We see more and more that the Communist International must

19. Expanded sessions of the ECCI, first held in February–March 1922, included delegates chosen by Comintern parties as well as ECCI members. For the composition of the Expanded ECCI, as defined by the Fourth Congress, see p. 931.

influence the organisational structure of the individual sections, assist them in building their organisation, and stand ready to advise and assist. The Organisational Bureau is to take on these tasks.

We consider these tasks to be unusually vast, because the Communist International now includes a number of sections that do not in any way possess organisations of the type needed to be genuine Communist parties. There are many sections that in their organisational structure still resemble a Social-Democratic electoral association – as similar as two rotten eggs. This must change. We have no use in the Communist International for electoral associations; we need organisations of struggle. The work of the sections must get in tune with this need. In the coming year, the Communist International Executive must devote its main attention to taking up the organisational construction and perfection of the individual sections and helping the sections in this work.

The organisational division and the Organisational Bureau will be assigned another extremely important function. It will follow the underground work of the different sections. Previous congresses have repeatedly made decisions in this regard,²⁰ but, to our knowledge, very little has been done by the different sections. The Organisational Bureau will direct its attention to this work. Its necessity is particularly evident now when the counter-revolution lifts its head more and more shamelessly every month, not merely in political struggle. Their gangs are attacking Communists with swords and with terror, with imprisonment and murder. Just how essential underground work is for the sections' future is indicated by the example of events in Italy. We expect the sections to place a much greater emphasis on this task in the coming year than has previously been the case. The International's Organisational Bureau will assist in this work.

We also propose the establishment of a General Secretariat, an auxiliary body of the Presidium, with a general secretary elected by the Expanded Executive, with some assistant secretaries at his disposal. The General Secretariat itself does not have the right to take binding decisions. Its function is to assist the Presidium and nothing more.

In addition, we propose the establishment of a division for agitation and education. This division will report directly to the Presidium. It will seek to centralise agitation in the Communist International as much as possible, forwarding proposals and instructions to the individual parties.

20. The need to combine legal with illegal work is taken up in the Comintern Statutes and Twenty-One Conditions adopted by the Second Congress as well as, in more detail, in the organisational resolution of the Third Congress. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 698 and 770; Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 258–61.

Linked to the agitation division is the educational division, which has the same task. It will seek to provide common guidelines and instructions for educational work in the Communist International. I believe the tasks of these divisions are so obvious that I need make no further comments.

The next division we must decide on is the division for the East. The fact is that the Eastern Division has to work under very special conditions, because Communist parties are still as good as absent in the countries assigned to it. Only the first beginnings of such parties exist there, so that the task of dealing with the East as a whole must be taken up in the main by the other parties, in countries where stable Communist parties are already present. The work developed visibly in the course of the last year, and the political importance of the East became ever more evident for the Communist International. We believe it is necessary to have a special division assigned to this question, whose leader must be a member of the Presidium, collaborating in the work of the International as a whole.

Our theses also say that the Executive and the Presidium have authority to establish other divisions if they consider this necessary for the work of the International. All such divisions must be led by members of the Presidium or the Executive, so that a member of the Presidium always has responsibility for the work of this division.

We also propose an Expanded Executive. The last year has shown that sessions of the Expanded Executive have functioned in a useful way. It is particularly desirable that, when important political issues are posed for decision, a broader range of responsible party workers from different sections come together in order to make decisions. The Expanded Executive is to meet twice a year, every four months, so that each year, in addition to the world congress, two sessions of the Expanded Executive will take place.

As regards the composition of the Expanded Executive, we are proposing that it include, first, the twenty-five members of the Executive; and then an additional three representatives of the parties in Germany, France, Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Italy, plus three from the Youth International and the Profintern, unless the Profintern takes a different decision changing the present form of collaboration;²¹ then two representatives each from Britain, Poland, the United States, Bulgaria, and Norway; and one representative from each of the other sections with full membership in the Communist International.

With regard to the make-up of the Presidium and Executive, we, in the Commission, put considerable weight on ensuring there would be a careful division of labour among members of the Executive, so that individual comrades who come here to the Executive headquarters from the parties no

21. See p. 536, n. 7.

longer consider themselves merely as representing their party but as genuinely responsible collaborators of the Executive. Also, there is no rule that the twenty-five elected members of the Executive be present here in his headquarters all the time. Our proposal is that at least fifteen members always be present. The other members can be sent by the Executive on assignment to other parties, or as authorised representatives, or can return to work in their own party.

The Commission is proposing another new provision to the Congress, concerning the right of the Executive to send authorised representatives to individual sections. It has become clear during the last year that the exchange of letters alone and the sending of delegates to Moscow is not sufficient. Rather, it is necessary to give the Executive the right to send its representatives to individual sections. These representatives will be charged either with carrying out specific tasks set by the Executive, or – for the most part – to go to the sections in order to determine and supervise the degree to which the Twenty-One Conditions of the Communist International are in fact being carried out. They are also to exercise close supervision of whether all the other decisions of the Communist International and its congresses are really being carried out. These representatives will be named from among the most qualified representatives of the sections. They are to be among the best and most effective Communists. Their functions are to be specified clearly and unambiguously, before the representatives go to the sections. We ask you to adopt this motion as well.

We are also proposing a change in the make-up of the Control Commission. The task of the Control Commission has been – so to speak – to look after matters of honour. It also had to supervise finances and to mediate disputes between individual parties or individual persons in a party. The Control Commission was composed of representatives of the most varied parties.

But experience has shown that a Control Commission structured in this way is incapable of functioning. It has not been possible even once for all the members of the Control Commission to meet together. Each member had so many other functions, and they were so widely dispersed, that the Control Commission was never able to really function. For this reason, we propose that, in future, the choice of members of the Control Commission be carried out by two sections, changing every year. In this way, two sections will always elect a Control Commission to carry out its duties. The next world congress will name another two parties to form the Commission. The Executive approves the members of this Commission. For this year, the Executive proposes that the German and French Parties be given responsibility to form this commission, with three representatives from each party. We believe that this will make it possible for this commission to function on an improved basis.

Another question taken up in these theses is that of reciprocal relationships. Contact between the individual parties and the Communist International has, in the past, been extremely loose. Meanwhile, it is more and more evident that almost every political question that is posed, let us say, for a country in Western Europe, has an enormous impact on the other countries. Intensive collaboration and ongoing agreement of the individual parties is shaping up as one of the most important tasks of the coming year. For this reason, we recommend that the larger parties exchange representatives. Of course this is posed only for the most important and larger parties. It is not possible for all sixty-one parties affiliated to the International to have permanent representatives in all of the other parties.

What we are proposing here is not a binding decision, but the Congress should express its desire that the larger parties set up such an exchange of representatives.

In addition, we propose a motion that, in the future, the parties be obliged to regularly send the minutes of their central bodies to the Executive, in order to keep it informed regarding the ongoing work of the sections. This is additional to the regular reports of the sections to the International, which, in many cases, have unfortunately not been sent. The minutes must then, of course, also be written up in such a way as to make them comprehensible to those far removed from the section's centre. We ask you to adopt this motion.

Furthermore, as I indicated at the outset, we intend to present you with a motion that forbids members from resigning from leading bodies, making resignation conditional on a decision by the Executive. Thus even when the central committee of the section concerned is in agreement with the resignation of one or several of its members, this decision will not take effect until the Executive has so decided.

In addition, as I have mentioned, we have adopted a prohibition of imperative mandates.

In conclusion I just need to refer briefly to the fact that the Executive will send two representatives to the Youth International's Executive Committee, so that there is an exchange here as well. The representatives of the youth have consultative vote in the Presidium and the Executive and decisive vote in the Expanded Executive, and the same will hold true for the International's representatives in the Youth International's Executive, in order to secure close collaboration.

A representative of the International Women's Secretariat will be elected here. This secretariat will remain in its present location [Berlin].

The degree to which we can resolve our relations with the Profintern [RILU] cannot yet be determined, because the Profintern congress has not yet taken its decisions on this question. We will only be able to discuss this issue when

we have the decisions before us. But given that we see everywhere, more and more, that economic struggles are closely linked to political ones, it seems to us to be very important that in the future there be close ties and contact between the Comintern and the Profintern.

With regard to the timing of world congresses, we propose that we should decide once again to hold the world congress during the next year. Whether it will be possible in the coming years to extend the span of time between successive world congresses should be decided next year. We believe that we will gradually go over to holding large and comprehensive congresses, like the one this year, less frequently, perhaps every two years.²²

The number of participants in a congress should be, as before, determined by the number of its members and by political conditions.

That ends the proposals laid before you by the Reorganisation Commission.

The question was also raised in the Commission whether it would not be expedient to revise the Statutes of the Communist International.²³ We unanimously recognised that this proposal was well justified, but we believe that we cannot now, right before the end of the Congress, jump head over heels into a definitive revision of the Statutes. We therefore propose to assign the Executive to undertake preparatory work for such a revision and expansion of the Statutes and to forward these proposals in good time to the individual sections, so that the next world congress can definitively adopt the expanded Statutes. Until then, obviously, the existing Statutes are recognised and they alone have force.

Comrades, we hope that in adopting the proposals of the Reorganisation Commission, we will be able to advance a significant step toward our goal in the organisation of the Communist International. We hope that it will be possible, after this reorganisation, to link the sections more closely and firmly to the Communist International, and to better unify the sections. We hope that the leadership can be structured more tightly and more expediently, so that in the coming year we have a tight, well-organised, and efficient Communist International leadership. No one will question the fact that this leadership is necessary, for the tasks posed for the Communist International in the future, indeed in the coming year, are so enormous, that to accomplish them we need to bring together the best comrades here in the Executive. (*Loud applause*)

Adjournment: 4:25 p.m.

22. Subsequent congresses were held with increasing time intervals, in 1924, 1928, and 1935. The Comintern was dissolved in 1943.

23. For the text of the Statutes, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 694–9.

Session 27 – Thursday, 30 November 1922

Executive Reorganisation; Yugoslavia; Egypt; Black Question; Agrarian Question; Workers' Aid

Discussion on organising the Executive. Declaration against the white terror in Yugoslavia. Theses on the black question. Agrarian action programme. Resolution on a political Red Cross. Poale Zion.

Speakers: Bordiga, Kolarov, Josef Grün, Katayama, Eberlein, Radić, Katayama, Sasha, Varga, Feliks Kon, Marchlewski

Convened: 12:40 p.m.

Chairpersons: Marchlewski, later Kolarov

Bordiga (Italy): I have asked for the floor in order to speak on Comrade Eberlein's report on reorganising the Executive Committee of the International. In the Commission, I said that this involved a reorganisation not just of the Executive Committee but of the entire International. There are important questions at stake here, involving a de facto revision of the International's Statutes with regard to all relationships between the sections and the centre and the entire organisational work of the International.

I proposed that it was necessary to revise the International's Statutes. However, Comrade Eberlein has just said that this matter should be tabled until the next congress.

In my opinion, all aspects of the draft on organisation are quite acceptable. It contains provisions that are objectively very important, inasmuch as they aim to wipe out the last remnants of the federative organisational methods of the old [Second] International.

If it is possible to broaden the discussion a bit at this stage of the Congress, the question could be posed whether everything that is required to achieve a genuine revolutionary centralism can really be attained through a reform of the organisational apparatus.

I have already said a few words on this theme in my comments on the report of the Executive Committee.¹ I will not repeat this now; there is no time for that. A genuine centralisation would bring about a synthesis of the revolutionary movement's spontaneous vanguard in every country, in order to end once and for all the crises of discipline that we experience at present. However, I must reiterate that if this is what we want, we must not only centralise the organisational apparatus but also simultaneously unify our methods of struggle and specify very precisely everything that relates to programme and tactics. We must explain to all groups and all comrades who belong to the International the meaning of the pledge of unconditional obedience that they make when they join our ranks.

As regards the international congresses, I am in complete agreement with abolishing the imperative mandate and with holding of national congresses after the world congresses. I concede without reservations that these measures are consistent with the principles of centralisation. However, in my opinion, we should not limit ourselves to stating that the interests of genuine centralisation requires getting rid of imperative mandates and holding international congresses before the national congresses. Some serious words must be spoken about the work and organisation of the congresses.

We have reached the final sessions of this congress, and we must concede that the performance has not been in all respects satisfactory.

Many important questions were analysed. We are in the final days of discussions, and we see that these discussions were not particularly effective.

We must look into the question of resignations. I agree with the view that these resignations must be prevented. We could also try a rule that has been successfully applied in our party, namely, that all resignations are immediately accepted, and the comrade who resigns cannot reassume his place in the party for the next one or two years. I believe that this system would lead to a significant fall in the number of resignations.

There is also a question before us that I must take up, despite the late stage in the Congress's deliberations. This is the proposal that there be a two-year period between the world congresses. If the next congress was going to be less overwhelmed with work and issues than this one has been, it would be quite correct not to repeat this significant expenditure of organisational, finan-

1. For Bordiga's comments on the ECCI report, see pp. 178–85.

cial, and other resources. But I would like to raise the specific question of the amount of time that will pass before the Fifth Congress.

We are in the process of referring to the next congress questions of great importance. We are postponing adoption of a new programme – or, better said, the first programme of the Communist International. We have postponed the revision of the Statutes, that is, the organisational link between the International and its sections.

After the report from the Executive, we had a lengthy discussion of tactics. But the different speakers that took the floor, one after another, did not take up the great problem of the International's tactics. They limited themselves to discussing some remarks by the Executive Committee on the work or the situation in this or that national section. But very important questions, like that of the workers' government, for example, were not resolved in this discussion. This text was referred to a commission, which has not yet come to a decision. The question is still not clarified, and we have no time left for that. I do not propose that the question of tactics be reopened for a broad debate. But, when I consider the programme, the statutes, and tactics, it seems to me absurd to suggest that the Fifth World Congress can take place only in two years. I therefore consider it appropriate to present to the Congress a proposal on behalf of the majority of the Italian delegation that, given the important decisions that are being put off, the Fifth Congress of the International take place in the summer or autumn of 1923.

Chair: Comrade Kolarov has the floor for a statement.

Kolarov (Bulgaria): If Comrade Bordiga believes that the Commission proposed holding the next congress not during the next year but during the year that follows, this is based on a misunderstanding. The Commission's decision was in line with what Comrade Bordiga wanted: world congresses should take place every two years, but the next world congress must absolutely take place next year.

Bordiga: I am happy to hear this clarification. The misunderstanding was caused by too loose a translation of the speech of Comrade Eberlein.

Grün (Austria):² Comrades, the Third Congress of the Comintern took a number of decisions regarding the organisational work of the Comintern and its affiliated sections, which, as Comrade Lenin stated explicitly in his report, have, for the most part, not been implemented. This is to some degree explicable, understandable, and pardonable. When the Third Congress adopted

2. The Austrian delegation included both Anna and Josef Grün. Eberlein's summary (p. 944), however, indicates that Josef was the speaker here.

these organisational guidelines, we still considered, with good reason, that it would be possible to carry out the consolidation of the Communist International prior to the Fourth Congress. We were then on the eve of the foundation of the Czechoslovak Party. As for the other parties, we believed that we had come very close to a resolution.

However, this hope did not become reality. The Czechoslovak Party has now fused, but its necessary consolidation is taking place only at the Fourth Congress. The Norwegian Party is an assembly of collectively affiliated trade unions; only the Fourth Congress will make it into a party. Only the Fourth Congress will create the large Italian Party of the future and consolidate the French Party. The fact that a large portion of the organisational decisions of the Third Congress could not yet be carried out is understandable, in part, because the expected consolidation of the sections had not taken place.

In addition, there are also international causes, namely that the international apparatus had not yet made the necessary transition *from the first period of the Comintern's activity, which focused on agitation and demonstration, to a period of organisation*, which we must undertake and to some degree have already undertaken.

Opinions may differ on what the immediate organisational effect will be of the pending fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. Politically, this will undoubtedly benefit the Comintern in the foreseeable future. Organisationally, however, this will likely place certain limits for a time on the Comintern's recruitment activity. We should utilise this span of time, which will probably be quite short, for a thorough reorganisation of the Comintern from top to bottom. In this regard, the Organisational Commission has placed before the Congress motions that would move us closer toward this goal.

At the outset of the Congress, Comrade Zinoviev wrote an article that referred to the final goal of reorganising the Executive. This goal was to convert the Executive from its previous loose federated form to the final goal of a tightly organised central committee of a single great international Communist party. The motions presented to the Organisational Commission by the German delegation amounted to achieving this tight central committee immediately. For the moment, that is not entirely possible. We do not yet have the consolidated international party that could have a tight central committee, which would be constituted without consideration for the parties.

The proposals adopted by the Organisational Commission and presented to the Congress constitute a transition from the previous system, in which the Executive consisted entirely of representatives of the sections, to the final goal of a unified central committee. Such a committee will not be selected according to the wishes of the sections. Rather, there will be a process in which,

according to the wishes of the international congress, forces will be selected that will be released for a period from their sections in order to devote themselves exclusively to the task of constructing a central committee of a unified international Communist party. This goal will, I hope, be reached at the Fifth or Sixth Congress. The present proposals – let us be in no doubt about this – are only steps toward this goal.

We therefore have before us commission proposals that represent a transition and that still take the sections into consideration to some degree, since they retain the right to present nominations to the congress. In addition, an increase is projected in the size of the Executive, which is to create the opportunity for various larger and middle-sized parties, and to some degree even the different currents, which are not yet a thing of the past, to be represented in the Executive.

In this regard, however, the proposal of the sub-commission, which was elected by the broader Organisational Commission and then presented its proposal directly to the Congress, displays a certain lack of consistency.

Specifically, the proposal is for the Congress to elect, in addition to the twenty-five members, an additional ten candidate members. In practice, the result will be that these ten candidates are chosen from the larger parties, in anticipation of the possibility that they may, in the course of the year, change their representation. The expectation is that, among these candidates, comrades will stand ready in case of need to shift their area of work from the sections to the Executive Committee.

This displays a certain lack of consistency. For, if we take the position that the Executive should be chosen for now by considering proposals from the sections, and that it is not yet a tightly structured central committee, then we must also give the smaller and middle-sized parties the possibility of assuring their participation in the Executive's work, in the event that there should be a change during the year regarding the situation of the representative elected by the Congress. And, further, if representatives are chosen by the parties belatedly, they should not have a decisive vote. The party in question should then be represented at best by a consultative vote. This small correction fully removes the inconsistency.

In a number of cases, the rights of the congress are delegated to the Expanded Executive, whose role is to grow even more when we make the transition next year to holding a full congress only every two years. There is no doubt that that the meetings of the Expanded Executive will then become a sort of international conference, a small congress. I believe that the Expanded Executive can be accorded the right to replace the congress in certain cases and expand the Executive, if one or another party finds it necessary to replace

its representative. Every party will, of course, avoid doing that except where necessary, because it risks losing its decisive vote through such a substitution, unless the Expanded Executive gives its approval.

The Austrian delegation has presented a motion along these lines, which will be considered in the final editing. Its adoption would benefit the smaller and middle-sized parties, which are growing in the Communist International in number and in total membership.

What I have just said is presented on behalf of the Austrian delegation.

What I am about to say regarding the structure of the Communist International's central apparatus is presented on my own behalf, on the basis of many years of experience both before and after the War and particularly on the basis of experiences collected during my activity in the Executive.

The Organisational Commission proposes that the structuring of the Communist International's central apparatus shall serve as a model for that of the sections. That is undoubtedly correct. The sections must be structured in such a way as to constitute corresponding bodies in the sections' central leadership with which appropriate communications can be initiated and conducted. This model can and should be achieved when an even more defined articulation and structuring takes place than what the proposal foresees.

The proposal provides for two bureaus, an organisational bureau and a presidium, which has the tasks of a political bureau. It does not matter whether the name is presidium or political bureau, but it must be more clearly established that the bureaus are subordinate to the executive. That is not stated with sufficient clarity in the draft. In addition, in the present draft, the divisions are not clearly subordinated to the bureaus but, rather, placed beside them. It must be stated more distinctly that the bureaus report to the executive, and the divisions to the bureaus.

In addition, it is proposed that there be a general secretary of the presidium. However, the general secretary must also be a secretary of the executive. The presidium or political bureau must have its own special secretary, responsible to it, and so too must the organisational bureau. The other secretaries, who share responsibility for the various divisions, must have a clear and organisationally quite unambiguous relationship with each other. I believe that small changes in the present draft will readily make the organisation of the future central committee of the international Communist party in fact a model for the organisation of the central committees of the different sections. To my knowledge, there are at present two parties that can provide a model as to the structure of their central leadership: the Communist Party of Germany and the Communist Party of Austria, in which this clear structure has already been implemented. Through the adoption of this structure on an international

level, this model can be realised in the International's other sections, where this is not yet the case.

I would like to close with a comparison. Previously, the Communist International's tasks, as I said in my opening, were mainly demonstrative and agitational. It had above all to attend to destroying the illusions that existed inside the working class and exposing the other Internationals. It has done full justice to this task. Now, however, it is turning to organising itself to a much greater extent. We have come to a certain closure in our initial work, and we do not know at what time we will resume it to the same or a greater degree. However, we face the necessity of an intensive organisational reconstruction. Until now, we had a tool, a hammer, a heavy, powerful hammer, which was wielded against the opponent to good effect. But it was a tool wielded by many hands, not always the most competent. It will be necessary to take measures so that this will not be repeated.

Now we are turning to another kind of activity that demands precision labour. And here we have in hand this heavy and powerful tool, which has already proven hard to handle in many political interventions in the framework of our own International. It will be even harder to handle in future organisational interventions of the central leadership in the individual sections. Our previous tool will no longer do the job. Instead, we must have a precision tool, and more than that, given the heightened tasks, we need a precision machine. We must make the transition from manual labour to working with machines; from a manual hammer to a steam hammer, and even better, to an electrically powered hammer machine, which can hit down with much greater force against enemies without and within, and is still capable of carrying out the most precise political and organisational engraving work inside the Communist International. What the Commission has proposed offers a somewhat usable foundation, and, with some touching up and precision adjustments, we can produce at the end of the Congress what we need for the future. I am convinced that the Congress can and will carry out this essential labour to transform the hand-tool into a precision-machine.

Katayama (Japan): Comrades, we agree with the proposals made by Comrade Eberlein. I would like to clarify for comrades here the necessity of unifying the Comintern's work and of economising its resources. Until now, the Comintern has taken up chiefly the more important national questions. It is obvious that if, for example, the German revolution becomes reality, the Comintern will pay very close attention to the German question. There is no doubt about that. But, comrades, the Comintern is international in significance. Previously, we have lost too much time on the national questions and propaganda against the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.

We desire to bring about a centralisation of the Comintern's work. Many Communist parties in the West cannot see beyond the borders of their own country. I will give you an example: the Mexican Party, which is still quite young.³ When I was in Mexico, I sought to establish closer relations between this party and the Communist Party of the United States. We in Mexico wrote many letters to this party and sent many articles, but the letters were never answered and the articles were never printed. Most of us thought that personal factors were at work here. But, after I had left Mexico, a member of the central leadership of the Communist Party of Mexico wrote to the US Party with a proposal for collaboration, and he too received no answer. That shows that the American Party has not yet looked beyond the borders of its own country. That runs counter to the idea and principles of the Comintern. For this reason, we support the organisational plan for the Comintern.

Now, I would like to speak of my experiences in Moscow during the last ten months. If this congress elects twenty-five members and ten alternates to the Executive, I would hope that those chosen are known as good Communists, comrades who are genuinely leading members of the Communist International, not only with respect to their own country but to other countries. It is necessary that these comrades be good Communists, and they must also have a wide perspective and horizon.

In the past, the Presidium carried out massive, important, and good work. But we have had members of the Executive from different countries who often did nothing and often did not even know what was going on in the Comintern or what the Presidium did. Certainly, many important matters had to be concealed from Executive members of the Comintern. That must be so. But you should elect trustworthy comrades to the Executive Committee, so that they can contribute something to the work of the Comintern. If they cannot do this, they should be trained by the Presidium and the Comintern to do so. That is my thinking and my experience. When you are electing an Executive, you should seek comrades in whom the Presidium can place trust.

Now I come to the *question of the Far East*. As Comrade Eberlein has already said, we should be recognised as an important section of the Communist International, because in the coming years, the Far East will be a focus of capitalism and imperialism. In the East, we have only small and weak Communist parties, which need assistance in order to serve the Communist movement of the entire world. In particular, we should be recognised as a region directly subordinated to the Comintern. For one part of the Far East is now a part

3. The Mexican CP was founded in November 1919 with twenty-two members, and claimed 1,500 members in late 1922. Katayama represented the ECCI in Mexico in 1921.

of Soviet Russia, a territory where Soviet Russia and the Russian Revolution confront world capitalism and world imperialism. Every encounter between these forces and every aggressive action by imperialism threatens the Russian Revolution and the Soviet government. For this reason, we strive for a strong and effectively organised orientation to the East, in order to assist the revolutionary workers and Communist parties there.

Eberlein (Germany): Comrades, it is evident from the discussion that no proposals have been made to substantially modify our theses. We can therefore conclude that, by and large, you are in agreement with them.

Comrade Bordiga is doubtless correct to say that our main task is the political transformation of the International and its sections. Obviously, errors and deficiencies in the political arena cannot be made good by even the best organisation, if the political line and political work has been neglected or is on the wrong track. But my task was to take up not the Congress's political tasks but the organisational issues. All other agenda points focus in the main on the political tasks of the International and deal with them in many different ways.

A word on the proposals raised in the discussion. Comrade Bordiga probably misunderstood me in thinking that world congresses would now take place every two years. No, our proposal, like yours, is aimed at holding another world congress in the coming year and considering, between now and then, whether it would be expedient to hold world congresses less frequently.

That decision will be based to a large extent on how the meetings of the Expanded Executive turn out in the course of the coming year. In this regard, the few meetings held during the past year have carried out useful work. This encourages us to believe that, in the future too, the expanded meetings can carry out a significant part of the work of future world congresses. They can do this all the better in that they take place more frequently and regularly, and that great and important political questions do not have to be held over for a long time before they are decided. We believe that expanded meetings can be quite effective as a sort of substitute for the world congress.

If I have understood Comrade Bordiga correctly, he said with regard to resignations, that resignations from the Executive should be accepted, and that the member who resigned should then be suspended from party work for a period – for one or two years. In other words, resignations should be met with a type of penalty.

Comrades, we do not share this point of view. Firstly, we do not have such a surplus of capable political forces in the International that we can suspend them just like that for a lengthy period. Secondly, comrades must learn more and more, if only for disciplinary reasons, to subordinate themselves in the

Communist International to the will of the whole organisation, even when in this or that question their own views do not concur with the adopted decision.

In all the cases we have seen so far, it was evident that the comrades could very well continue to carry out their function, if they showed enough discipline and subordinated themselves to the will of the whole organisation. Obviously, cases can arise in which resignations are necessary, and in which they must be accepted. In our proposals, we make no general ban, but demand the agreement of the Executive to such resignations. We believe that it is then made possible to take into account comrades' justified desires and to accommodate them, when this is advisable.

I would therefore not propose that the Commission accept the suggestion by Comrade Bordiga.

Comrade Grün says that the number of candidates is too small in relationship to the number of members of the Executive.

We do not want to have new members appearing at every meeting, who then disappear again a few meetings later. This is not beneficial for the work, but, rather, poses a barrier to systematic and methodical work by the Executive and the Presidium. When comrades come here from other countries, or are summoned from other countries for discussions, they should carry out the specific tasks set for them and then return as quickly as possible to their party and their work, rather than staying here in the Executive headquarters for a lengthy period.

The other question raised by Comrade Grün probably concerns an error. He says that the bureaus that we are to form are not strictly and tightly enough subordinated to the Executive or the Presidium. That is not the real situation. Let me emphasise that, in addition to the Executive, we have the Presidium, which is composed of a smaller number of comrades and is the actual political bureau of the International.

All divisions report to this political bureau and responsible to it. Indeed, we have gone beyond that in specifying that the most important divisions must be responsible to and led by members of the Presidium. Thus the Organisational Bureau, the Agitation and Propaganda Bureau, and the Eastern Division report directly to the Presidium, while the other divisions, such as for statistics, report to the Organisational Bureau and are responsible to it. In this way, we believe we have achieved what Comrade Grün is aiming at.

As I have said, the Commission will again review the few proposals made in this discussion, and we ask you, when the theses are distributed to you today or tomorrow, to read them through again carefully and then vote for the Organisational Commission's proposals.

Radić (Yugoslavia): The Yugoslav delegation requests that the following appeal be read:

Against the White Terror in Yugoslavia

To the workers of the world:

Working men and women! Comrades!

The reactionary government of Yugoslavia's infant capitalism has committed many crimes against the Yugoslavian Communist proletariat in the course of two years of white terror. Their white judicial authorities have already pronounced many sentences of death. One of their victims is to be executed in a few days.

The most recent victim is our younger Comrade Kerošević. He was sentenced to death because he was among the leaders of the general strike of Yugoslav miners in 1920.

Although placed outside the law, the revolutionary proletariat of Yugoslavia and our comrades have found ways to carry out a broad campaign in the country against this most recent crime of the Yugoslavian government. They have also addressed an appeal to members of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, calling on them to form a united front of the entire Yugoslav working class against the white terror. Their response was negative.

The Fourth Congress declares its unlimited solidarity with the Communist proletariat of Yugoslavia in the struggle against reaction. It addresses to the revolutionary proletariat of all countries an appeal to join its protests to those of the Yugoslav proletariat, and declares its complete solidarity with the latter in its struggle against the execution of Comrade Kerošević.⁴

With the leaders when possible; without the leaders when necessary – the entire world working class must raise its unanimous and threatening cry of protest in order to prevent this most recent crime of the Yugoslavian bourgeoisie and their Social-Democratic allies.

Down with the white terror!

Long live the Communist proletariat of Yugoslavia! (*Loud applause*)

Chair: We will now vote on the motion. All in favour of the motion, please raise your hands. The motion is unanimously *adopted*. Comrade Katayama has the floor for a motion.

4. The death-sentence against Juro Kerošević was subsequently commuted to twenty years imprisonment, and he was released in 1937.

Egypt

Katayama (Japan): Comrades, the Egyptian Commission has met several times. It has received the report of the Socialist Party of Egypt and discussed it thoroughly. We recognise the important role played by Egypt, as both a boundary and also a connecting link between East and West. Egypt is the gate to the Far East and to the real Near East, and this gives the Communist movement in Egypt a great importance.

For forty years, the Egyptian people have been exploited by British and French imperialists. The World War brought about a change in the attitude of the Egyptian people, who rose up against British imperialism.⁵ The Egyptian petty bourgeoisie and Egyptian capitalists are content with Egypt's nominal independence, but the Communists and revolutionary workers are not satisfied with this formal status. They want real independence, and here the Communist International should help them. We, the Egyptian Commission, unanimously agree that the Communist movement in Egypt should be supported and encouraged. A strong Communist movement needs to be built in Egypt in order to grasp the key to the Orient and the Far East.

If a revolt were to break out in India, Egypt – thanks to its geographical position – would be the key to the Indian revolution and could support it through the blockade of the Suez Canal.

For this reason, we want to assist the Egyptian Communist movement and to recognise the Egyptian Socialist Party. Although the Socialist Party of Egypt is still young and, in many respects, inexperienced, the Egyptian comrades are working for the Comintern and according to its directives. But we would like to establish certain conditions for the Party's admission to the Comintern, and have agreed on the following resolution.

Resolution on the Egyptian Socialist Party

After a number of meetings, the Commission came to the following conclusion:

- 1.) The report presented to the Commission of the delegate of the Socialist Party of Egypt is sufficient evidence that this party is a significant revolutionary movement that is in agreement with the broad movement represented by the Communist International.
- 2.) However, the Commission considers it necessary to postpone the affiliation of the Socialist Party of Egypt until:

5. See p. 715, n. 8.

- a.) The Party has excluded certain undesirable elements.
 - b.) The Party has called a congress at which an attempt will be made to bring back into the Socialist Party of Egypt communist forces now outside the Party who want to accept the Twenty-One Conditions of the Communist International.
 - c.) The Party has changed its name to 'Communist Party of Egypt'.
- 3.) The Socialist Party of Egypt is instructed to convene a congress to this end soon, and in any case not later than 15 January 1923.

Chair: A commission must be formed to decide the *Korean* question.⁶ The Presidium proposes to assign the following as members of this commission: Feliks Kon, Katayama, Chen Duxiu, Manner, Próchniak, Kuusinen, Voitinsky, Zetkin.

If there are no objections, I take it that you are in agreement with the formation of this commission and the assignment of these comrades as members.

No objections have been raised.

Comrade Sasha has the floor for the report on the decisions of the Commission on the Black Question.

Sasha (Rose Pastor Stokes, United States): Comrades, I will now read the thesis on the black question that were referred back for clarification and expansion. I hope that it will be unanimously adopted by the Congress.

Theses on the Black Question⁷

1.) During and after the War, a movement of revolt developed among the colonial and semi-colonial peoples against the power of world capitalism, and this movement is successfully making progress. Meanwhile, the further development of capitalism depends on resolving its last great challenge, the penetration and intensive colonisation of the territories inhabited by black races. French capitalism has clearly recognised that postwar French imperialism can only be maintained by creating a French empire in Africa, tied to the mother country by a Trans-Sahara railroad.

The financial magnates of the United States, who already exploit twelve million blacks in that country, have begun the peaceful penetration of Africa. Britain's fear that its position in Africa may be threatened is clearly shown

6. Regarding the dispute among Korean Communists, see p. 440, including n. 4.

7. The enumeration of the theses is taken from Béla Kun 1933; it is not found in the German text.

by the extreme measures it took to suppress the strikes in South Africa in the Rand.⁸

Just as the competition between imperialist powers in the Pacific region has produced an acute danger of a new world war, so there are ominous indications that Africa has become the object of their competitive efforts. In addition, the War, the Russian Revolution, and the powerful rebellious movements of Asian and Muslim peoples against imperialism have awakened racial consciousness among millions of blacks, who have been oppressed and humiliated for centuries not only in Africa but also, and perhaps even more, in the United States.

2.) The history of blacks in the United States has prepared them to play an important role in the liberation struggle of the entire African race. Three hundred years ago, the American blacks were torn from their native soil, transported on slave ships under the most indescribably cruel conditions, and sold into slavery. For 250 years, they worked as slaves under the whip of the American overseer. Their labour cleared the forests, built the roads, planted the cotton, laid the railway tracks, and sustained the Southern aristocracy. The reward for their labour was poverty, ignorance, degradation, and misery.

The blacks were not docile slaves. Their history tells of rebellions, revolts, and underground techniques of winning freedom. But all their struggles were savagely suppressed. They were tortured into submission, while the bourgeois press and bourgeois religion declared their enslavement to be rightful.

Slavery grew into a barrier on the road to America's development on a capitalist basis. In the contest between chattel slavery and wage slavery, chattel slavery was destined to defeat. The Civil War was a war not to free the slaves but to maintain the industrial supremacy of capitalism in the Northern states. It presented blacks with the choice between slavery in the South and wage slavery in the North.

The longing, the blood, and the tears of the 'emancipated' blacks formed part of the material from which American capitalism was constructed. When the United States, which had now emerged as a world power, was inevitably pulled into the whirlpool of the World War, blacks were declared to be of equal worth to whites. They were permitted to kill for 'democracy' and let themselves be killed. Four hundred thousand coloured workers were recruited into the American army and formed into black regiments. Immediately after the dreadful sacrifices of the World War, the black soldier, returning home, faced racial persecution, lynching, murder, deprivation of the right to vote, and inequality between him and the whites.

8. See resolution on South Africa, p. 736, and n. 29 on that page.

Blacks fought back, for which they had to pay dearly. The persecution of blacks became more intensive and pervasive than before the War, until they had learned to forget their 'presumption'. The spirit of rebellion aroused by the postwar persecution and brutality, although suppressed, flares up again, as we saw in the protests against atrocities such as those that took place in Tulsa.⁹ Combined with the impact of the blacks' integration into industry in the North, this assigns to American blacks, especially in the North, a place in the vanguard of the struggle against oppression in Africa.

3.) The Communist International views with satisfaction the resistance of exploited blacks to the attacks of their exploiters, since the enemy of their race and of the white worker is identical: capitalism and imperialism. The international struggle of the black race is a struggle against capitalism and imperialism. The international black movement must be organised on this basis – in the United States, the centre of black culture and the focus of black protests; in Africa, the reservoir of human labour for capitalism's further development; in Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Nicaragua, and other 'independent' republics), which is dominated by American imperialism; in Puerto Rico, Haiti, Santo Domingo [Dominican Republic], and other islands in the Caribbean, where the brutal treatment of our black fellow men by American occupation troops has aroused a protest by conscious blacks and revolutionary white workers around the world; in South Africa and the Congo, where the increasing industrialisation of the black population has led to uprisings of different types; in East Africa, where the current penetration of international capitalism is driving the native population to active resistance against imperialism.

4.) It is the task of the Communist International to show blacks that they are not the only people that suffer the oppression of imperialism and capitalism. The workers and peasants of Europe, Asia, and America are also victims of the imperialist exploiters. In India and China, in Iran and Turkey, in Egypt and Morocco, the oppressed coloured peoples are mounting a heroic defence against the imperialist exploiters. These peoples are rising up against the same outrages that drive blacks to fury: racial oppression, social and economic inequality, and intensive exploitation in industry. These peoples are fighting for the same goals as blacks – for political, economic, and social liberation and equality.

The Communist International represents the worldwide struggle of revolutionary workers and peasants against the power of imperialism. It is not only the organisation of the subjugated white workers in Europe and America, but is also the organisation of the oppressed coloured peoples of the world.

9. See p. 803, n. 18.

It feels duty-bound to support and promote the international organisation of blacks in their struggle against the common enemy.

5.) The black question has become an essential part of the world-revolution. The Communist International has already recognised what worthwhile help the coloured peoples of Asia can provide in the semi-colonial countries. It views the assistance of our oppressed black fellow human beings as absolutely necessary for proletarian revolution and the destruction of capitalist power. For these reasons, the Fourth Congress assigns to Communists the special responsibility to apply the 'Theses on the Colonial Question' to the situation of blacks.¹⁰

6(a). The Fourth Congress considers it essential to support every form of the black movement that either undermines or weakens capitalism or places barriers in the path of its further expansion.

(b). The Communist International will struggle for the equality of the white and black races, and for equal wages and equal political and social rights.

(c). The Communist International will utilise all the means available to it to compel the trade unions to take black workers into their ranks, or, where this right already exists in form, to make special efforts to recruit blacks into the trade unions. If this proves to be impossible, the Communist International will organise blacks in their own trade unions and make special use of the united-front tactic in order to force the [main] unions to admit them.

(d). The Communist International will take immediate steps to convene a general conference or congress of blacks in Moscow.

Sasha: Now, comrades, I would like to add a few words concerning the black question, regarding specifically the paragraph about blacks and the trade unions. In the American Federation of Labor, for example, blacks are admitted to most trade unions in theory. But, with a few exceptions, absolutely no efforts are made to draw blacks into the ranks of the trade unions. In the United States, we have a party that we can use as a means to exert pressure on the American Federation of Labor to admit black workers.¹¹

We must organise a specific campaign to achieve this. Just as our party branches make efforts to gather the radical forces in the trade unions, so too we can work – slowly but clearly and specifically – for the acceptance of blacks in the trade unions. If we carry out such a campaign in the countries in ques-

10. The reference here is probably to the Theses on the National and Colonial Questions adopted by the Second Congress. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 283–90. Theses on this topic were also adopted by the Fourth Congress, although not until its final session. See pp. 1180–90 below.

11. Stokes is referring to the Workers' Party of America, founded December 1921. US Communists first called for the building of a labour party in October 1922 and began practical work toward this goal in December.

tion, comrades, and if we find that it is a failure, then it will be our duty to unite the blacks in black trade unions. We will then bring together the white and black workers who are ready to form a united front and carry through our campaign for the acceptance [of black workers], especially in the terrain of industry, where black and white workers work side by side, striking together and suffering together the economic oppression of capitalism.

In this way we can hope to generate the unity, understanding, and adhesive power that will finally, through a common organisation, be able to bring these workers into the struggle. In my opinion, the Congress has obviously taken a great step in the correct direction by calling for a general conference of blacks. But our main task is to achieve the admission of blacks working in industry into the trade unions, where they will conduct the struggle on an equal basis with white workers for their joint liberation.

Comrades, I would like to ask those of you whose countries contain black and coloured workers to draft a programme based on the Communist International that provides you with instructions on the conduct of the struggle, particularly in the trade unions. I ask you not to permit these theses to remain a dead letter but to transform them into reality, and to make the black workers into an essential part of the Communist International.

Chair: The resolution has been distributed to you in translation and has been read out. We come to the vote on the resolution on the black question. (*Adopted unanimously*)

We come to the next point on the agenda. Comrade Varga will report on the decisions of the newly formed Agrarian Commission, which has made some changes in the resolution submitted to you.

Agrarian Question

Varga (Hungary): Comrades, as you know, after the agrarian debate, a new editorial commission was established, in order to carry out certain changes in the draft before us. The work of the editorial commission was guided above all by a letter of Comrade Lenin.¹² In this letter, which most comrades are familiar with – it was distributed in four languages – Comrade Lenin referred to the importance of avoiding even the slightest suggestion that there was any kind of real or merely apparent contradiction between the resolution of the Second Congress on the agrarian question and the present agrarian action

12. For the final text of the resolution, see pp. 954–9. For Lenin's letter, see Lenin 1960–71, 45, pp. 593–4.

programme.¹³ Such a contradiction would give our opponents an opportunity to say that we change our views every two years.

The editing commission has therefore compared very carefully the theses of the Second Congress with the action programme, changing all those passages which could give rise to the possibility of misunderstanding. The changes have already been distributed to you in German and French. I will now read them to you quite briefly.

The most important change is that of the subtitle, which now reads: *'Instructions on the application of the agrarian theses of the Second Congress'*.

Through this subtitle we wish to indicate that this agrarian action programme is closely tied to the Second Congress theses and is not something that contradicts them in any way or modifies them.

In Point 1 a sentence was added. At the end of the definition of what we understand by the term 'poor peasant', the words were added:

...or is exploited in any other way by the large landowners or by capitalism.

We were thinking here of categories that do not directly carry out wage labour but are subjected to exploitation under exceptionally onerous conditions by debt slavery, sharecropping, or tenant farming, and actually belong to the semi-proletariat, despite the appearance that they have independent economic operations.

In Point 5, Paragraph 2, which speaks of the movement in the colonial countries, a change was made to reflect that there are two types of such countries. One type is represented, for example, by Turkey, where the peasants at present are fighting together with the feudal lords against foreign imperialism. The other type, which is what we originally had in mind, is represented by India, where the feudal lords stand together with the imperialists in fighting the peasants.

In Turkey, the peasants' struggle against the feudal lords will begin when the national liberation struggle, the struggle against France and Britain, is over.

In India, the struggle against imperialism is simultaneously directed against the feudal landlords. We have divided this section into two parts, in order to stress this distinction.

In Point 6, where we speak of support by the Communist party for a strike of agricultural workers, we have added the words:

13. For the Second Congress theses, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 660–70.

...in contrast to the Social Democrats, who sabotage the struggle of the agricultural proletariat.

That has happened in many countries, above all in Germany, where Social Democracy took an official position against the strikes of rural workers on the grounds that agriculture is 'an essential industry'. We therefore want to point out the difference between the stance of the Communist party and that of the Social-Democratic party.

In Point 7, a passage was added that had been omitted by error in the type-written copy of the resolution. It reads:

...against exploitation by loan and usury capital, which reduces the poor peasants to debt slavery.

In Point 9, where it states that a bourgeois agrarian reform offers nothing to the purely proletarian elements, the words have been added: '...and semi-proletarian elements...' since certain semi-proletarian elements that have insufficient ownership of the means of production and receive land under bourgeois conditions invariably sink into debt servitude to the banks and cannot improve their standard of life.

In Point 10, we sought again to stress the unity of this action programme with the theses of the Second Congress. At the point where we had written, 'along the lines of the Second Congress theses', we introduced a rather lengthy quotation from these theses themselves. I believe there is no need to read out this quotation, since the delegations have it already.

Finally, at the end of the theses, in the last point, we modified the passage that says that the agrarian parties, landlords, and rich peasants strive to magnify the apparent or secondary conflicts of interest between the hired rural workers, on the one hand, and on the other the small peasants and those with tiny plots. We deleted the words 'or secondary'. We proceeded on the basis that what we have here are truly very secondary conflicts of interest that we can confidently assume to be non-existent. We do not want to give our opponents the opportunity to point out that the Communist International itself recognises in its action programme that there are conflicts, even if secondary, between true agricultural proletarians and peasants with small plots, we considered it appropriate to delete these two words.

I now believe, comrades, that we have in this way fully and finally removed any grounds for the concerns expressed by Comrade Lenin that the text of the action programme could conceivably be read or interpreted in such a way as to indicate any contradiction to the Second Congress theses.

There is a genuine difference between the Second Congress theses and the action programme. That consists of the reference in the action programme to

the need to link up with the daily needs not only of the agricultural proletariat in the narrow sense but also with all working layers in the countryside. As I already said in my first report, this difference flows from the present historical situation, from the necessity to proceed in the same manner as with the united-front tactic among industrial workers by linking up with the daily interests of wide layers of the agricultural working population. This difference is, of course, necessary, but it is not a difference of essence but of the changed historical conditions and our changed tactics and methods of reaching broad layers of the agricultural proletariat.

I believe, comrades, that following these editorial changes, the Congress can adopt this action programme in full confidence, and that each party, if it throws sufficient forces into this endeavour, working on this basis, can achieve great and real success. (*Applause*)

Chair: The final text of the agrarian action programme reads as follows:

Agrarian Action Programme

Instructions on the application of the agrarian theses of the Second Congress

The principles underlying our relationship to the working masses in the countryside have already been laid down in the Agrarian Theses of the Second Congress. In the present phase of the capitalist offensive, the agrarian question is achieving heightened importance. The Fourth Congress calls on every party to do its utmost to win the working masses in the countryside, and establishes the following guidelines for this work.

1.) The great mass of rural proletarians and poor peasants – who do not own sufficient land and are forced in part to carry out wage labour or are exploited in other ways by the large landowners or by capitalism – can only be definitively freed from their present servitude, and from the wars that are unavoidable under capitalism, by a proletarian revolution. Such a revolution will confiscate without compensation the holdings of the great landowners, including all their means of production, and place them at the disposal of working people. In place of the state of great landowners and capitalists, it will establish the soviet state of proletarians and working peasants, and, in this way, pave the way to communism.

2.) In the struggle against the state of the great landowners and capitalists, the working, poor peasants and small tenant farmers are the natural comrades in struggle of the agricultural and industrial proletariat. The unification of their revolutionary movement with the struggle of the urban and rural proletariat substantially aids the overthrow of the bourgeois state. While the urban

proletariat seizes political power and expropriates the bourgeoisie's means of production, the rural proletariat and poor peasants will seize the land, drive out the great landowners, and put an end to the rule of the great landowners and the bourgeoisie in the countryside.

3.) In order to win to the revolution not only the agricultural workers but also the poor peasants (those with tiny holdings, poor tenant farmers, and a part of the poor peasants), and to win the middle peasants to an attitude of benevolent neutrality, these latter layers must be freed from the influence and leadership of the large peasants and large landowners. They must reach an understanding that their interests coincide not with those of the large peasants but with those of the proletariat – that only the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the Communist party, can be their leader in struggle. Publishing a programme and developing propaganda is quite insufficient to speed up the process of freeing these poor peasants from the leadership of the large landowners and rich peasants. The Communist party must furnish proof through *consistent action* in the interests of these layers that it is truly the party of all the working and oppressed people.

4.) The Communist party therefore places itself at the head of every struggle that the working masses of the countryside carry out against the ruling classes. Linking up with the immediate demands that these layers pose within capitalist conditions, the Communist party unites the fragmented forces of rural working people, heightens their will to struggle, supports them in struggle by bringing to bear the strength of the industrial proletariat, and presents them with ever new goals leading in the direction of revolution. The struggle waged jointly with the industrial workers, plus the fact that industrial workers led by the Communist party are fighting for the interests of workers and poor peasants in the countryside, will convince them of two things. First, only the Communist party is honest with them. All other parties, both agrarian and Social-Democratic, merely deceive them, despite their demagogic words. Second, workers and poor peasants can achieve no definitive improvement in their conditions within capitalism.

5.) Our specific demands for the struggle must conform to the diverse forms of dependency and oppression suffered by [rural] workers, poor peasants, and middle peasants at the hands of large landowners and capitalists, as well as conforming to the interests of the different layers of the working population.

In some *colonial countries with oppressed native peasant populations*, the national liberation struggle will be waged by the entire population together, as for example in Turkey. In this case, the struggle of the oppressed peasantry against the landowners necessarily begins after the victory of the liberation

struggle. In other cases, the feudal landlords are in alliance with the imperialist bandits. In these countries, as for example in India, the social struggle of oppressed peasants merges with the national-liberation struggle.

In regions where *strong survivals of feudalism still exist in the countryside*, where the tasks of the bourgeois revolution have not been completed, where large landownership is still linked with feudal privileges, these privileges must be eliminated in the course of the struggle for the land, which, in these countries, has decisive importance.

6.) In all countries where there is a real agricultural proletariat, this layer is the most important factor in the revolutionary movement in the countryside. The Communist party supports, organises, and intensifies all struggles of the agricultural proletariat to better its condition, in contrast to the Social Democrats, who sabotage the struggle of this layer. In order to hasten the winning of the rural proletariat to revolution and to school it in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone can finally free it from exploitation, the Communist party supports the agricultural proletariat in its struggle for:

Raising its real wages, improvements in all working, living, and cultural conditions; full freedom of assembly, association, and for the trade-union movement; freedom to strike; freedom of the press; and so on – at least the same rights as those enjoyed by the industrial working class. Further, the eight-hour day as an average through the year, accident and old-age insurance, a ban on child labour, the development of vocational education, and so on – at least the extension of social legislation that exists for the proletariat.

7.) Until the moment when all peasants are definitively freed from subjugation by the social revolution, the Communist party will struggle against all forms of exploitation of the poor and middle peasantry by capitalism, against exploitation by loan- and usury-capital, which drives the poor peasants into debt slavery.

Against exploitation by *commercial and speculative capital*, which purchases the poor peasants' scanty productive surpluses at cheap prices and sells them at high prices to the urban proletariat. The Communist party calls for elimination of this parasitic speculative capital and for establishing direct ties between the cooperatives of small peasants and the consumers' cooperatives of the urban proletariat. It opposes exploitation by *industrial capital*, which utilises its monopoly position to keep the prices of industrial goods artificially high. We therefore struggle for the poor peasants to be supplied with the means of production (artificial fertiliser, machines, etc.) at cheap prices. The factory councils in industry should cooperate in this by controlling prices.

*Against exploitation through the private monopoly of the transport system, which is the case above all in the Anglo-Saxon countries.*¹⁴

Against exploitation through the capitalist state, which loads the taxes onto the poor peasants, to the benefit of the large landowners.

8.) In all the non-colonial countries, the heaviest exploitation inflicted on the land-hungry population results from the *large landowners' private ownership of the land*. The land-hungry peasants are forced, in order to fully utilise their capacity to labour and simply to survive, to work at starvation wages for the large landowners or to rent or buy the land at such high prices that part of the payment for working peasants is robbed from them and assured to the large landowners. Land scarcity forces the land-hungry peasants to accept modern forms of mediaeval subjugation. The Communist party therefore struggles for the confiscation of this property, including all equipment and possessions, and for handing it over to those who really work it. Until this has been achieved by the proletarian revolution, the Communist party supports the struggle of land-hungry peasants for:

- a.) The improvement in conditions of the sharecroppers (*métayers, mezzadri, Instleute*, and so on) by reducing the share received by the owner.
- b.) Reduction in rents for the poor tenant farmers, compensation at the end of the contract for any improvements carried out by the tenant, and so on. The trade unions of agricultural workers led by Communist party will support poor tenants in this struggle, for example, by refusing to work on fields extorted from poor tenants by the large landowners on the pretext of disputes over rents, etc.
- c.) Distribution of land, livestock, and means of production to all land-hungry peasants on conditions that enable them to do well. That means not allocating scraps of land that chain the owners to the earth and force them to seek work for starvation wages for neighbouring large landowners or rich peasants, but *distribution or expansion of landholdings to assure [the peasant] of a full subsistence*. In this regard, the interests of rural workers must receive special consideration.

9.) The ruling classes seek to utilise a bourgeois agrarian reform that distributes the land to the leading elements of the peasantry, in order to dampen the revolutionary character of the movement for land. They are succeeding in bringing about a temporary ebb in the revolutionary movement. But every

14. By 'Anglo-Saxon countries' is meant the economically advanced predominantly English-speaking countries, whose population included indigenous peoples as well as major components from European peoples other than the English and from other continents.

bourgeois agrarian reform hits up against the limits of capitalism. Land can only be distributed to people in return for compensation and then only to those who already possess the means of production necessary to work the land. A bourgeois agrarian reform offers nothing to the purely proletarian and semi-proletarian elements. A bourgeois land reform always imposes onerous conditions on those receiving land. It does not produce any real improvement in their conditions, but, rather, leads to debt slavery of those receiving land. This provides the basis for the revolutionary movement to go forward and for an intensification of the conflict between rich and poor peasants, as well as with the rural workers who receive no land and who are deprived of work through the dividing up of the great estates.

10.) Only a proletarian revolution can bring about a definitive liberation of all rural working people, confiscating the land of the large landowners plus equipment without compensation, but not touching the land of working peasants. It also *frees them from all requisitions, rents, mortgages, feudal restrictions*, etc. and supports the working peasants in every way possible.

The workers themselves will decide how the land confiscated from the large landowners will be worked. In this regard, the theses of the Second Congress read:

For the most advanced capitalist countries, the Communist International recognises it as correct to preserve most of the large-scale economic enterprises and operate them in the manner of Soviet enterprises in Russia.

It will also be appropriate to support the establishment of collective enterprises (agricultural cooperatives, communes)...

Preserving the large agricultural enterprises best protects the interests of the revolutionary layer of the rural population, the landless farm workers, and the semi-proletarian owners of small plots, who earn their livelihood mainly from wage labour in the large enterprises. In addition, nationalising the large enterprises gives the urban population, at least partially, independence from the peasantry regarding provisions.

On the other hand, where relics of the mediaeval order such as the *corvée* system lead to special forms of exploitation, marked by servitude or sharecropping or the like, it may sometimes be necessary to turn over to the peasants part of the land of the great estates.

In countries and regions where the large agricultural enterprise plays a relatively small role, but there are, on the other hand, a great many poor peasant owners striving for land, distributing the large landowners' land will prove to be the surest method of winning the peasantry for the revolution, while preserving the large enterprises has no particular significance with regard to supplying the cities...

Whatever the case, wherever large landholdings are distributed, the interests of the rural proletariat must be safeguarded above all.¹⁵

As for the organisation of our work, all Communists working in agriculture and in related industrial enterprises must join the rural workers' organisations. They must unify and lead the revolutionary forces within these organisations, with the goal of transforming them into tools for revolution. Where no trade unions exist, Communists must lead in their creation. In the yellow, fascist, and Christian counter-revolutionary organisations, they must carry out tenacious educational work, with the goal of breaking up these counter-revolutionary associations. In the large estates, estate councils of the workers should be formed in order to obstruct the expansion of extensive agriculture. Communists must call on the industrial proletariat to support the struggles of rural workers, and in return integrate rural workers into the industrial factory-council movement.

Given the tremendous importance of poor peasants for the revolutionary movement, it is essential that Communists enter *the poor-peasants' organisations* (producers', consumers', and credit cooperatives), and win them to revolution, in order to eliminate the apparent clash of interests between wage workers and land-hungry peasants, a clash artificially magnified by the landlords and rich peasants. Communists must establish close links organisationally and in action between these cooperatives and their counterparts among the rural and urban proletariat.

Only the unification of all revolutionary forces in the city and countryside can make it possible to mount successful resistance against the capitalist offensive and, moving from defence to the attack, to achieve final victory.

Chair: We now come to the vote on the proposed agrarian action programme. If there are no objections, I will take the vote on the resolution including the amendments read out by Comrade Varga.

I see no objections. We will therefore take the vote. (*The vote is taken.*) The resolution with the changes proposed by Comrade Varga is *adopted*.

Feliks Kon (Poland): Comrades, at the outset of this congress, we adopted an appeal for those held in capitalist jails.¹⁶ Since then a month has passed, during which we have received news of new arrests in almost every country. In the United States, Poland, Yugoslavia, Japan – everywhere our comrades and working-class leaders committed to and engaged in the struggle against capitalism have been thrown in jail. It is high time to found a political Red

15. Translated from Comintern 1921e, pp. 775–6.

16. See pp. 80–2.

Cross in all of these countries. The Association of Old Bolsheviks of Russia therefore makes a motion that we initiate here the founding of this political Red Cross, with the specification that it is to be founded in every country and by all Communist parties.¹⁷

Comrades, we must give our imprisoned comrades not only material but also moral support. What is happening in the prisons must be published in all Communist newspapers, so that the entire working class is aware of how capitalism combats the working class. On behalf of the Association of Old Bolsheviks, I ask for the adoption of a resolution, which I will now read out.

International Workers' Aid¹⁸

The capitalist offensive is increasing the number of Communists and non-party workers who have taken part in the struggle against capitalism and who are languishing in jail in all the bourgeois countries.

The Fourth Congress instructs all Communist parties to create an organisation that provides the imprisoned victims of capitalism with material and moral assistance, and greets the initiative of the Association of Old Bolsheviks, which is in the process of creating an international association of such organisations. (*Applause*)¹⁹

17. Old Bolsheviks were party members who had joined the party before October 1917; in 1922, they numbered about forty-four thousand. The Association of Old Bolsheviks was formed in February 1922 as a branch of the Institute of Party History. It was dissolved in August 1935, on the eve of the Moscow frame-up trials, during which most of the prominent Old Bolsheviks perished.

18. Committees for Red Aid were formed in Germany, early in 1921, to aid political prisoners in that country. International Red Aid (Russian acronym: MOPR) was founded on 30 November 1922, the day of this session, with Julian Marchlewski as chair and Clara Zetkin as vice-chair. Heinz Sommer records that in 1932 it claimed 13.8 million members, including 8.2 million outside the Soviet Union. Sommer 2008, pp. 107–9, 112.

19. This appeal, taken from the German text of the proceedings, is not found in the collection of congress resolutions published in 1923. In its place is the following resolution (Comintern 1923g, p. 111)

Resolution on Assistance for Vanguard Fighters of the Communist Movement

The Comintern recognises the need to organise international material assistance for vanguard fighters for communism – whether or not they belong to the party – who are held prisoner by the reactionary governments of various countries. This initiative is placed on the agenda by the sympathy of the broad masses for the cause of struggling to eliminate the old, outlived forms of social life and replacing them by new forms that represent the beginning of communism. The Comintern therefore addresses the following appeal to all Communist parties:

- 1.) Take the initiative – or support it, if it has already been taken – to organise material and moral assistance to vanguard fighters for the cause of communism

Chair: We will now vote on the resolution just read by Comrade Kon. Is anyone against adoption of the resolution? That is not the case. The resolution is adopted.

Marchlewski (Poland): Comrades, the Presidium has received a letter from some comrades who have previously been members of the Poale Zion party.²⁰ The comrades inform us that differences of opinion in this party have led to a sharp struggle, and that the comrades in question have decided to join the Communist party. I want to say in advance that the Executive has held negotiations on several occasions with the Poale Zion party, which has recently termed itself a Communist organisation, with the goal of bringing about the entry of this party, which also uses the name International Communist League of Jewish Workers, into the International. All these efforts have failed because of the nationalist currents in this organisation.

The comrades now inform us that a conference has taken place that was marked by a total breach. The comrades have quit Poale Zion and wish to join the Communist party. They ask the International to facilitate their entry into the Communist parties. We are concerned here in the main with comrades who work among the Yiddish-speaking proletariat in Russia, Poland, and perhaps in some East-European countries.

We propose that the question of dealing with the Poale Zion issues be referred to the Executive.

Chair: Is there any opposition? There is not. The referral is adopted.

Adjournment: 3:00 p.m.

who are locked in prison, forced into exile, or for any reason excluded against their will from our fighting ranks.

- 2.) The Communists of Soviet Russia must take a very special initiative here. Such organisations to support victims of political struggle for communism can take on large scope as measures toward uniting internationally all those who sympathise with the cause of communism.

20. Poale Zion [Workers of Zion], founded in the early 1900s, was an international movement that attempted to combine the ideas of socialism with Zionism. A left wing developed in 1919–20 that supported the Russian Revolution and Communist International. The Jewish CP–Poale Zion functioned as a legal political party in the Soviet Union until 1928.

Session 28 – Friday, 1 December 1922

France

The French question.

Speaker: Trotsky

Convened: 1 p.m.

Chairperson: Kolarov

Trotsky (*Greeted with applause*): We now reach an extremely important and difficult point on our agenda, that of our French party.

The Communist Party of France is now undergoing a very severe crisis. Curiously, this crisis in the Party coincides with that of the French bourgeoisie and its state.

I say this is curious because, in general, crises of bourgeois organisms create favourable conditions for the revolutionary party's development. The revolutionary party normally draws strength from the crisis of bourgeois society.

The coincidence of these two crises leads me to conclude that the French Party has not yet achieved the absolute independence and freedom in action and organisation from capitalist society that it needs in order to utilise the crisis of this society freely and fully. We will examine this more fully later on.

What is the nature of this crisis, whose existence is disputed by no one?

References have been made to a stagnation and even a decline in recruitment. The circulation of our newspapers, press statements, and above all of *L'Humanité* are declining. The organisation's internal life is stagnating.

These are the most striking, obvious, and undeniable indications.

But more is involved here. A system of factions has taken root inside the Party. The factional struggle and the harsh, sometimes even personal polemics are also undeniable expressions of a deep crisis of the party organism.

These outward indications are not of decisive importance for the development of our French Party.

The decline in recruitment does not represent any great danger, provided it is only temporary and only a reflection of the fact that, initially, our party attracted forces that did not belong with us in terms of either their mentality or their political positions, and that the Party is distancing itself from these forces in order to heighten and stabilise its Communist unity and cohesion. Even the decline in circulation of the press does not represent a danger. This could well be only a passing phenomenon brought about by a shift in the political situation.

It is an undeniable fact, which we have observed in the history of our different parties, that the path of our development is never entirely straight; rather, there is an alternation of ebb and flow. During a period of upsurge, the party must develop large-scale external activity in order to attract the masses, while, during a period of ebb, it must focus more on itself and turn into itself, developing its organisation, working out its ideas more precisely, and preparing itself for the inevitable struggles to come.

Much more significant are the struggles among factions and their predominance.

What causes factions? Who is responsible for the dominance of factions?

It is possible to give an answer that is mainly descriptive in character, an answer encountered rather often in the press of our French party. I will quote a comrade surely well known to you, Comrade Frossard, who wrote an article in *L'Humanité* on 16 July under the title, 'So this will never end'. I will quote a few sentences:

We are so Byzantine! We are genuine hair-splitters! We are such pathetic nit-pickers! We can only have pity on the true heroes who read what we write.

That is a very dismal picture. However, in these sentences we find only an external description of the Party's condition. Why is it that we seem so Byzantine? Why are we such wretched nit-pickers and hair-splitters? What is the underlying basis for these assertions? This question absolutely demands an answer. And, from time to time, it is asked where these polemics, both general and personal, are coming from.

Comrades belonging to the same tendency as our Comrade Frossard often single out the Left as the driving force of these polemics and also of the system

of factions. Comrades who themselves belong to factions often denounce the factional system as entirely artificial, as something that is not at all based on principles and does not relate to political goals. I would like to quote from an article by Daniel Renoult that appeared in *L'Humanité* in September.

As was said by my friend Duret – and no one ever answered him on this point – a serious and correct differentiation can come about only in action and through action.

Thus, we see the factions attacking each other furiously, and that the leaders of both these factions declare these groupings to have been formed artificially, and that a genuine differentiation in the Party can only be established by action – that is, action in the future. I do not believe that such an analysis is correct.

Above all, we must ask how it is that comrades who reject the ideological and political shape of these factions belong to one of the three largest factions in the Party.

We must also ask whether it is correct to argue that we can expect activity to bring about a differentiation on a correct basis.

If we were speaking here only of revolutionary activity, that is, the struggle for the seizure of power by the working class, then we would have been wrong to separate off from the Dissidents, because they claimed that the split was driven through by a will coming from outside rather than by the internal needs of the party.¹

But the entire life of the Party must express a series of actions that form a chain, and this chain must lead to the greatest action of all, the conquest of power by the proletariat.

Now we hear that the groupings that took shape are not definitive. We are in agreement, and I believe that we will never put in question the correctness of such an assertion.

I believe that there will always be a differentiation into tendencies, and that, in the moment of decisive revolutionary action, the overwhelming majority of members of all factions will meet together in a common framework. That is quite correct. But the assertion that the tendencies existing today in mutual conflict are merely an artificial division is in fact inapplicable to the French Party, which consists entirely of tendencies and has no existence apart from its tendencies. There must be a convincing reason for their existence and their struggles.

1. The Tours Congress of the French SP in December 1920 voted by a seventy-five per cent majority to affiliate to the Comintern; the minority (Dissidents) then split away.

It is said that differentiation can be produced only through activity. But it was precisely through activity that the International sought for a year and a half to bring about a reconstitution of the groupings in the French Party. In order to promote activity of this type, the International proposed two approaches, both of which lead to the same goal: activity in the trade unions, both within the unions themselves and through the united front.

However, in order to conduct a campaign, one must have a more-or-less precise conception of it and also enjoy the agreement of the majority of the party. When it was proposed to reorganise the Party through actions, this encountered a sharp rebuff. Among the French organisations that are the most important and largest – even if considerably smaller than before – there was opposition to methodical and organised party work, as well as to activity using the united front slogan.

It has now become a banal truism that, in a country where we do not enjoy the confidence of the immense majority of the working class, where the proletariat is split into different factions on both trade-union and party levels, where the members of these factions both in the trade unions and in the Party represent only an extremely small portion of the working class – that, given all these factors, it is impossible to develop our activity in any way other than under the slogan of the united front. When such a possibility for action is rejected – an action that has not been dreamed up but arises from necessity itself, one is, in effect, rejecting action itself. And if, after this, one complains about the existence of tendencies, one is only increasing the quantity of impermissible contradictions.

As you know, comrades, during the past year, there was an ongoing struggle – there is no other word for it – between the International and the French Party – that is, its majority, which, in this case, was represented by two currents, the Centre and the Renoult current.

We wanted to explain to the French Party why the united front was necessary. In France, those arguing against the International in this important question have raised the argument that through the united front, the International has forced the French Party to return to the policy of ‘civil peace’ and Millerandism.² Comrade Zinoviev reminded us of this argument yesterday in the commission that you have established to deal with the French question. This indicates just how far misunderstandings have developed on a question that offers a powerful tool to develop the work of the French Party.

2. Civil peace or ‘union sacrée’ was the name given to the alliance of the majority SP and union leaderships with the French capitalist class during the World War. One of the earlier expressions of such a class-collaborationist approach was the acceptance by socialists of ministerial posts in the capitalist government, a practice pioneered by Alexandre Millerand in 1899.

The French bourgeois press has now seized on this argument. That is punishment for the errors committed in this polemic. It is punishment for you so that you will see how the enemy seizes on erroneous formulations, sharpens them, and throws them into the political marketplace. Here is what we read in *Le Temps*:

It has not been said that this humiliating obedience will be sufficient to appease Moscow's anger, for it is far from easy to follow the spirit and letter of the International's policies. They are boundlessly changeable, according to the momentary interests of the Soviet government and according to the circumstances that this government must take into account in order to try to conceal the complete failure of communism.

It was not *Le Temps* that discovered this formulation. They borrowed it from a representative of one of the tendencies of our party. *Le Temps* just refined it and turned it against the Party as a whole.

Only a few days ago, Frossard, who also fought against the united front, turned to the reformists with a proposal for action on the basis of this policy.

The response of the Dissidents contains the entire terminology that we know so well, that we have already read in the press of our party, and that has now been taken up by our enemies.

Even more serious, however, is the fact that the French Party delayed more than a year, permitting the Dissidents to seize on the idea of the united front. Now it is not our French party that appears before the French proletariat as the originator of this proposal, but the Dissidents, who have begun to compete with us in this arena. It is enough to read the articles in *Le Populaire* on the restoration of trade-union unity.³

The factional system was therefore not set up artificially and accidentally under the influence of some external will. It is based on currents that result from actions, or the absence of actions, which themselves do not represent accidental developments in the French Party.

As for the question of who is responsible for this policy, I must reply that responsibility lies not with the Left but – perhaps unfortunately – with the International as a whole. Our French comrades could not carry out the action because they did not want to accept the preconditions for this action. The task is to remove the ideological barriers for action through polemics. That is why the International itself took the initiative for such a polemic.

In order to justify the guidelines that we have followed with regard to the French Party during the last two years, I located a speech that I gave on the

3. *Le Populaire*, edited by Léon Blum, was the official publication of the 'Dissidents', that is, the French SP.

French question in June 1921 at a meeting of the Expanded Executive – that is, one and a half years ago.⁴

I must admit I was struck by the fact that we have not made a step forward since that time.

I would like to recall a few important passages in this speech:

People do not see the gulf that our press and our speeches must create between the Communist Party and the entirety of bourgeois society. The gulf is not visible. Workers must now come and ask you, 'But what are you up to? Why do you not speak in a Communist language? With you everything is vague, no more distinct than the obscurity of the Longuet people, with which it is actually identical.'⁵

I must add that there is another reality here that must be recognised and correctly evaluated: namely that the conduct of the Party toward the syndicalists is entirely wrong.

And further:

We must therefore tell the Communist Party of France cordially but forcefully: We do not demand that you undertake revolutionary actions without taking into account whether the conditions are favourable or not. We demand of you only that you break once and for all with your former conduct, your former connections, your former relationship to capitalist society and its institutions – and that you do so not merely in form but through your deeds, your ideas, your feelings, and your conduct as a whole.

Do not these words sound as if spoken now, when we discussed freemasonry?⁶ Continuing:

We demand of you only that you give expression to your revolutionary will everywhere – in your press, in parliament, in the trade unions – and ultimately, in its highest expression, on the Paris barricades.

That is how we presented the matter to the Executive Committee. My voice was only one voice in the Executive, which, in this matter, was completely unanimous. And that was one and a half years ago. We fought against a spirit of conservatism, which represented the past, on behalf of a revolutionary spirit, which was the spirit of the future. I cannot say that our efforts were entirely without success. Something changed in the Party. The present

4. An abridged version of this speech was published in the daily *Moscou/Moscow*, and in Comintern 1921d. Its context is also discussed by Broué in Trotsky 1967, p. 100.

5. 'Longuet people' refers to the Socialist Party leadership.

6. For Trotsky's comments on the freemasonry discussion, see pp. 994–8.

crisis, which is certainly very unpleasant, dealt a deadly blow to the Party's conservatism.

Obviously, if the Party does not muster up the necessary energy to overcome this crisis, that could result in a defeat for the entire revolutionary development of the French proletariat. But there is no reason at all to form a pessimistic opinion of the opportunities before the French Party. I repeat: the nature of the crisis results both from the polemic and from the struggle that the International has waged against conservatism, and the sharpness of this crisis and its entire character flow from the fact that conservatism has remained so strong – in fact, too strong.

After the Tours Congress, we inherited many customs and habits that resist being displaced by those of Communist action. That is what caused the rise of factionalism, which signifies simply the struggle of the future against the past, or the intermediary tendency, which searches for an orientation.

Reference was often made to the many factors in the Party itself that obstruct its more rapid development. Reference was made to French tradition and to the individualism of the French workers. However, if the Party wishes to be a party of struggle, it must not merely adopt the point of view of a historian, who steps aside from the Party's internal life and merely indicates the causes obstructing its development.

I would like to borrow an excellent argument from our comrade Vaillant-Couturier. He said: 'You claim that you have to deal with workers who are entirely imbued with the spirit of individualism, and that this individualist spirit obstructs the organisation of a revolutionary party. But did capitalist society come to a halt in the War when faced with French individualism? Did this individualism pose a barrier for the social patriots? Not at all. On the contrary, utilising the police and the regular army, but, above all, utilising public opinion, they brought to bear increasing pressure on the so-called individualism of the French worker, sufficient to bring him into the trenches, where he stayed for four and a half years.'

When it served bourgeois interests, they knew how to conquer this individualism. Should this individualism really become so invincible the moment it is a matter of conquering it in the interests of the proletariat?

Thus we must reject this argument. Of course, there is a strongly developed individualist side to every worker. It can certainly be put down to French history that this individualism is perhaps more strongly developed among French workers than among other ones.

But the French worker also has a generous side. We must understand how to appeal to this generosity by opening up for him the perspectives of an action to which he can devote his entire commitment, his entire selflessness.

You will see that he will sacrifice not only his material interests but his life, the moment that the struggle demands it.

But we must be capable of doing this. When I hear a Communist say that everything is in vain because the workers are so individualistic, I must respond that such a statement is likely to awaken mistrust of the Party, or of a certain tendency within it, by demonstrating its impotence.

The trade-union question

We have spoken much about the trade-union question in the course of the Congress and have encountered the same obstacles with the Centre and Renoult tendencies that were reflected in the proceedings of the Paris Congress.⁷

I would like to quote some statements by Comrade Jacob, who is part of the trade-union delegation. His speech at the Paris Congress is extremely characteristic and important and – I say this in friendship – quite wrong, entirely and dangerously wrong.

Comrade Jacob is a member of the Party and also a leading member of a trade union. He addresses the role that the Party should play in the workers' movement as follows:

The Party must not interfere in the activity of the trade unions. However, there are certain passages in the Central Committee resolution that can only obstruct this activity. Manuilsky is misinformed regarding the Le Havre strike. Frossard and Lopez said that the Communist Party had not carried out its duty in the strike.⁸ We, by contrast, say that the Party had absolutely no role to play there.

This is an extremely dangerous statement. It could perhaps be said that this is simply a fit of bad temper. Possibly! That does not alter the fact that it is highly characteristic of the Party's entire mentality. It is party members – not sympathetic syndicalists like Monmousseau or Monatte – it is party members

7. The Paris Congress of the French CP (15–20 October 1922) ended in deadlock and disorder. The Centre current rejected the ECCI representative's proposal for a parity leadership and took the leadership alone, based on a delegate vote of 1,698 to 1,516, with 814 abstentions. The Left appealed to the World Congress, and the Centre agreed to continue the discussion in Moscow.

8. The name Lopez does not appear in available records of activists in the French Communist movement. Jacob may be referring to José López y López, a leader of the Spanish Communist youth movement. For the June–October 1922 strike movement in Le Havre, see p. 581, n. 15.

who are telling the Party, 'You have no business getting involved in events like the strike in Le Havre.'

You know that in the Le Havre strike, the local mayor – Meyer, a bourgeois radical – and the since-deceased parliamentary deputy Siegfried intervened. Also Poincaré intervened, using rifles. That is simply politics. Only one party did not intervene as such in this strike.

Certainly, the Party did a great deal for the strikers. It collected daily donations amounting to a great deal of money; many articles were written. But, as an organisation, that can provide advice; that can take a stand, without in any way interfering with the activity of the trade unions; that can show its political face to the workers and say, 'We are here to help you. What do you ask of us? We are prepared to do it!' – in this sense, the Party as such did nothing for the strike in Le Havre.

Some local trade unionists – I have heard this from comrades present here – said: 'Don't compromise us in the eyes of the government, which will claim that we are carrying out a Communist strike, perhaps even on the orders of Moscow.'

On hearing that, the Party slunk away.

I well understand that there can be circumstances during a strike when the Party may make concessions to backward attitudes among the masses or their local representatives. In that case, *L'Humanité* would have to write: 'We have offered our services to the leaders of the Le Havre strike, and they replied, "We are in touch with Meyer and Siegfried; do not compromise us!" But we would say to them: Watch out! That is a trap! You are dealing with bourgeois professional politicians, who will betray you and sell you out. There is only one party that will march with you in a moment of intense struggle – the Communist Party!'

If you had spoken these words from the first days of the Le Havre strike or during its development, before the tragic events of 28 August,⁹ before the slaughter, your authority now would be much greater, because people would then know that you had foreseen the way events would develop.

But no. We were obedient. Comrade Frossard said, 'The Party cannot undertake anything in this arena.' And a Communist working in the trade unions explains, 'The Party has no role to play there.'

This is a very sad and very dangerous situation. From here, it is only one step to our Comrade Ernest Lafont, who, in his speech to the Paris Congress, took inspiration from 'Lagardellism'. You are probably familiar with this

9. Trotsky is referring to the killing of strikers in Le Havre on 26 August 1922 and the attempted general strike three days later.

‘Lagardellism’ – it is not syndicalism but a mishmash of various ideological bits and shavings of syndicalism, mixed in with political demagoguery. And Ernest Lafont says: ‘The trade unions are a second-rate thing, and I have been created for such second-rate things.’

Lagardelle was a great philosopher. He is now in the employ of capitalist organisations. The Party’s thoroughly opportunist, reformist, and non-revolutionary course is being pursued by reference to philosophical teachings that the revolution should be carried out outside the Party. And Ernest Lafont comes up with a very apt formulation, saying: What business do we have, as lawyers, to get mixed up in trade-union matters?

And Comrade Jacob, who is neither a lawyer nor a Lagardellist, but, rather, a good Communist and a good syndicalist worker, says, ‘Yes, the Party has no role to play there.’

This alignment is particularly dangerous.

I also find something of this in the declaration that my friend Monatte has signed together with comrades Louzon, Chambelland, and others.¹⁰

It is understandable that Monatte, who does not belong to the Party, says, ‘We are revolutionary syndicalists, that is, we recognise that in the revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the proletariat, it is the trade union that plays the central role.’

Such a declaration appeared just a short while ago, just after the Paris Congress, in the newspaper *Lutte des classes* [*Class Struggle*], edited by Comrade Rosmer. It was printed with a comment from the editors.

I understand such claims coming from Monatte, who remains outside the Party – although he is wrong on this – but I do not understand Louzon, or Chambelland, or Clavel, or Orlianges, who belong to the Party and are also members of the CGTU Executive Commission.

What does it mean to say, ‘We recognise that the trade union plays the main role in the revolutionary struggle for liberation’? Which trade union? There are various ones in France. Is this a reference to the trade union of the Jouhaux people?¹¹ Certainly not. Or to the trade union of our Comrade Monmousseau? Possibly. But you want to bring about a unification, a fusion of the two unions [CGTU and CGT]. At the moment, Monmousseau is general secretary of the CGTU, but, not long ago, the CGTU administrative committee was in the hands of the originators of the Pact: Besnard, Verdier, and the like.¹²

10. Regarding the declaration by Monatte et al., see p. 549, n. 17.

11. Léon Jouhaux was general secretary of the CGT, which had forced out its revolutionary wing in 1921.

12. Besnard and Verdier were among the CGT and subsequently CGTU activists close to anarchism who in February 1921 signed a secret pact aiming to secure election

Can the proletariat advance to the revolution and carry it out, under their leadership? Do you seriously believe that the trade unions deserve the role of leading the working class? Do you really believe that the best workers' organisation of the world is a trade union led by reformists, confusionists, and those Communists who do not want to submit to the discipline and theory of their party? Or is it, as we maintain, a trade union imbued with Communist ideas? You utilise a syndicalist formula, but you rob it of its revolutionary and ideological content, in order to declare that the trade union is the most important thing in the world.

Of course, if it were a matter of a trade union under the leadership of the best, most organised, and conscious forces of the working class, one inspired by the spirit of that theory, one defending the interests of revolutionary struggle, that would be an outstanding trade union. There is no union of this type, at least, not in France. It must still be created. What means should be employed? The collaboration of comrades who do not belong to the Party with others who do belong to it. We must organise the best forces of the working class, by disseminating a Communist ideology among them and ensuring that it penetrates the spirit of all workers' organisations.

You allow into the trade unions workers who are outside the Party, who are not revolutionary, and who retain backward prejudices, such as the Catholic workers, for example. You are forced to do this, because if the trade unions included only Communists and those syndicalists who are held back by their prejudices from joining the Party, if the unions included only such forces, then they would have no value, because they would simply reproduce the Party.

But it would be even worse than that, because the Party is homogenous, or at least should be more homogenous than unions containing Communists who do not submit to party discipline and syndicalists who belong to no party and are afraid of the Party, even though they have a need to analyse their ideas and methods and do not have a party in which they could do this.

If the unions were constituted in this fashion, they would be nothing but a poor copy of the political party.

The significance of trade unions is that they consist, or should consist, of forces that are not yet subject to the Party's influence. But it is obvious that there are various layers in the unions: layers that are fully conscious, layers that have a degree of class consciousness but also retain a residue of prejudices, and layers still seeking to develop revolutionary consciousness.

Who in this situation is to play the leading role?

of their candidates to the leadership of the union confederation and the revolutionary-syndicalist association within it.

We must not forget the role of the 'Pact'. It must stand as an example for every single French worker, even for the most backward and undeveloped. We must explain to them the fact that, because of the Party's weakness in the trade-union field, some anarchist-inclined or outright anarchist forces made a secret 'pact' to take over the leadership of the movement.

The trade unions generate within their ranks a layer, their best forces, who feel the need for guidance by ideas. These ideas cannot arise out of nothing. They do not fall from the sky. There must be a continuity present in these ideas, confirmed by experience, analysed and criticised, and this work must be carried out by the Party.

The great objection that is raised against us is our demand that trade unions be subordinated to the Party.

Yes, it is true that we want to subordinate the consciousness of the working class to revolutionary ideas. That is what we strive for. It would be stupid indeed to claim that we can function on the basis of a pressure coming from the outside, which does not arise from the free will of the workers themselves, or because the Party controls means of pressuring the unions that are stronger, or at least should be stronger, than it is. Reaction has always claimed, in every country, that the Party and the unions seek to subject the working class to their will.

Let us consider the most reactionary and perfidious publications in France, in Germany – everywhere, even in the United States. Everywhere, we find the same claims. According to them, the workers' organisations impose actions on the working class against its will, actions that they consider necessary and that, as a result of their manoeuvres, lead to the subjugation of the working class to these organisations.

And how do you answer this? You explain, 'No. We offer our services to the working class, we win its trust. The advanced sector of the working class joins the trade unions; the broad masses support them in struggle and gradually join them as well.'¹³

Is the Party not in the very same situation? We want to win the trust of the workers organised in trade unions. Is it not our right, our duty, to appear before the workers in every action, especially the challenging ones, as the most courageous supporters of these actions, in order to spur them on, give them courage, taking the most difficult assignments that carry the greatest dan-

13. This description of the unions is based on the 'open-shop' pattern then common in France and many other European countries, in which unions included only those workers at an organised workplace who chose to join. Factory councils, by contrast, were chosen in votes open to all workers.

gers, in order to demonstrate that Communists are always and everywhere the most loyal forces in the revolutionary struggle?

Is that not our duty and our right?

In this regard, read the article by Comrade Soutif in the last or next-to-last issue of *Bulletin communiste*, that is, after the Paris Congress. In France, they have a special way of criticising the International. They are obedient to the International, but, at the same time, they strike out with a sharp jab to their left, especially on the issues where the Left loyally presents the ideas of the International. Soutif says: 'This resolution' – it was Rosmer's resolution, and I find it excellent – 'this resolution announces that the Communist Party "believes itself to be best placed to express the strivings of the working class and to secure its liberation"'. The majority of the Central Committee of course rejected this motion.'¹⁴

The Central Committee of a party that claims it is the best servant of the working class has 'of course' to reject such a statement. And that is written in a publication of our party by a member of the Central Committee, who attacks the Left for having blundered into the assertion that our party is best capable of serving the working class.

All this is simply beyond comprehension. When we expose ourselves, in our publications, to such attacks by members of our central committee, how can we possibly then win the trust of the working class? Can we tolerate this for weeks on end? A living party that seeks to win the trust of the working class would have to immediately teach the author of this article the ABCs of communism.

That is not the first article of this kind. It is one in a long series of articles that we have taken up in our letters, our discussions, and our telegrams.

[*The Le Havre strike*]¹⁵

We see the results in the Le Havre strike and especially in the great general protest strike toward the end of the Le Havre strike, after the slaughter of [Saturday] 26 August.¹⁶

All of you are familiar with these events. The Le Havre strike lasted 110 days. It ended in a slaughter. Four workers were murdered and many wounded. I will now show you a few documents that form part of the history of the French workers' movement. They are quotations from *L'Humanité*. First we

14. See 'Mise au point nécessaire', in *Bulletin communiste*, 46 (16 November 1922).

15. Bracketed subheads have been supplied by the editor; other subheads are taken from the German text.

16. Here Trotsky erroneously gave the date of the shooting as Monday, 28 August, when the CGTU made its call for general strike.

have the call of the CGTU and its Seine union federation, which appeared in *L'Humanité* on Monday. This informed the working class of the murders in Le Havre, and it is followed by a postscript: 'Tuesday (that is, the following day), twenty-four-hour general strike'. And then, added to that, 'Meanwhile, the construction workers' union has decided on a general strike today.' That is, already on Monday!

As our Comrade Jacob told us, our party had nothing to do with the strike in Le Havre. It was, he said, an economic question. Four workers were killed – that was 'economics' – and many workers were wounded in a purely trade-union matter. And, now, economic organisations deal with the situation, beginning with the construction workers' union, acting 'meanwhile', that is, without waiting, and thus sabotaging the action. They launched a strike that they proclaimed as a general strike.

And what did the CGTU do? It followed the construction workers' union. Why? Because they could not let their place be taken by the anarchists, who would claim that they are better revolutionaries than the others and would say: 'We have proclaimed the general strike, and the syndicalists and semi-Communists of the CGTU have sabotaged our great action' – which, in fact, was no action at all but at that moment was just the issuance of a slogan.

The CGTU went along with this great error. And what did the Party do? It followed the CGTU. One error leads to another. How did it start? With a few young anarchists, who are probably really not so much to blame. They went to the headquarters of their organisation and said, 'Something must be done'. And they found there a comrade who gave them an answer: 'But, of course, something must be done. We will proclaim a general strike.'

And the CGTU goes along with this great error. The Party, which did hardly anything about the Le Havre strike; the Party which, in this great contest between the Le Havre workers and bourgeois society as a whole, remained a totally irrelevant entity – what did the Party do? It followed the lead of the CGTU. What a chain of errors!

And the result? A disaster. A total fiasco. Why? Because the outcome was predetermined, decided in advance. The newspaper clippings that I read for you here were supposed to mobilise the working class of France in a single day – from Monday to Tuesday. Is that possible?

Even in a country like here in Russia, where we have possession of the telegraph network, radio-telegraphy, where the Party is strong and the trade unions work in full agreement with it, where our party and our unions are not confronted by any other party or unions, this would be impossible.

Thus, for example, before the demonstration in honour of the Fourth World Congress, it was first necessary to explain to the workers exactly what the

Fourth World Congress is. Among the soldiers are many who marched past you on 7 November with no little enthusiasm. Where did this enthusiasm come from? Among them are peasant youths whose grasp of geography is not strong and who do not know what is happening in France and outside Russia. We had to explain to them the meaning of the Fourth World Congress. And what were we asking them to do? Simply that they march past the delegates from abroad and offer them a fraternal greeting.

But you, in asking that the French working class carry out a general strike, you had to explain what exactly was happening in Le Havre and not content yourself with the simple slogan, 'government of murderers'.

In France, such slogans are formulated much more readily than in any other country. They are experts at it. What was necessary was to explain to every single working man and woman, the agricultural workers, the peasant men and women, what had happened in Le Havre. In Le Havre, they killed four workers, after having killed a million and a half in the War. It was necessary to display, where possible, photographs of the dead workers, and photographs of their daughters and sons. Correspondents had to be sent there who understand such questions and the lives of the workers, comrades capable of going to the families of the dead workers, sharing their anguish, and explaining the entire appalling story to the working class.

It was necessary to mobilise thousands of the best Communists and revolutionary syndicalists, in Paris and across the country – to do this together with the CGTU, and send them everywhere, not just in every corner of Paris but across the entire country, in the cities and countryside, in order to carry out intensive propaganda. At the same time, leaflets and appeals had to be printed up with three or four million copies, in order to report on the events to the working class, explaining that we cannot let this crime pass without protest.

Does doing this imply immediately launching a 24-hour general strike? Not at all. The entire working class must be set in motion through intensive propaganda, which consists simply of explaining what happened. First, everything must be concisely explained and told to the working class. That is the first precondition.

Why was this not done? Because it was feared that the feeling of outrage in the working class would not last three, four, or five days. This absolute mistrust is bureaucratic – mistrust by our revolutionary syndicalists and Communists toward the working class. (*Applause*)

The facts have to be related and explained to the working class. Our comrades of Pas-de-Calais went into the mines and did not learn until later that they were supposed to strike. Naturally, the action was crippled and

compromised from the start. I really do wonder if anyone who deliberately wanted to compromise it could have acted differently.

And, in the process, the Dissidents, the reformists, the Jouhaux people were saved. Of course, not forever. Why was that? Very simple, comrades. When the bourgeoisie in France killed four workers, did it not place its friends, the Dissidents and reformists, in an extremely difficult situation? They are still able to deceive working people with reforms, with the idea of a National Bloc, with Jouhaux's participation in bourgeois meetings to better the lot of the worker. That is why the slaughter in Le Havre represented for our opponents an almost fatal blow.

What ought to have been done? Every issue of *L'Humanité*, for a week or two, all possible propaganda materials, all appropriate agitational material should have been utilised to ask the reformist CGT and the Dissidents, 'What do you propose? This is not a matter of the dictatorship of the proletariat; that is not what we are asking, although we are its most loyal supporters. What do you propose doing against the bourgeoisie that has just killed four workers? What do you propose doing against the government, against Poincaré?'

That is the question that should have been repeated day after day, by the party and trade-union propagandists and agitators at every street corner, in every corner of the country, in every village where a working man or woman is to be found, during the course of one or two weeks. That would really have been a great experience for the workers' movement. Instead of that, the whole affair was a shambles. This crazy appeal was published for an immediate strike. A general strike must not be called in this way on twenty-four-hours notice, because that gives the Dissidents and reformists a pretext to draw back and say: 'We will not take part in such a risky undertaking'.

And, since the general strike was compromised from the start, they decided to pay wages to the victims. They did not carry out this decision. Nonetheless, their crime lay in their passivity, which turned into a generalised forgetfulness, for the entire attention of the working class was focused on the general strike that had been compromised in such a dangerous fashion.

Afterwards, *Le Temps* wrote, 'The failure of the general strike is an encouraging sign for the future'.

Le Temps is right. And *L'Humanité* declared: 'The bourgeoisie will utilise this unprecedented passivity of the working class'.

It was an appalling failure, and still, afterwards, it was declared to have been a great success. But, since this position was untenable, it was then said that the bourgeoisie will utilise this unprecedented passivity of the working class. Responsibility is unloaded onto the shoulders of the working class. When the workers do not respond to the call of the CGTU and the Party, it is the working class that is to blame for the failure. The working class should not

tolerate this kind of thing any longer. It must demand that its leaders analyse their failures, in order to learn something from the experiences of the struggle. Truly, it is high time for this, comrades.

We experienced a great event in France, of which the protest strike can only be viewed as a wretched repetition. That is the movement of 1 May 1920. The party was not then called the 'Communist Party'. The split in the trade unions had not yet taken place. The forces, however, were the same in both the political and trade-union arenas. The left forces had not prepared the action. The Right had done everything to compromise the movement and, through their betrayal, to destroy it. In this they succeeded. You know how important 1 May 1920 is in the postwar history of France.¹⁷

The revolutionary spirit of the working class suddenly gave way, and the stability of bourgeois rule was suddenly increased. After this failed general strike, a great change took place.

After this object lesson, two years and three months passed by, and, now, this strike has been repeated in the form of the protest strike against the slaughter in Le Havre. It, of course, caused great disappointment, and the result is working-class passivity and an unavoidable strengthening of reformism and syndicalism of the Jouhaux variety.

Why did this happen? Because the Party did not succeed in rushing to aid the movement with its advice, because it failed to intervene, to analyse the situation, to express its point of view, and to call on our Comrade Monmousseau, who does not belong to the Party and is opposed to an organic connection with it, to decide what is to be done. He should have been told: 'You are proposing a general strike for tomorrow, Tuesday, but that is completely impossible. By doing this, you will compromise the strike and create an unfavourable situation for the working class.'

I am convinced that our Comrade Monmousseau would have answered: 'I am prepared to discuss with you, but my organisation is autonomous and will take the decisions that it considers appropriate and correct'.

But was it not necessary to sit down around a single table to analyse the situation and exchange points of view?

This was all the more necessary since the CGTU did not do anything except follow the initiative of the construction workers' union. We have seen the outcome. After 1 May 1920, months and months were lost, although, in a

17. A general strike on 1 May 1920 opened a broad strike movement of CGT unions, which ended in a severe defeat. Twenty-two thousand railway workers were fired. The CGT lost three-quarters of its members between the beginning of 1920 and the spring of 1921.

For 'In this they succeeded', the German text reads, 'In this they did not succeed.' The translation here follows the Russian text, which was edited by Trotsky.

working-class struggle, time is the most precious thing. The bourgeoisie loses no time. We have lost two years, and there are comrades who say we won this time.

[Relations with the International]

At the Paris Congress, our Comrade Frossard characterised the Party's relations with the International with the phrase, 'We must win time'.

The Party's general secretary [Frossard], who already held this post at the time of the Tours Congress [1920], and thus has the greatest authority to speak for the Party, expressed himself as follows in a report entitled 'The Crisis' and printed in *L'Humanité*:

What are the causes of the crisis? For two years I have been torn between my loyalty to the International and the interests of my party. For me this is a permanent crisis of duty. It is said that I change my positions. That is because I am not sure of myself. (*Extended applause*)

This *Applause* is thus greeting a statement by the comrade with the most authority to represent the Party, who is saying: 'There are thus two kinds of loyalty, which do not coincide and contradict each other. And if you say that you see me vacillate, that I take two different positions, that is because of the continued internal conflict within me'. And, after that, according to the report in *L'Humanité*, there was prolonged *Applause*.

Later, Comrade Frossard says:

In the face of some decisions of the International that were unworkable, as I have explained, I began to play for time. I preferred that to breaking the neck of my party.

Thus, the general secretary of the Party experienced the quarrel between the International and the French Communist Party as an internal struggle, and tries above all to play for time, so as not to break the neck of his party. We have to focus our attention on this. Every time I read this quotation, I am again shocked – it is so unexpected.

How can this be? For two years, he belongs to the International and then says that this or that resolution of the International threatens to break the neck of his party. Why then belong to the International at all? Incomprehensible!

When I received this issue of *L'Humanité* and read this passage for the first time, I thought that this was the preparation for a break with the International.

We know our Comrade Frossard well. He is not a person to let himself be carried away by emotions. He is a man of sober calculation. When, as general secretary of the Party, he tells its congress, not at all in passing, that, for two

years, he has done nothing other than win time because the International has adopted resolutions that were damaging to his party, I must ask if there is any way to understand this except as preparation for a break with the International. (*Applause*)

The matter becomes even more serious when you consider what happened before that speech. In the so-called Frossard-Souvarine motion, which Frossard had signed and which was distributed to the party congress, we read:

On the basis of experience we must recognise that the survivals of a Social-Democratic spirit from the old party and a failure to grasp the meaning of the Communist International's resolutions have retarded the strengthening and improvement of the young Communist Party.¹⁸

So, on the eve of the Congress, this motion states that it is primarily the failure to understand the value of the International's resolutions that has harmed the French Party.

This concerns the value of the resolutions on the united front and trade-union activity. Frossard signs this, and, before the ink is dry, he is already declaring from the podium that the resolutions coming from Moscow and the International threaten to break the neck of the Party.

I invite anyone who understands this to please explain this conduct. We have tried to receive an explanation from the eloquent mouth of our Comrade Frossard. We have invited him. We repeated our invitation in the form of letters and telegrams, indeed even decisions of the Executive. Unfortunately, our efforts were unsuccessful. Nonetheless, we would be very glad to hear an explanation of this conduct, which appears to us to be neither consistent nor coherent.

In order to give you at least a condensed picture of the relationship between the International and the French Party (chiefly its central committee and its general secretary), and to show you the way in which the Executive threatened to break the neck of the Communist Party of France, I ask you to permit me to read a list of the letters, telegrams, and resolutions that we have sent. It makes for a dry and not very entertaining recital. It is a catalogue. I am not including here the private letters that I have written. I arranged for distribution to members of the full commission copies of the letters that I wrote in my own name to the French comrades – always with the consent and agreement of the Executive.¹⁹

18. See *Bulletin communiste*, 20 (28 September 1922), p. 738.

19. Trotsky refers to 'full commission' because there was also a sub-commission on the French question, whose function is discussed on p. 993. For the members of both commissions, see p. 93, including n. 5.

I will enumerate here only the official documents.

June 1921: A session of the Expanded Executive was held at which I made a speech from which I have already quoted some relevant passages.

July 1921: After the Third World Congress, three resolutions of the Executive were drafted, regarding supervision of the press, work in the trade unions, and the dissolution of the Committee for the Communist International.²⁰

Let us look at these resolutions. The resolution on supervision of the press was adopted in connection with the Fabre-Brizon affair.²¹ They had used their authority as party members as cover for their engagement in personal businesses. Did this resolution really threaten to break the neck of the Party? Was it not high time to abandon this method of assuming very important posts in the Communist Party while simultaneously collaborating in bourgeois publications that poison the popular masses?

If this resolution threatened to break a neck, it seems to me that it was not the neck of the French Party but at most that of some careerist journalists in the French Party. This resolution was not implemented.

I have already said something of our discussion of trade-union work.

Only one of these three resolutions was carried out. It was the one relating to dissolution of the Committee of the Communist International.

If we have made mistakes – and we have made many – the greatest of them, in my opinion, was our loyalty to the comrades that then led the French Party, to whom we gave a bit too much loyalty.

26 July 1921: A confidential letter from the Executive to the Central Committee with friendly criticism and encouragement regarding the Party's parliamentary work; on its relations with the International; on the reports in *L'Humanité* on parliamentary debates (our Comrade Marthe Bigot made some remarks in the Commission on this point that fully confirmed the correctness of our criticism); on relations with the syndicalists; on work in the trade unions; on reorganisation of the Central Committee (that was when we asked for the first time in writing for the creation of that dastardly oligarchy that is called the Political Bureau of the Central Committee); on the Party's structure; on inadequacies of *L'Humanité*, on supervision of the press; and finally, an invitation to Frossard and Cachin to come to Moscow.

1 October 1921: Telegram to the Party with the request that Frossard be sent to Moscow.

20. For the Committee for the Communist International, see p. 576, n. 9.

21. Henri Fabre was founder of the socialist newspaper *Le Journal du peuple*, in which he expressed his strong criticisms of the Comintern. Looking back in 1952, he wrote that he had 'seen through the Bolshevik game' at the Tours Congress (1920) and had joined the CP only on condition that he 'retained full freedom of expression'. Maitron 1964–97, 27, p. 148.

15 December 1921: An open letter of the Executive to the Marseilles Congress with criticism and encouragement regarding the weakness of the party leadership, discipline, trade-union policy, supervision of the press, the right tendency and the *Journal du peuple*.

That was not the first time. It began already with discussions during the Third Congress with the delegation. Then came the resolution on supervision of the press, in July 1921, when the question of Fabre was raised for the first time. The third step was that of 15 December 1921. Of course, it is said that we 'exaggerated' the importance of Fabre, but, now, all those who have been turned away by the Party are grouped around the *Journal du peuple*. It has become an abscess, but this time outside the Party and in collaboration with the now notorious tribe of suburban mayors.

The same letter spoke of the Party's penetration into the factories; integrating workers into the leadership; the Party's indifference toward the life of the International.

Further: on 19 December 1921: A confidential letter to the Central Committee, containing criticisms and encouragement regarding the following questions: toleration of the *Journal du peuple*. For the third time, failure to carry out the decisions of the International. Toleration of Brizon and *La Vague* [*The Wave*]. Relations of the Party to the International. A presidium or political bureau for the Party.

Why am I not enumerating the replies? Simply because there were none. Not a single time did they reply.

9 January 1922: Resolution regarding the resignations in Marseilles,²² telegrams summoning five party representatives to Moscow.

15 January 1922: Telegram repeating the invitation of a French delegation, making reference to the crisis.

23 January 1922: Telegram inviting Frossard and Cachin and stating that the French question would be placed on the agenda of the February session of the Expanded Executive.

24 January 1922: Telegram stressing the necessity that Frossard and Cachin come, and expressly pointing out the unfortunate impression that would be created by their absence.

27 January 1922: Telegram insisting on the presence of Frossard, 'whose absence would make the worst impression on the entire Executive', and also

22. At the 25–31 December 1921 Marseilles Congress of the French CP, Boris Souvarine, a central leader of the party's Left and its delegate in Moscow, failed to win election to the party executive. Four left members who had won election to the executive thereupon resigned in protest.

stating that the opening of the Expanded Executive meeting would be postponed by some days in order to enable Frossard to arrive in time.

During these days, in which we prepared to refer the French question to the International and make it known to the parties, we asked each other every morning and every evening on the phone:

‘Trotsky, do you think he’ll come?’ – ‘How should I know?’

‘Zinoviev, do you think he’ll come?’ – ‘I haven’t a clue.’

We wait, we send telegrams, and what is this all about? If we had been in a position to travel immediately to Paris, in order to consult with our friends there, every one of us would have tried to be the first to jump onto the railway train. (*Applause*)

What is at stake here is discussing the difficult problems of the French Party and analysing them, in order to be able to resolve them. And we always try to invite their most able leaders to discuss with us. That is why these five telegrams were sent to invite the leaders of the French Party to come to the International and resolve the French question.

At the same time: Radek discussed with Cachin in Berlin in order to convince him to come to Moscow.

February 1922: Expanded Executive – Resolution on the French question,²³ criticism of opportunism, of the left bloc, of petty-bourgeois pacifism, of inactivity regarding syndicalism, the inadequate leadership of the Party, federalism.

Undertaking by the delegation of the Centre to expel Fabre. For the fourth time, the question was raised of reinstating the comrades who resigned in Marseilles and of implementing the trade-union theses adopted in Marseilles.

April 1922: National Council of the French Party.

9 May 1922: Fabre expelled by decision of the Executive (fifth time that the question was raised; Article 9 of the Statutes was brought into play).²⁴

12 May 1922: Confidential letter to the Central Committee with criticisms and encouragement on the following questions:

- The increasing influence of the Right.
- Passivity in the Fabre affair (sixth time).
- Silence of *L’Humanité* on urgent issues.
- Inactivity with regard to the anarchists and syndicalists.

23. See Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 110–13.

24. Article 9 of the Statutes dealt with the relationship of the ECCI to the Comintern’s member parties. It granted the ECCI ‘the authority to demand of its member parties the expulsion of groups or individuals that breach international discipline, as well as the authority to expel from the Communist International any party that contravenes the resolutions of the world congress’. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 698. The ECCI interpreted this provision as granting it the right to expel party members.

- Hostility to the united front. A campaign by *L'Humanité* and *L'Internationale* that sabotaged the Communist International's campaign.
- Indiscipline by the Party regarding decisions of the Communist International.
- Absence of good will in carrying out resolutions that various French delegations voted for in Moscow. A reminder regarding the many steps taken by the Communist International for a reconciliation.
- A demand that the French Party clarify without delay its relationship to the International.²⁵

Same time period: Telegraphed instructions to Frossard to attend the June meeting of the Expanded Executive.

June 1922: Expanded Executive – Resolutions on:

- Party structure.
- Internal discipline.
- The Seine federation.
- The trade-union question.
- The united front.
- The bloc of the Left.
- The Party's publications.
- Party fractions.
- Reprimand to Daniel Renoult.
- The Fabre affair (seventh time).
- The party congress.
- Need for a manifesto by the Central Committee.²⁶

July 1922: Three telegrams calling on the Party to expel Verfeuil, Mayoux, and Lafont.²⁷

July 1922: Letter to the Seine federation on:

- Federalism and centralism.
- Article 9 of the International's Statutes.
- The Fabre affair (eighth time).
- Discipline.

25. See Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 124–32.

26. For the ECCI resolution, see Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 143–51.

27. Verfeuil had been publishing criticism of the ECCI in non-Communist newspapers. He was expelled in October 1922 after writing an appeal against the ECCI that appeared in the rightist newspaper *Le Matin*. Lafont, also an opponent of the Comintern's positions, was ultimately expelled following the Fourth Congress for opposing its decisions on France, especially concerning freemasonry. Regarding Mayoux, see p. 571, n. 4.

September 1922: Message to the Second Congress of the Communist Party of France, taking up all the questions raised in the letters previously referred to.²⁸

6 October 1922: Supplementary message to the Paris Congress regarding:

- A new vote on the Twenty-One Conditions.
- Expulsion of Verfeuil.²⁹

November 1922: Several telegrams inviting Frossard and Cachin to attend the Fourth Congress.

That is a dry recital of the letters, telegrams, proposals, and ideas that we have sent off over the last year and a half, which have almost always gone without comment and without a response. That represents the time that our Comrade Frossard claims to have won. In our opinion, this must be marked down in the history of the French Party as lost time. And the blame for this lies with the passivity and the material and political inertia of the comrades who were the Party's responsible leaders during this period.

I would like you to please tell me which of the proposals I have enumerated could be harmful to the Party?

Consider Fabre's expulsion, which was so obvious and unavoidable; the publications, the political bureau, and, above all, trade-union unity and the united front – why was it necessary to win time in these matters?

No one questions the fact that the members of the International are not infallible. But can anyone show us that the International has committed errors in these motions, proposals, and resolutions? What are these errors? Please be so good as to show us that it was useful for the French Party to ignore all these motions and initiatives of the International. Please be so good as to show us that time was won and not lost.

When the general secretary of the Party himself declares that he has won time with regard to the International that threatened to break the neck of the French Party, it follows logically that the party members responsible for ongoing propaganda will say and do the same, except in a more straightforward form. Thus we see that Comrade Auclair of the youth explains that the International's decisions are based on 'ragots' – gossip – as he puts it.

When we asked Frossard if he had really given Auclair responsibility for propaganda, he responded that this was a temporary measure. That is quite true.

Now, however, we see that, after the Paris Congress, this comrade was left at his post. And, when we reproached our French comrades of the Centre

28. See Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 162–80.

29. See Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 181–2.

for this fact, they responded: 'You're exaggerating'. So, we exaggerate with Fabre, we exaggerate with Auclair, we exaggerate in our calls for the united front and for trade-union action, we exaggerate regarding the publications – we are always exaggerating.

Yet it is natural that we object to expressions of an anti-Communist spirit, as expressed by Fabre and Auclair or in collaboration with the bourgeois press. Each of these facts, taken alone, has deep roots in the deepest layers of the Party. To consider them meaningless is wrong, for they are indications to which a party militant must not be blind. What do you then require as a sure indication that someone is not a Communist? When Frossard declares that the International's decisions threaten to break the neck of the French Party, and when Auclair expands on this by saying that these decisions are written on the basis of gossip, you can get an impression of the kind of light that is shining in the deeper layers of the Party, who are deprived of accurate information.

In this regard, we have extremely useful information from our comrade Louis Sellier (not to be confused with Henri Sellier, who has been expelled from the Party). Louis Sellier represented the Party for a time in Moscow. He has now returned to France and has been proposed as assistant general secretary of the Party, an indication that this comrade is held in high regard in the French Party. Those of us who got to know Louis Sellier in Moscow share in this esteem for him.

In *L'Humanité* on 27 August 1922, he published an article under the title, 'First, Let Us Be Done with Absurd Legends', which reads, in part:

'Some of our comrades certainly display a great deal of ill will. They start by putting their hand on their heart and swearing that they were and are for the Russian Revolution with heart and soul, but –' And then begins a whole series of threatening, solemn, and absurd 'ifs' and 'buts': 'If Moscow wants to convert the Party into a small, subsidised, and servile sect'; 'If Moscow wants to deprive the Party of every form of independence'; 'If Moscow wants to introduce the guillotine as permanent equipment in the Party...' and so on.

He continues:

We would be neglecting our most elementary responsibilities if we did not shout out to our comrades of the majority, our comrades of the Centre, that they are being deceived when they are told stupidities about Moscow, of which I have just quoted some of the most perfidious. Moscow certainly does not want the Communist International to collapse the way the Second International did.

That is what Louis Sellier writes. So it is necessary to 'shout out' to the comrades of the Centre that Moscow does not want to create a small, subsidised, and servile sect. And this is said by a comrade of the Centre.

Louis Sellier reports the statement, 'If Moscow wants to rob the Party of every form of independence.' And we did in fact hear some words of this sort in the larger French commission, saying that some of the International's interventions threaten the Party's honour. These are feelings, a mentality, a conception, that is entirely alien to us and that we do not understand.

In February, there was a commission here on the Russian question. It was chaired, if I am not mistaken, by Comrade Marcel Cachin. It concerned an internal malady of our Russian party. The Commission did not meet in Paris, because, unfortunately, we are not yet able to hold our congresses in Paris. That will come. It was in Moscow. The Commission consisted of comrades from abroad, who had to decide a question that was very awkward for our party, for it concerned the so-called Workers' Opposition against the Central Committee of the Russian Party.³⁰

The Commission invited Zinoviev, myself, and some other comrades to come before it. We expressed our point of view. We felt relief at the thought that there was an international institution, a highest body, and no one saw this as a humiliation for the authority of our party. On the contrary, we were very happy to be able to deal with an important question with the assistance of the Communist International.

The involvement of this commission had an outstanding result that was in the interests of our party, because after the involvement of this highest body, the Workers' Opposition dissolved.

What then is the Party's honour? There is only the Party's interests, which are the highest law, which all of us must obey. That is the honour of the Party and of each of its members. (*Applause*)

I have dwelt in length on this point because the spectre of the Party's honour was conjured up at the Paris Congress. You know the entire situation created by the Paris Congress. Some months prior to the Congress, we had proposed to build an alliance between the two strongest factions, between the Centre and the Left against the Right, and with a certain attitude – how should I put it? – of a waiting game with regard to the Renoult-Dondicol current.

30. The Workers' Opposition in the Russian CP, formed in 1920, called for trade-union control of industrial production and greater autonomy for CP fractions in the unions. Defeated at the tenth CP Congress in March 1921, the oppositionists subsequently raised criticisms of measures adopted introducing the NEP. They submitted an appeal to the Expanded ECCI conference of February–March 1922, which was rejected, after discussion in a conference commission and plenary session. See Comintern 1922b, pp. 110–12, 164–5.

What was this proposal's basic idea? It was simple. The Executive had predicted the factional struggle. In fact, we stated many times to our Comrade Sellier that if the Centre stood by its conservatism, the formation of factions would be inevitable as a necessary and healthy response in the interests of the Party, so that it did not sink into the swamp of passivity.

At the same time, as this unavoidable process unfolded, it became necessary to provide the Party with a means of leadership for its external activity. At that time, the Renoult-Duret faction was mounting the most strenuous opposition to the united-front tactic. At that time, there was not the slightest possibility of considering collaboration with this faction, although the Executive was well aware that it included many outstanding workers who were against parliamentarism and against combining with the Dissidents – that is, they were imbued with a pure revolutionary spirit but were poorly informed. We criticised this tendency but had an approach of waiting.

But we were also always aware of the fact that, despite some errors committed by the Left from time to time, this was the tendency that represented an impulse to move the Party forward, against conservatism and passivity.

In addition, we never lost sight of the Centre, despite its errors, which threaten the very foundations of the Party. This faction includes a great many outstanding workers, who will unite tomorrow, or the day after, on a common foundation of revolutionary action. We therefore proposed an alliance of the two large groups, the Centre and the Left, in order to ease the task of the Paris Congress, which consisted purely in clarifying the Party's ideas and creating a central leadership capable of leading it. The faction fight was leading the Party into a dead end. Some kind of combination had to be put together that – if far from perfect – would still be able during the next year to offer a more or less appropriate solution.

This alliance had to be with the central leaders against the Right, and it had to be formed on the basis of the resolutions prepared by the Left, which were imbued with a Communist spirit. The negotiations to form this alliance began in Moscow with Comrade Louis Sellier, Comrade Lucie Leiciague, and with Frossard, as representatives of the Centre.

We always insisted that the alliance be realised on a revolutionary basis. It must be directed with full energy against the Right, so this question could be fully and finally resolved in a political fashion. Had this been achieved, we would have been able to initiate a powerful campaign, and the Party would have come to the Fourth Congress as a much more disciplined organisation capable of carrying out actions.

We said and repeated countless times that, if the Centre resists this and allows itself to be pulled along, passively, by forces of conservatism and reaction, in order to win time, we believe that it is heading for disintegration,

and its disintegration will launch the Party as a whole into a most grievous crisis.

I will not tell here the whole story of the negotiations that took place in Paris regarding the composition of the leading body. The factions ran into difficulties and were unable to achieve any results. In negotiations between two factions engaged in mutual struggle, the organisational questions are always awkward. Discussions take place, and both sides make exaggerated demands. That's the way it always is. The breach, however, did not result from exaggerated demands by the Lefts, as was said by some, but from entirely clear proposals for a parity solution, made by the representative of the Executive.

The Centre preferred to break off negotiations. It rejected parity – even a provisional parity during the pre-congress period. Comrade Ker made a major speech about this on 17 October. He posed the question as follows:

It is a question of whether the French Party is not to have the freedom to itself elect the men who are to lead it.

I take this from the report in *L'Humanité* of 18 October on the meeting held the previous day.

The moment the negotiations are broken off, on the initiative of the Centre, they tell the delegates from outside Paris, who have no knowledge of the International's proposals, that it is a question of whether the French Party is not to have the right to itself elect the men who are to lead it.

What is that supposed to mean? Negotiations were conducted by the Centre with the Left in order to determine the composition of the leadership body. And the Centre decided that these negotiations could not lead to any results. The Centre found the Executive's intervention incorrect and dangerous. Instead, however, of saying, 'We have not come to agreement with the other faction on the make-up of the leadership body', they permit rumours to spread regarding the negotiations and explain that it is a matter of whether the French Party is not to have the freedom to itself elect the men who are to lead it.

There were denunciations of the Lefts and also of the International's representatives, who supposedly had the intention of depriving the French Party of the right to exercise autonomy as a party. This accusation was completely unjustified and was very dangerous in terms of national and anti-internationalist tendencies.

This notion comes up again in the appeal of the new Central Committee, made up of members of the Centre. On the day following the Paris Congress, they said:

The Fourth World Congress will examine the situation in the Party.... The Party is undergoing a conflict that relates basically to whether the Congress can be deprived of the right to itself elect the men in whom it has confidence and who have the task of representing it in the Party's leading bodies.

Comrades, our task here is to determine guidelines for the activity of every section, to provide advice on party organisation, to monitor the party's direction. Every party can thus ask whether it has real control of itself or whether it is under threat of being deprived of its rights.

What is the nature of the Party's right to determine its own course? In the present case, it consisted in the fact that the two factions that together constituted the immense majority of the Party should have come to agreement, proposed a common slate, determined the composition of the leadership bodies in mutual agreement, and presented this slate to the Congress with the explanation: 'These are our proposals. We advise you to accept them because in the present situation, where the Party is threatened with breakdown, they represent the best way out.'

The question was not, however, posed in these terms. After the negotiations with representatives of the Left and the International, that is, with institutions, organs, and individuals that threaten the honour and sovereignty of the French Party, and after the tumult and anxiety of the Congress, they declared in an appeal bearing the names of the Central Committee members, 'The World Congress will have to take up the question of whether the national congress has the right to elect its own Central Committee.'

But no one contests that right! We see that this right exists. We see that these very same comrades have not dared – I think that is the right word – to propose to the Congress the affirmation and protection of their sovereignty through forming a normal central committee. They themselves made the proposal to establish a provisional central committee. Why? Because they themselves had restricted the Congress's sovereignty, and, after having done so, and given the Party's condition, they could not ask the Congress to form a central committee based on only two-fifths of the votes. So nothing was left but to turn to the international congress so it could knit together the ties that had been ruptured through the fault of the Centre itself.³¹

[Regarding Jean Jaurès]

Comrades, as I said earlier, I cannot tell you the entire story of the Paris Congress. However, there was an incident that needs to be brought to your

31. Regarding the outcome of the Paris Congress, see p. 970, n. 7.

attention. This incident was dealt with in our full commission by Comrade Clara Zetkin. This concerns an extremely unpleasant incident linked with the name of Jean Jaurès. I believe it is necessary to say a few words on this, not in order to relive what happened at the Paris Congress, but in order to deal with a serious matter of principle.

The Control Commission, whose secretary, I understand, was a young comrade of the Left, had distributed a motion to expel from the Party Henri Sellier, an action long overdue. The motion made reference to the fact that the democratic outlook of Henri Sellier was based on the tradition of Jaurès.

Everyone will agree that in a motion for expulsion there was no call to speak of Jaurès, even tangentially. This piece of clumsiness was made into a great political incident not only at the Congress but also after the Congress in the Party's press.

A resolution was hastily drawn up. It became a factional question, and research was undertaken to discover who was for the tradition of Jaurès and who was against it. That is how the question was posed. I believe that this did not serve to honour the memory of Jaurès or the Party itself.

We all knew Jaurès, if not personally, then through his political reputation. We all know his great and monumental historic role, which towers over his thought and which will always stand as one of the most glorious human achievements in history. We can say today, and we will also be able to say tomorrow, that every revolutionary party, every oppressed people, every oppressed working class, and above all the vanguard of the oppressed peoples and working classes, the Communist International, can claim Jaurès, his memory, his example, and his person, for our own. Jaurès belongs to us all, to the revolutionary parties, the oppressed classes, the oppressed peoples.

However, Jaurès played a specific role in a specific period, a specific party, and a specific tendency in this party. That is the other side of Jaurès.

Our Comrade Marcel Cachin knows the story of his political activity better than I do.

In France, before the War, there were two currents in the Socialist Party. The ideological and political leader of the other current was Jules Guesde, equally a great and brilliant figure in the history of the French and international working class. There was a great struggle between Jaurès and Guesde, and, in this struggle, it was Guesde, not Jaurès, who was right.

We must never forget that.

We are told that we are breaking with the tradition of Jaurès. But that does not mean that we leave the person and memory of Jaurès in the sullied hands of the Dissidents and reformists. It means only that our politics have undergone a great change.

We will combat the survivals and prejudices of what is called the Jaurès tradition in the French workers' movement. Anyone who makes this incident into a battle of ideas, as if Communists could really snatch the democratic and socialist traditions of Jaurès, is not serving well the working class of France. When we read Jaurès's books – his socialist history of the Great French Revolution, his book on the new army [*L'Armée nouvelle*], his speeches – we will always feel that we have been reborn with a new spirit and new beliefs. At the same time, we must be aware of the great weaknesses that caused the downfall of the Second International. Least of all should we be guardians of the weaknesses and prejudices of the Second International represented by Jaurès, with all his brilliance. We should not be guardians of these prejudices. On the contrary, we combat these traditions. We must combat them and replace them with Communist ideology.

[Work of the Commission]

Comrades, the full commission that you established, after thorough and often passionate discussion, set up a sub-commission to deal with the organisational questions and to draft a political resolution. You have received our written proposal.³² In drafting this proposal, we were guided by two thoughts.

The political errors and mistakes of the leading faction of the French Communist Party, the Centre, have to be condemned. The errors of the Daniel Renoult-Duret-Dondicol tendency must be stressed. And it must also be conceded that, whatever the secondary errors that may have been committed by the left faction, nonetheless it is this faction that has represented the International, its ideas, and its demands on the issues that are most important for the life and struggle of the French working class.

That has been recognised in our political resolution.

As for our proposal for the organisation and composition of the Party's leading bodies, we have tried to estimate the relationship of forces among the different currents and match the composition of the leading bodies to the present situation in the Party. Of course, we usually proceed in a different manner. We unconditionally reject the principle of proportional representation, because it presents the danger of converting the Party into a federation of different currents. It encourages every individual grouping that wants to build a tendency. This system harms the Party and its activity.

However, we find ourselves in a situation created by the preceding events, of which I have spoken – and said enough, I hope, to enable you to grasp our policy.

32. See pp. 1013–16 and 1123–32.

Given this situation, we have therefore called for proportional representation for the Central Committee and other central leadership bodies. The sub-commission that worked out this proposal consisted of comrades Zetkin, Bordiga, Kolarov, Humbert-Droz, Katayama, Manuilsky, and Trotsky.

We distributed our draft, worked out after through discussion, to the full commission. It unanimously adopted all the political and organisational proposals, and we ask the Congress to do the same and to give unanimous support to the adopted resolutions.

Freemasonry

During the deliberations of the full commission, a new question was placed before us. This is the question of freemasonry, which, until now, has gone unnoticed in the life of the Party. Never were articles written on this; it was never the object of polemics.³³ It was never mentioned in the press that in the Communist Party, as well as the revolutionary and reformist trade unions, by the way, there is a not inconsiderable number of comrades who are simultaneously also members of the freemasons.

When the Commission learned this fact, it was quite amazed. None of the comrades from abroad would have believed that two years after Tours, the Communist Party of France would still accommodate comrades belonging to organisations whose character I probably do not need to define in a Communist world congress.

I initially attempted to do this in an article in the Congress's publication, *Bolschewik*. In order to write this, I had to dig up out of my memory long-forgotten and dusty arguments against freemasonry.³⁴

I will not bore you by repeating these arguments. The fact is that the radical bourgeoisie of France, which has quite mediocre leaders and truly piteous publications, utilises secret organisations such as freemasonry, chiefly in

33. While not discussed in the French Party, freemasonry had been taken up in the International. At the Second Congress, whose complete proceedings were published in French, the problem was raised by Serrati, Graziadei, and Bombacci. A motion was put by the French delegate Guilbeaux to amend the Twenty-One Conditions by 'forbidding Communists from belonging to the Freemasons' and was unanimously adopted. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 417; see also pp. 167, 320–1, 334, 523–4. However, the amendment on freemasonry, sometimes called the 'twenty-second condition', was not included in the published theses – 'only because this principle had already found expression in a separate resolution', according to the Fourth Congress resolution on France (see p. 1128).

34. For Trotsky's article, see 'Kommunismus und Freimaurertum' in *Der Bolschewik*, no. 18 (28 November 1922), Comintern 1994, 491/1/381/1735–43; or 'Communisme et franc-maçonnerie' at: <www.marxists.org>. During Trotsky's first imprisonment (1898–1900), he studied freemasonry, writing an extensive manuscript that was later lost. Trotsky 1970, pp. 120, 122.

order to conceal the reactionary conduct, the petty ambitions, and the perfidy that characterise their programme. Freemasonry is one of these institutions, one of these tools.

A year and a half ago, we said to the French Party, 'We fail to see the abyss that our press and our speeches should create between the Communist Party and the entirety of bourgeois society.'

Today, we see not only that this abyss does not exist, but that there is a well-constructed, somewhat concealed, somewhat veiled bridge: the bridges of freemasonry, the League for the Rights of Man and the Citizen,³⁵ and so on. This bridge secures the link between the League and freemasonry and the institutions of the Party, the editors of its newspapers, the Central Committee, the regional committees.

Yes, we make speeches, we write articles about destroying this corrupt society through the class struggle of the proletariat, which is led by a party completely independent of bourgeois society. We are revolutionary to the nth degree, and then we go to the masonic lodges and there we meet and embrace the senior brothers that represent the bourgeois classes.

What are we to make of such a mentality and such conduct? Many comrades say: 'Yes, we agree that every Communist should devote his entire energy to the Party and not set aside a certain part of this energy to other institutions, undertakings, organisations, and the like.' But that is not the only reason. If a Communist is a musician, he may certainly go to concerts or the theatre. We cannot ask a sacrifice from him that is not demanded by the situation. If he is father of a family, he may devote part of his life to his children; we may demand much of him, but not that he abandon interest in his children.

But that is not what is involved here. What is at stake is not a division of interests, attention, and life between two institutions or two activities. Not at all! If you posed the question before the working class in these terms, they would never understand why the International is concerned. What must be stressed is the complete, absolute, and irreconcilable incompatibility of the revolutionary spirit with that of petty-bourgeois freemasonry, which is a tool of the big bourgeoisie. (*Applause*)

Unfortunately this question was not raised after the Tours Congress. It only came up in our commission as a result of the faction struggle. When

35. Founded in 1898, the League for Defence of the Rights of Man and the Citizen campaigned to affirm individual rights against injustice, notably on behalf of the framed Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfus. Its scope soon expanded to include social rights and defence of trade unions. The League provided an arena for discussion and a meeting place for the French Republican Left, above all of those in the Radical Party. In 1933, its membership reached 180,000; it remains active today.

the Commission learned of these facts, it immediately recognised their great importance and placed the question on its agenda.

They told us we were exaggerating.

Always the same story. It's the Fabre business, which comes up again and again. Fabre is immortal. No sooner is he dispatched by the Communist International, but he comes up again under other names, wearing a new mask – even that of secret freemasonry – to celebrate his resurrection.

They told us we were exaggerating. On the contrary, we believe that, this time, we find ourselves confronted by an issue that can become a lever capable of changing things in our French party immediately and effectively.

We face major questions: the trade unions, the united front. These questions form the basis on which the workers' movement develops. However, the parliamentarist tradition of the French Party has led to the consolidation of a higher layer of parliamentary deputies, journalists, lawyers, and intellectuals, and this consolidation has created what one may call a state within a state.

The opportunist spirit has developed chiefly among intellectual elements, whose thinking is often confused by fragmented reminiscences of past experiences that they can no longer decipher.

A certain shock is needed here. Especially for this upper layer, such a shock would be therapeutic, not only for the Party – the most important consideration – but also for healthy elements that are, of course, present in this leading layer, with its somewhat tradition-bound and overly conservative psychology, always glancing back to yesterday, rather than looking to the future.

Yes, this will be a major shock. For this is not a question of the ongoing line of march of the working class, but exclusively of the relationships, habits, and personal outlook of comrades who belong to this leading layer.

Many party functionaries visit the masonic lodges regularly. They, of course, make no secret there of their Communist convictions when among the masons, in the way that they hide their freemasonry when they are among us. But, still, they give their Communism a veneer pleasing to the bourgeois 'brothers', so that they will be accepted in this very sensitive milieu, where perceptions are so refined. Maeterlinck, the poet, once said that he who conceals his soul between the stars will ultimately not be able to find his own self. So, when you spend time in this environment and amend your opinions to suit the superior tastes of these brothers, so sophisticated in matters of radical politics, you will ultimately not be able to find your genuinely communist and revolutionary essence.

That is why this is such a difficult question for us and for the leading layers of the Party. When the Central Committee carries out this task we are proposing to it, of course it will face the hostility of nine-tenths of official

public opinion. We can already predict, with a certain revolutionary satisfaction, that these reactionary, Catholic, and masonic circles, similar to Léon Daudet or to Herriot's friends, will hurl themselves at the International and the Communist Party, using all their publications. But, if you offer apologies and soothing words and explanations, if you say that there is nothing to be condemned in freemasonry as such, but that one's heart must not be divided between the Party and freemasonry, because the Party demands 100% of your commitment, then, Central Committee comrades, you will place yourself in an indefensible position.

On the contrary, the Party must vigorously bang its fist on the table and say: 'Yes, we made an error of criminal laxity by allowing valuable comrades to belong to the masons. But as soon as we recognised this error, we launched an irreconcilable struggle against this apparatus for preventing revolution. The League for the Rights of Man and Freemasonry are bourgeois institutions that cloud the consciousness of representatives of the French proletariat. We are launching an irreconcilable struggle against these methods, which constitute a secret and disloyal component of the bourgeoisie's whole mechanism.'

If the Central Committee launches its campaign with such irreconcilable energy, it will, of course, have the Dissidents and Léon Blum against it. Even the Catholics will defend the masons. The Catholics will aid the masons by cursing Communists and placing them under ban. The Party will be confronted by a mishmash of all the different shadings of the bourgeoisie, but, despite all the political hacks and all the deceptions of bourgeois society, the Party will remain firm as a revolutionary rock, defending the highest interests of the proletariat.

And I am convinced that you, having lived through this therapeutic shock, will find that, after a month or two, your party is in a situation far different from the one in which it found itself before the Fourth World Congress.

There will be a great outcry against the 'orders' of Moscow. They will shout about freedom of opinion – this time, that of the masons. The same comrades will also demand freedom of thought and of criticism. But are the comrades fighting for this freedom concerned with the differences of opinion that inevitably exist among the Communist cadres? No. They want the Party's cadres to encompass the pacifists, the masons, the advocates of holy Catholic faith, the reformists, and anarchists, the syndicalists. That is what they call freedom of opinion.

These people, who are almost always intellectuals, spend nine-tenths of their time in bourgeois circles. Their occupations are completely cut off from the working class. Their spirit is shaped by this milieu, in which they spend six days a week. They come to the Party on Sunday. By that time they have

forgotten the Party's principles, and, of course, they must raise their criticisms, starting above all with their doubts. They say they demand freedom of opinion. Then, a new resolution is passed against them. After this, they return to their milieu and start all over again. They are amateurs, dilettantes, and among them are many careerists.

They must be removed. The Party must be freed from these elements who see in it nothing more than an open door to a post or a seat in parliament.

That is why we have adopted the strict guideline that nine-tenths of the elected posts available to the Party should be filled by workers – not workers who have become party staffers but workers who are still labouring in the factory or in the field.

We must show the working class that they have been misled in the past by different parties that used them as a springboard for personal careers. We must show them that our party views activity in parliament as a component, a small part of its revolutionary activity as a whole.

It is the working class that acts in this arena. Its purest and best representatives, who can best speak for their class, must be brought into parliament, of course with the addition of some very gifted and reliable comrades who have a certain education. The overwhelming majority of our parliamentary, municipal, and regional fractions must be held by the working masses, especially in France, given the customs, outlook, and habits of this country.

The press

We must put an end once and for all to the system in which the publications are viewed as a private playground for those with journalistic talent. It is very good for a journalist to have talent. However, the press is nothing more than a tool of struggle, a tool that must strive for autonomy and collectivity, expressing the guiding ideas of the working class rather than the personal notions of this or that individual.

From this point of view, *Le Populaire* represents very well the traditions of the parliamentary party [SP].

I have here an editorial from *Le Populaire* with a notation by the editors. The editor-in-chief comments: 'I feel compelled to remind readers that editorials in this newspaper reflect the views only of their authors.'

That is how they function. Editorials reflect the views only of their authors. They ask that a worker pay for a newspaper that claims to represent socialism and then puts forward the general principle that editorials reflect the view only of their authors.

For us, the Party is responsible for the articles. The journalist must be anonymous – at the disposal of the Party. And, when the esteemed journal-

ists – and I am also part-member of this caste³⁶ – respond that proceeding in this way insults their personal dignity, we answer that the highest dignity of a Communist journalist consists of being the most loyal and irreconcilable instrument of the thinking, politics, and struggle of the working class.

Our activity among the peasants

I still have to give particular attention to two other questions. The first is that of our work among the peasants.

At the Paris Congress, this question was dealt with more hastily than any other major issue. It was raised by Comrade Jules Blanc, who said that letters from peasants made it clear that they have revolutionary instincts. He protested labelling them as petty-bourgeois. We are all too quick to pin this label on them, he said; the distribution of literature treating the peasantry as petty-bourgeois is playing a nasty trick on our party's propaganda.

Comrade Renaud Jean raised the same objection. I would therefore like to say a few words about our work among the peasantry.

The term 'petty-bourgeois' is not one of insult. It is a scientific term whose content is determined by the fact that the producer possesses his means of production. He has not been deprived of these means of production and is not a wage worker.

That is the meaning of the term 'petty-bourgeois'.

If while I am giving a propagandistic speech, rather than a theoretical class, a peasant asks me, 'So am I a petty bourgeois'? I will give him an explanation that he will, I believe, not find offensive. Only too often we meet peasants who are no different from proletarians who have nothing, except with respect to possession of the means of production. This fact causes them to have a more individualistic manner of thinking than workers.

This term is correct and necessary so that we do not fool ourselves regarding the character of the peasantry and that of the workers. However, despite the differences that distinguish the life and thought of these two classes, this term should not limit our activity among the peasantry in the slightest.

36. Several volumes of Trotsky's professional journalistic writings from before 1917 were published in Russian after the Revolution. One is available in English: see Trotsky 1980, *The Balkan Wars 1912–13*.

[The colonial question]

The other question is that of the colonies. I do not know whether the resolution of the Sidi-Bel-Abbès section was mentioned here.³⁷ Despite the small size of this group, which calls itself Communist, its resolution is a major scandal. The resolution states that the section is in complete disagreement with the Moscow theses.³⁸ Only the native-born Communist groups are authorised to determine local tactics for Communist activity. The Algerian-Communist groups cannot accept that manifestos are published in Algeria for which they must answer but whose spirit and content is quite alien to them.

This is equivalent to saying that the International must not intervene directly in internal questions within the Party. A branch in the colonies is rebelling against its party and the International, saying: 'No, no, when it's something concerning the natives, this is exclusively our business.'

37. See comments by Boudengha (pp. 700–4) and Safarov (pp. 719–20), and the resolution on France (pp. 1131–2). The French edition of Trotsky's speech, available at: <www.marxists.org/francais/trotsky/oeuvres/1922/12/Lt19221201.htm>, contains the following footnote by Trotsky:

This section is made up, of course, of French persons in Algeria. I omitted from my speech the necessary refutation of the pseudo-Marxist argument of the Sidi-Bel-Abbès group. They refer to the barbarous state in which the indigenous people would necessarily fall if their uprising against the French bourgeoisie's despotism were to succeed. This argument is lifted from the prewar Social Democrats. But then they had a certain justification, we must concede, because capitalism was in a period of ascendancy. Now that European capitalism is in full decay, to view it as a progressive factor for the colonies would challenge the most essential truths of historical science. Only socialism – after having replaced capitalism and extended its influence to the colonies, will be really able to lift them out of 'barbarism' – that is, their present backward conditions.

Every colonial movement that weakens capitalist rule in the ruling country (*métropole*) is progressive, because it assists the proletariat in its revolutionary task.

Clearly, the colonies cannot be sparked into rebellion at some arbitrarily chosen moment. Special conditions are needed to enable such a movement to achieve victory. But that is a question of strategy: the moment must be chosen and the methods must be appropriate. This strategic principle has nothing in common with the formula we are referring to, namely: 'Colonial slaves, you must remain slaves until we, the supreme beings of the ruling country change all that, because if you are prematurely deprived of the protective tutelage of our bourgeoisie, you will inevitably fall back into the barbarism that is your natural state!'

For responses made in the prewar period by Kautsky, Lenin, and other Marxists to this procolonialist argument, see Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 9–15, 38–9, 60–63.

38. 'Moscow theses' refers to the Twenty-One Conditions. The Sidi-Bel-Abbès resolution objected specifically to condition #8, which declared that every party in the Comintern must 'support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds' and 'to demand that the imperialists of its country be driven out of these colonies'. Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 768.

The resolution also says:

A victorious uprising of the Muslim masses of Algeria, unless preceded by a victorious uprising of the proletarian masses of the mother-country, would inevitably lead to Algeria's reversion to a system bordering on feudalism, which cannot be the goal of Communist activity.

That is the heart of the matter. One must not permit revolts of the indigenous people in the colonies – let alone victorious revolts – because, if they commit the stupidity of freeing themselves from the rule of the French bourgeoisie, they will revert to feudalism. And the French Communists of Algeria must not permit the poor natives to carry out a revolutionary uprising, free themselves from the French bourgeoisie, and revert to feudalism.

[Conclusion]

Not for a single hour, not for a single minute, should we tolerate the presence in the Party of comrades who think like slave-owners and want Poincaré to hold the indigenous people under the benevolent rule of capitalist civilisation, given that Poincaré represents a group that is going to employ all means of repression to save the poor indigenous people from feudalism and barbarism.

A betrayal in action is always masked by insistence on autonomy, independence, and freedom of action. There are constant protests against the intervention of the International and the French Party. Well, there is much in the French Party that needs changing. And we have already seen how the Dissidents draw comfort from the condition of the Party, writing in their articles, for which, of course, the author takes sole responsibility, 'Because of the Communist Party's disarray, the situation is favourable. It is no longer a matter of defending ourselves but of going over to a powerful offensive', and so on.

The Dissidents predict that their party will expand, a prophecy that will certainly not be fulfilled. On the contrary, it can safely be prophesied, without fear of the stenographers' skilful record,³⁹ that if the parties remain as they are now, differentiated only by shading, each with their supporters, their churches, and their hierarchical bureaucracies, this may last for years and decades. But, the moment that the Communist Party undergoes a radical change and becomes a party entirely different from other parties – one that the workers recognise as not merely a party but a preparation for the proletarian revolution – we can predict that, from that moment on, the Dissidents

39. Trotsky means: Without fear that the printed stenographic record will stand as evidence of an incorrect forecast.

will be defunct, that they, along with the reformists of the CGT, will no longer exist.

And I can tell you with full confidence that it is not the CGTU with its own forces that will extinguish the reformist CGT. No. There is only one great, powerful, and truly revolutionary party that encompasses the entire working-class élite. It will fully destroy political and trade-union reformism. You will experience this soon.

The first weeks of struggle against freemasonry or against the League for the Rights of Man will reveal weaknesses, and deserters will cross over to the Dissidents. But I am certain that, if the Dissidents win at first, they will receive only the rubbish and trash of the Communist Party. (*Applause*)

It is a matter of carrying out a painful operation with energy and strength in order to speed up the process and carry out a great action to build a revolutionary party.

On behalf of our commission, we propose an action programme that was submitted to the Commission by the Lefts and that has been unanimously adopted with changes of only a secondary nature.⁴⁰

The basis of this programme is the possibility of carrying out a broadly based party campaign, sweeping aside all forces that block this revolutionary campaign. Do not say that immediate demands by the French movement can lead to a new reformism. In this period of the decay of bourgeois society, immediate demands become the key to a truly revolutionary movement. This movement must develop in a fashion that takes the factory councils as its starting point and the united front as its necessary slogan in order to achieve all the forms of action and success. We also advance the slogan of the workers' government, which is particularly necessary in France.

The quarrels over these questions must come to an end. Polemics on this slogan will only confuse working-class consciousness, which is disturbed enough already.

The notion of a government of Blum and Frossard is intended only in a symbolic sense, in order to capture the notion very concisely. But it is not a matter of an alliance among parliamentarians to form a viable government. For, in order for the Dissidents and the Communists to achieve a majority in parliament, it's necessary that they win the votes of the working class in its entirety. And, for that, the Dissidents must stop calling on the working class to vote for the Left Bloc,⁴¹ in other words, to break from the Left Bloc and from

40. See 'Programme of Work and Struggle for the French Communist Party', pp. 1194–8.

41. The Left Bloc was formed in 1899, encompassing forces that had fought against the reactionary framing of Dreyfus. Led by the Radical Party, it united left-bourgeois and some Socialist forces in a parliamentary alliance.

bourgeois society. The French working class must be shown how essential it is to break from the bourgeoisie and resist it in every respect.

In a case like the Le Havre strike and the slaughter of workers, we must tell workers that no such slaughter could take place under a workers' government. Our representatives in parliament must state that the working class cannot tolerate a government of Poincaré or the Left Bloc; it will recognise only a government that represents the working class and is formed by workers.

As Communists, we direct all our energy toward a workers' government, formed by a revolutionary movement. But, when workers believe that such a government can be achieved through parliamentary methods, we must tell them: 'Try it out, but to achieve it you must fully repudiate the Left Bloc and other bourgeois alliances. What you need is simply a workers' bloc. If you fully free yourself from the bourgeoisie but still believe in parliamentary methods, we tell you: We have no confidence in these methods, but the moment you break from the bourgeoisie, we will support your actions.' If asked whether a coalition is possible of the parties that speak in the name of the working class, I would answer: 'Of course, but on the basis not of parliamentary alliances, but of a great movement encompassing every aspect of the proletariat's class struggle along with parliament.'

The main thing is to convince the working class of the simple idea that it is capable of forming a workers' government, of the workers and for the workers.

If you ask whether we are sure the Dissidents will not betray us, I reply: 'We will never be sure of that. That is why even at the moment that we form a revolutionary workers' government with them, we must watch them with the same alertness and mistrust that we direct to our worst enemies. And if they show weakness, if they carry out a betrayal, we will throw them out of the government, just as we did with our Left Social Revolutionaries, who represented the peasantry in the workers' government that we formed, and that we then had to throw out in order to establish a government wholly in the hands of the working class.'

The slogan of a workers' government means, above all, our party's complete independence. We must achieve this independence quickly. In France, in the coming weeks, the Centre will carry the responsibility for this energetic campaign in our French Communist Party. I am convinced that the painful discussions we have had with our French comrades in the Commission and which I have conveyed in this report will not be repeated.

Frossard's speech, however, shows us the danger. I have quoted from it and interpreted it, but it is up to the Centre to banish this danger from the world forever. I see no reason for a breach. On the contrary, the prospects for our

French party are extremely favourable. Given the breakdown of the National Bloc, the complete impossibility of reparations, the difficulties besetting the Left Bloc, I believe that our party holds the future of France and of human-kind as a whole in its hands. We are convinced that the Centre, inspired by these great and wonderful prospects, will carry out its duty to the fullest. By the next congress we will have a unified, homogenous, revolutionary party, which will carry out its duty through to the victorious revolution of the French proletariat. (*Lengthy applause*)

Adjournment: 4:15 p.m.

Session 29 – Saturday, 2 December 1922

France (continued), Spain, Denmark, Executive, Youth

The French question. The Spanish question. The Danish question. Reorganisation of the Executive. Communist Youth Movement.

Speakers: Cachin, Renoult, Souvarine, Renaud Jean, Canellas, Trotsky, Humbert-Droz, Kuusinen, Eberlein, Schüller

Convened: 1 p.m.

Chairperson: Kolarov

Chair: The French delegation has the floor, in order to state their position on Comrade Trotsky's report and the Commission's proposals.

Cachin: We wish to read our statement on the report and the comments that followed it.

Statement of the Centre

In order to bring an end to the distressing crisis, the entire French Party turned to the Fourth Congress, submitting itself without reservations to its decisions. By so doing, it undertook a commitment to accept its decision and its discipline.

We have made statements to the French Commission that we wish to repeat to you here.

The report includes a severe criticism of the party majority. This criticism is one-sided, since it leaves the Left untouched. Neither the resignations that followed the Paris Congress nor the attacks that were

made on majority militants have been taken into consideration.¹ On the contrary, representatives of the Centre have been blamed in this document as those chiefly responsible for the crisis.

These assertions cannot be sustained. Among other things, the reporter took a supposed sentence of Frossard's at the Paris Congress and imputed to it far-fetched conclusions. The truth is, however, that he, like all of us, encountered obstacles to the implementation of the International's decisions that were all too real. Despite our good will, and in the interests of us all, we and Frossard were forced to take these obstacles into account.

We are now faced with the anticipated solution of the problems taken up by the Communist International. That applies to the Party's centralised organisation, to the break with the Right, to the united front.

Tomorrow, in the session of the Red International of Labour Unions, the question of the Party and the unions will be resolved.² Frossard's role in Saint-Étienne must have been significant to lead to this happy result.³

The decisions made regarding the freemasons and other institutions cited in the report will now be carried out strictly and as the International has decided.

The directives of the Communist International will be loyally carried out. If errors and mistakes occurred in the past, the entire party was involved in them, since it had a common leadership.

The greatest harm to French communism has been caused by internal faction struggles. These struggles became so fierce in the recent period that relations among comrades became very aggravated. We were not the cause of this ferocity.

However, signing some documents jointly is not enough to restore our spirits to confidence. It will be necessary to end immediately the still continuing personal animosities. The rival factions must absolutely be dissolved. Should the International not succeed in this, then we will soon find ourselves exhausted by the same ignoble squabbles, instead of serving the interests of the proletariat and the revolution.

1. After the exclusion of the Left from the French party executive at the October 1922 Paris Congress, members of the Left current resigned their posts in the party apparatus and *l'Humanité*.

2. See p. 536, n. 7. Objections to the RILU's relationship with the Comintern were particularly strong in the French CGTU.

3. At the Saint-Étienne CGTU congress 25 June–1 July 1922, responding to urgings from the left current and the International, Frossard convened a meeting of 130 communist delegates, advising them to vote for the *Vie ouvrière* motion regarding affiliation to the RILU. In this way, he sought to demonstrate agreement with the principle that Communists in the unions should function as an organised fraction. See also p. 624, n. 1.

As for the proposals that relate to our internal organisation, we have distributed some of them to the Commission. They are important for the welfare of the Party. We regret that they have not all been accepted.

We will return to our party and convey to it the verdict of the Fourth Congress.

The Party has declared itself in advance ready to submit to these decisions.

It will do so, and so will we.

The delegation of the Centre

Renoult: On behalf of our faction, I submit the following statement:

Statement of the Renoult current

The undersigned declare their readiness to carry out the decisions of the Fourth Congress as a whole, with regard both to the common activity of the International and to the special problems of the French movement.

We commit ourselves to take the decisions of the World Congress as our guideline in the various questions covered.

The criticisms raised against some slogans in the implementation of the united front flowed from an honest desire to avoid every danger of incorrect, confused, or opportunist interpretations. The work of the Congress has contributed greatly to dispelling the misunderstandings that had arisen and correcting the errors made in this regard. This work showed that the tactic concerns organising the proletarian masses and setting them in motion, in order to free them from the influence of Social-Democratic leaders, who are shot through with parliamentarism and electoralism. The signers of this statement also renew their previous declarations in which they pledge to work together with all factions of their party and the International in order to realise the united-front tactic.

We also welcome the affiliation of the CGTU to the Red International of Labour Unions, which promises to open a new era of collaboration between communism and the French trade unions. We assure the Congress of our willingness to work for the implementation of the congress decisions on the trade-union question. We consider that Communists have a constant duty to hold firmly and exclusively in the trade unions to the directives of the International, working under the supervision of the party leadership.

We will fully support the realisation of all decisions and, if necessary, combat all those who resist them. We endorse completely the International's judgement condemning the participation of Communists in associations like freemasonry, the League for the Rights of Man, etc., created by the bourgeoisie

to turn workers away from the class struggle. We are convinced that the resolution adopted by the Fourth Congress is suitable for directing the Party in a truly proletarian direction by removing all suspicious elements from its ranks.

We willingly concede that all the factions of the Party, including our own, were drawn into committing more or less serious breaches of discipline during the course of this crisis, which shook the Party so deeply. Relapses will be prevented by our common good will.

The undersigned intended only to form an ideological opposition, which they hoped would serve the interests of communism. We have nothing in common with those who have directly or indirectly attacked the International.

We offer again the assurance of our unrestricted devotion.

Duret, R. Lespagnol, Level, Daniel Renoult, G. Werth

Statement by the Left

Souvarine (France): The Left agrees with the resolutions proposed by the Commission and votes for them.

We see them as a vindication of our past positions and activity. We are proud to receive recognition from the International regarding our orientation and the most important aspects of our policies.

The Left will continue along these lines. We will be able to draw advantage from the International's friendly criticism of some less substantial aspects of our activity. We will always gladly receive the criticisms, proposals, and advice of the leading bodies and competent fighters of the International, which we regard as collaboration and support. We will be true to this undertaking, as we have always been in the past. We will always put the decisions of the Communist International first and carry them out.

Béron, Marthe Bigot, Lauridan, Rieu, Rosmer, Souvarine, David, Laporte, Péju, Péri⁴

Renaud Jean: Comrades, I consider some of the Commission's proposed decisions on practical issues to be dangerous for the French Communist Party and therefore also for the Communist International.

True, in a certain sense, they are justified by current conditions. Nonetheless, the election of members of the Central Committee by the Fourth Congress sets a significant precedent that contradicts the clearly expressed will of the Paris Congress and can therefore be the cause of new difficulties.

4. French CP youth delegate Gabriel Péri's name is given as Péri in the German text.

The dual leadership established for *L'Humanité* threatens to arouse conflicts in the affected area that would make it impossible to establish responsibility for a crippling of the paper's effectiveness. The immediate return to activity of the journalists who resigned will load down the paper with severe financial burdens, unless it is accompanied by a reduction in the workforce carried out objectively, in terms of period of service, ability, and professional enthusiasm.⁵ This could again shake the confidence of workers and peasants, which has already taken blows.

The measures against members who also belong to the freemasonry or the League for the Rights of Man threaten, because of their unanticipated character, to appear as a breach in the contract that ties the Communist Party to the International and to provoke a new distortion of the facts, because the Party was unaware of the decisions of the Second Congress and the presence of a twenty-second point.⁶ I oppose the decision from a moral viewpoint, and I fought against it in the Commission. Nonetheless, I commit myself, out of a sense of discipline, to do everything possible to assure its application.

Chair: I must now present to you a proposal of the Presidium not to open a debate on the report of Comrade Trotsky and the question of the French Party.

The question has in fact been debated very fully in the Commission, in which all important congress delegations were represented. They have made known their points of view and contributed to resolving this question.

Comrade Trotsky has examined with precision every aspect of this problem, and it seems to us that the question will not be further clarified by objections raised by other delegations.

For this reason I call on you to accept the proposal and to not open a debate.

Is there anyone who wishes to speak regarding the agenda?

Canellas (Brazil): Given that the debate on the French question in the Congress was inadequate;

Given that the Congress has been informed in a one-sided and biased fashion;

Given that some delegates who have a point of view different from that of the Executive have not been able to express their opinion;

5. Renaud Jean is referring to the return of supporters of the left current who resigned from *L'Humanité* in protest against the decisions of the Paris Congress. See p. 970, n. 7.

6. The reference is to the discussion of freemasonry at the Second Comintern Congress. See p. 994, n. 33.

The Brazilian delegate protests against this procedure and votes against the resolution placed before the Congress for approval.

Chair: The proposal of the comrade from Brazil is somewhat premature, since nothing has yet been decided. I will consider it as a proposal to open the debate and an objection to the Presidium's proposal.

I will put the proposal of the Presidium to a vote.

Shall the debate be opened, or not?

Are you in favour of the proposal of the Presidium not to open a debate?

(Adopted with one delegate opposed; all others in favour)

Comrade Trotsky has the floor.

Trotsky: There are three significant points on which I would like to say a few words.

1.) With regard to the declaration of Comrade Renaud Jean, who spoke regarding the naming of Central Committee members by the World Congress, I feel compelled to correct one formulation that could lead to misunderstandings.

If this formulation, which I consider to be a poor one, is made known in this form, it can only harm the decision that we are all adopting. For us there is no question of having the Central Committee of the French Party chosen by this congress. We have made an attempt, on the initiative of the Paris Congress itself and of all currents in the French Party, to draw up here a motion, which will be presented to the National Council of the French Party.

This motion was made by the delegations of the French Party's factions themselves, in full agreement with the commission named by the Congress. Three different lists were established by the factions. After some secondary corrections, it proved possible to draw up a common list. This list is the motion to which the three factions have committed themselves, through their authorised representatives, to be placed before the national congress of the French Party for its approval.

The commissions that you established to look into the French question – both the full commission and the sub-commission – have unanimously adopted this list. They do not consider it ideal in every way, and objections are, of course, always possible. But it is the only possibility for the French Party to escape from the dead end in which it was placed by the Paris Congress.

The Commission is therefore in full agreement with the French delegation in believing that if a certain part of our French section now begins to mount an opposition against this motion, one that in fact can only do good to the French Party, this opposition will sabotage the intention of all the factions and thus of the Party as a whole. In the name of the Commission, which helped the French delegation establish this list, I express the hope that the list will

be approved by the Congress and accepted by the national congress of the French Party and thus finally confirmed.

That is the only way to eliminate the personal battles that the factions have conducted against each other in the thorny process of constituting the Central Committee.

However, this does not establish a precedent for the use of proportional representation in the work of our national sections or our international congresses. It is merely a question of how our French Party can escape from the dead end in which it is presently caught. We firmly believe that no one in the French Party will oppose this wise, necessary, and even therapeutic motion, drawn up by a French delegation representing all the factions.

2.) My second point concerns the declaration of the Centre. It is charged that I have passed over without mention the errors and mistakes of the Left.

It is true that I did not say anything about that in my report. I regarded – and continue to regard – this matter as settled by the statement made by the Left itself in the full commission. In the first or second session of the Commission, we explained that in a revolutionary-communist party, to resign or threaten to resign contradicts revolutionary discipline, regardless of the circumstances in which this takes place.

The entire commission was of this view. The Left made a statement on this point in which they explained the circumstances that led to their resignation. The statement says:

The commission charged with analysing the French question is of the opinion that the resignations and the statements published in *Bulletin of the Communist International* were a political error. The Left has always shown through its actions that it takes the discipline of the Communist International seriously, and there is no need for it to declare now that it will unconditionally accept the decisions of the Fourth World Congress. In accepting the sub-commission's judgement on the specific points regarding the resignations and the *Bulletin*, it maintains that this decision acquires its true meaning when expanded to include the entire picture of the facts that gave rise to this situation.

In addition, your organisational commission will present you with a very general proposal that excludes once and for all the possibility of any resignation for any kind of oppositional motivation, whether it be the resignation of an individual or of a group, whether it be directed against the Central Committee or the International.⁷

7. See resolution on reorganising the ECCI, p. 1136.

3.) This point concerns a motion contained in the statement of the Centre regarding factionalism.

There is no doubt that factionalism is a very bad thing for any party that has to endure it. I have tried to explain in my speech that, in this case, factionalism is the unhappy result of an unhappy situation. We have proposed measures of a general political character and also measures that are organisational in nature. All factions, that is, the entire French Party through its authorised representatives, have committed themselves to implement these measures, which aside from a few reservations have been worked out with the complete agreement of the French delegation. This permits us to hope that we can count on the practical, systematic, consistent, and, if necessary, emphatic application of the Fourth Congress decisions.

In a few weeks, the National Council of the French Party will convene in order to put the finishing touches on the decisions that are organisational in character.

We trust that, after the National Council ratifies these decisions, the situation of the Party will change fundamentally, and that as a result any concept of factions will vanish, even in the eyes of the factional figures themselves.

As for the International, which we hope will be represented at the national congress by a delegation of its Executive – I say this on the basis of a discussion with your Presidium – the International will insist with full energy that as soon as the resolutions are implemented, factionalism and the factional struggle in the French Party must come to an end and that the French Party, in its thought and also its actions, becomes forever a united party. (*Applause*)

Chair: We will now vote on the Commission's proposals.

We have before us both a political and an organisational resolution.

The *political* motion was distributed to all delegations. It is already known, and there is no need to read it out.⁸

We will therefore vote.

The political motion is adopted *unanimously*, except for the vote of the chair.

Comrade Humbert-Droz will now read out the *organisational* resolution.

Humbert-Droz (Switzerland): The Commission on French issues has adopted the following resolution regarding the internal organisation of the Party. The Congress is asked to adopt this resolution.

8. For the 'political resolution', see pp. 1123–32.

Organisational Resolution on the French Section

a.) *Central Committee*. Given the acute crisis created by the Paris Congress, and as an exceptional measure, the Central Committee will be formed on a proportional basis, on the basis of the [Paris] congress vote on its leading bodies.

The numerical representation of each faction will be as follows:

Centre: 10 members, 3 alternate members.

Left: 9 members, 2 alternate members.

Renoult tendency: 4 members, 1 alternate member.

Renaud-Jean minority: 1 member.

Youth: 2 members with decisive vote.

The political bureau will be formed on the same basis. The factions will receive: Centre 3, Left 3, Renoult tendency 1.

In order to avoid any personal disputes which could lead the crisis to flare up once again, members of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau and other more important central leadership bodies will be designated by the factions in Moscow. The list worked out in this fashion will be presented to the National Council by the delegation sent to the Fourth Congress. The delegation accepts a commitment to champion this list before the Party. The Fourth Congress notes this statement and expresses its conviction that this list is the only one through which the party crisis can be overcome.

The list worked out by the factions for the new Central Committee is as follows:

Centre

Members:

Frossard – Secretary, delegate to the Executive

Louis Sellier

Marcel Cachin – Acting secretary

Jacob – Secretary of the Textile Workers' Federation

Garchery – Paris city councillor

Lucie Leiciague – Stenographer

Marrane – Mechanic, secretary of the Seine [party] federation

Gourdeaux – Employee of the postal and telegraph administration

Laguesse – Unemployed teacher, secretary of the Seine et Marne federation

Paquereaux – Lathe operator, secretary of the Seine et Oise federation

Alternate members

Pierpont – Textile worker

Dupilet – Treasurer of the United Mineworkers⁹ Federation (pending approval in Paris)

Plais – Telephone worker

Left

Members:

Rosmer – Employee

Treint – Unemployed teacher

Vaillant-Couturier – Deputy

Souvarine – Journalist

Tommasi – Chauffeur and pilot

Christen – Mechanic

Amédée Dunois – Journalist

Cordier – Barber

Bouchez – Mechanic

Alternate members

Salles – Metalworker

Depoorter – Weaver

Renoult faction

Members

Barberet – Metalworker

Fromont – Automobile and airplane worker

Dubus – Miner in Pas-de-Calais

Werth (Roger Gérard) – Metalworker

Alternate member

Lespagnol – Employee

This list is to be ratified by a meeting of the National Council, acting with the powers of a congress, by the second half of January at the latest.¹⁰

Until then, the provisional Central Committee named by the Paris Congress remains in office.

9. The German text identifies Dupilet's union as one of 'canal workers'; the Russian, as 'agricultural labourers'. However, the biography of Dupilet in Maitron (1964–97) states that in 1922 he was treasurer of the CGTU 'Fédération unitaire du sous-sol' (United Federation of Mines), whose strength was concentrated in the Nord department, where he was based.

10. Omitted from this listing is the central-committee position allocated to the Renaud-Jean tendency, which was filled by Renaud Jean himself.

b.) *The press*

The Congress approves the rules for the press that have already been decided upon: 1. the Political Bureau will assume direction of the newspapers. 2. Editorials will appear without signature, making known the opinions of the Party to the readers on a daily basis. 3. Party journalists are forbidden to work for the bourgeois press.

Director of *L'Humanité*: Marcel Cachin

General secretary: Amédée Dunois

Both enjoy equal rights. That is, every conflict between them will be brought to the Political Bureau for decision.

Editorial secretariat: One member of the Centre and one of the Lefts.

The editing of *Bulletin communiste* will be entrusted to a comrade of the Left.

The editors who resigned will be once again taken into the editorial staff.

During the preparation of the National Council meeting, each tendency will enjoy the right to express its views in the party newspaper.

c.) *General secretariat*

The party secretariat will be composed on a parity basis by a comrade of the Centre and a comrade of the Left; conflicts will be arbitrated by the Political Bureau.

Member: Frossard. Alternate members: Louis Sellier and Treint.

d.) *Delegates to the Executive*

In order to establish fully normal and friendly ties between the Executive Committee and the French Party, the Congress considers it to be absolutely necessary that the two most significant tendencies be represented in Moscow by their most able and authoritative members, that is, by Comrades Frossard and Souvarine, for a period of at least three months, until the French Party has overcome the crisis that it is now experiencing.

The representation of the French Party in Moscow by Frossard and Souvarine will offer an effective guarantee that the entire Party will approve of every motion of the Executive made in agreement with these two comrades.

On the motion of the Daniel-Renoult faction, Comrade Duret was elected to represent this faction for three months as an alternate member of the Executive Committee.

e.) *Income of party staff*

With regard to the income of party staff, editors, and so on, the Party will set up a commission consisting of comrades that enjoy the full moral trust of the Party, in order to resolve this issue from two points of view: (1) eliminating any possibility of multiple salaries, something that arouses justified

indignation among the Party's working masses; (2) creating a situation where all comrades whose work for the Party is absolutely necessary are in a position that enables them to devote all their energies to the Party's service.

f.) *Commissions*

1.) *L'Humanité* administrative board: 6 comrades of the Centre; 5 of the Lefts; 2 of the Renoult tendency.

The Congress is agreeable that the proportional representation system be utilised for other commissions as well, on an exceptional basis.

2.) *Trade union secretariat*. One secretary of the Centre and one of the Left; every conflict between them is to be investigated by the Political Bureau.

g.) *Contentious issues*

Disputes arising from the application of the organisational decisions taken here in Moscow must be resolved by a special commission made up of a representative of the Centre, one of the Left, and one from the Executive, who will act as chair.

h.) *Posts from which former freemasons are barred*

The posts from which former freemasons are barred will be those whose occupants are empowered to present the ideas of the Party to the working masses orally and in writing in a more or less independent fashion.

If disagreements between the two factions arise over assignments to these posts, this will be resolved by the commission mentioned above.

If technical difficulties bar the reappointment of the editors who resigned, these problems will be resolved by the commission mentioned above.

All decisions, except for those relating to the composition of the Central Committee, are to be carried out immediately.

Humbert-Droz: In addition to these resolutions, the Renoult current requested that it be permitted to name an alternate member of the Executive, to serve for three months beside Frossard and Souvarine. The Commission unanimously agreed to this request of the Renoult tendency.

Chair: We will vote on the organisational proposals as a whole.

Unanimously adopted against two votes from Brançon [France] and Antonio B. Canellas [Brazil]. One abstention.

The French comrades have just informed us that Comrade Victor Méric has been sentenced to six months in prison for anti-militarist propaganda.

I believe I express the feelings of all delegations in expressing the Congress's sympathy to Comrade Méric for his courageous stand, which is what the bourgeois and counter-revolutionary justice of France holds against him.

(Applause)

We now go to another point on the agenda: the *Spanish question*. The reporter is Comrade Humbert-Droz.

Spain

Humbert-Droz (Switzerland): The Spanish Commission was established at the request of the Spanish delegation, not to analyse some internal problem but with instructions to discuss and resolve certain tactical issues and certain important political questions that bear on the activity of our party in Spain.

One of the most important questions that concerns our party is its conduct toward the anarcho-syndicalist movement.

Conditions in the workers' movement in Spain are dominated by the decline of the anarcho-syndicalist movement, which brought together significant working masses toward the end of the War and drew them into its ranks. Now, however, the politics of the anarcho-syndicalist leaders – the anarchist policy of individual terrorist actions – has led to repression by the government and bourgeoisie and the crumbling of the organisation.

We note that the anarcho-syndicalist organisations are leaving the working masses in the lurch, while the leaders of this movement reorient themselves toward a new variety of neoreformism.

The moment is therefore favourable for our party to develop propaganda and activity in this milieu. A current appeared in the Communist Party of Spain that demanded that the Party give up its intransigence on certain points and make concessions to anarcho-syndicalist ideology, particularly with regard to taking part in parliament, in order to win these forces more quickly.

The Commission agreed with the concept that one of the Party's most important tasks is to draw towards it forces that come from the anarcho-syndicalist movement and from the masses who are disillusioned by the policies of the Spanish anarchist leaders. However, our party must not win these forces by retreating from our principles. On the contrary, it is better for our party to win these forces more slowly, but to genuinely win them to Communism.

If our party were to give way for a period of time with respect to conceptions that the workers' movement is apolitical or should abstain from the parliamentary arena, it would surely lead to new crises in the near future.

The Commission unanimously recommended that our party make no concessions to anarcho-syndicalist ideology, which is now in decline. Rather, it should hammer away at anarcho-syndicalist circles from our point of view, explaining to them clearly and plainly that the parliamentary policy of the Communist Party is not identical with that of the old Social-Democratic

parties, and to point out to them in this regard the theses of the Second Congress.¹¹

The second problem placed before our commission concerned our Party's conduct toward the Spanish trade-union movement.

As you know, the Spanish union movement is divided into two large confederations, one of which is reformist (the General Union) and one anarcho-syndicalist (the National Confederation).¹² In addition to these two confederations, there are some autonomous unions.

There is a current in the Party that wants to leave the reformist unions because of the wheeling and dealing of the Amsterdam leaders, who are the same in Spain as everywhere else. The Commission unanimously advised our party to take up the struggle against such tendencies within the Party and recommended that our comrades not leave the ranks of the General Union but, rather, stay there, build cells within it, and win it for communist ideas.

When unions are expelled from the General Union, as was recently the case with unions that had joined with the Communist Party in a united-front action, we advise our party not to have its members leave the General Union in solidarity, but, rather, to advise all its members to remain in the General Union and struggle within the Union for the readmission of the expelled. If this struggle for readmission proves to be fruitless, we advise our comrades to lead these expelled comrades to the National Confederation – and under no conditions to form together with them a third confederation alongside the two that already exist.

In addition, the Commission considers it useful to recall our party's stand on the united front.

In February, our Spanish party voted against the united-front tactic, together with the French and Italian Parties. But, as early as late May or early June, when there was a great strike in the steel factories, our Communist Party implemented the united-front tactic with intelligence and good judgement. This was not merely a case of mechanical obedience and discipline toward the International's slogans. We felt it appropriate to stress this.

It was also stressed that the inner crisis that our party experienced at a certain moment was resolved through a strengthening of internal discipline.

The Commission unanimously presents the following resolution:

11. See 'Theses on the Communist Parties and Parliamentarism', Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 470–9.

12. The two confederations were the UGT (General Union of Workers, termed 'General Union' by Humbert-Droz and in the resolution that follows) and the CNT (National Confederation of Labour).

Resolution on the Communist Party of Spain

1.) In the February meeting of the Expanded Executive, the Communist Party of Spain voted with France and Italy against the united-front tactic. However, it quickly realised its error. As early as May, when there was a great strike in the steel factories, they applied the united-front tactic, not because of formal discipline but with understanding, conviction, and good judgement. This action showed the Spanish working class that the Party stands ready to struggle for their immediate demands and is capable of taking its place in the front ranks, and thus drawing the working class into the struggle.

By holding firm on this course, spotting all possibilities for action, drawing all the workers' organisations into the campaign, and leading the proletariat in the struggle, the Communist Party of Spain will win the trust of the masses and carry out its historical mission to unify their revolutionary forces.

2.) The Fourth World Congress notes with pleasure that the crisis caused by indiscipline, which undermined the Party at the beginning of the year, has been successfully resolved through a reinforcement of the Party's internal discipline. The Congress calls on the Party to hold firmly to this path, and calls on the youth in particular to contribute with all its strength to this reinforcement of internal discipline.

3.) The Spanish workers' movement is at present dominated by the decay of the syndicalist-anarchist ideology and movement. A few years ago, this movement was still able to rally and attract broad working masses. However, it betrayed their hopes and desires by applying the anarchist policy of individual action, terrorism, and federalism – which fragmented the struggle – instead of the Marxist and Communist policy of mass action and centralised organisation of the struggle.

Today, the disappointed working masses are leaving this movement, leaving the leaders that led the masses astray in this manner, and are rapidly slipping over to reformism.

One of the main tasks of the Communist Party consists of winning and educating the betrayed working masses and in attracting the anarcho-syndicalist forces that – as the neoreformism of the syndicalist leaders was exposed – have come to realise that their doctrine is wrong.

However, in these efforts to win the trust of anarcho-syndicalist forces, the Communist Party must avoid making concessions of principle or policy to their ideology, which has been refuted by the experience of the Spanish proletariat itself. The Party must resist and condemn the tendencies within it that wish to lead the Party in the direction of concessions, in the hope of winning the syndicalists more quickly. It is better that the assimilation of the

syndicalist forces take place more slowly, but that they be truly won to the Communist cause – rather than winning them more quickly at the price of a retreat by the Party from Communist principles, which would surely lead to new and damaging crises in the near future. In particular, the Spanish Party must explain and make understandable the revolutionary policy on parliamentary activity, as it was defined by the Second World Congress. For the Communist Party, electoral action is a means of propaganda and of struggle for the working masses – not a refuge for reformist or petty-bourgeois careerists.

Through its repeated application, the united-front tactic will elicit the trust of an increasing proportion of the masses who are influenced by anarcho-syndicalist ideology, showing these masses that the Communist Party is a political organisation for the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat.

4.) Our party must devote more attention and exertion to the Spanish trade-union movement. The Communist Party must initiate intensive and methodical propaganda in all trade unions for the *unity of the union movement in Spain*. To lead this campaign properly, it must be able to rely on a network of Communist cells in all unions belonging to the National Confederation and the General Union as well as in all independent unions. It must therefore resist and combat every tendency or current that preaches leaving the reformist unions. When unions or Communist groups are expelled from the reformist unions, the Communists must avoid fulfilling the wishes of the Amsterdam partisans of the split by walking out in solidarity. On the contrary, they must demonstrate their solidarity with the expelled by remaining in the General Union [UGT] and struggling energetically there for the readmission of the expelled. If, despite such ongoing efforts, trade unions or groups remain expelled, the Communist Party must convince them to join the National Confederation [CNT]. The Communists who belong to the National Confederation must form party cells there, in conjunction with the Party's trade-union commission. They will doubtless have close relations with syndicalists who belong to the Red International of Labour Unions but do not belong to the Party. However, they must maintain their own organisation and not retreat from their Communist point of view. Where they disagree with syndicalists, they must debate these issues in a fraternal manner.

In order to conduct the struggle for trade-union unity properly, the Communist Party must form a combined committee for the unity of the Spanish trade-union movement, which will be a centre both of propaganda and of efforts to unite the unions of both confederations and the autonomous unions that take a stand for the principle of unity. The Party assumes the task of enabling the working masses of Spain to grasp that it is only the personal ambitions and interests of the reformist and anarcho-reformist union leaders

that obstruct unity. The working class has a great interest and urgent need for this unity, in order to free itself fully from the yoke of capitalism. (*Applause*)

Chair: I will now take the vote on the motion of the Spanish Commission.

Adopted unanimously.

The next agenda item is the Danish question. The reporter on this question has the floor.

Denmark

Kuusinen (Finland): Comrades, brothers and sisters: In Denmark, at present, there are two Communist parties, both of which have appealed to this congress. On the basis of these appeals, a resolution has been submitted to the Presidium, on which I am to deliver a brief report.

The Danish Communist movement arose from two sources: first, the opposition wing of the Social-Democratic youth movement, and, second, the revolutionary wing of the syndicalists. It was a stroke of luck for the Communist movement to win over the majority of syndicalists. But it must be said that the leading Danish comrades who came from the youth movement were not equal to the task imposed in this situation. These comrades were the leadership of the original small Communist Party. And the revolutionary wing of the syndicalists was then linked in alliance with this leadership.

About a year ago, the Comintern Executive instructed the Party to finally build a united party in Denmark from this loose organisation, combining the two wings. We were pretty well convinced that there would really be a firm unification in Denmark. But, then, we suddenly learned that a full-scale split had taken place there, with much hostility, and right at the moment of the greatest workers' struggle that Denmark had yet seen – the February lockout.¹³ Precisely at this moment, the Communists of Denmark fell into a very acute struggle with each other – a moment when their still very slender forces were urgently needed for the struggle against the employers. The Executive could not remain inactive in face of this situation. It emphatically demanded the unification of the two sides. Initially, it established an inter-Scandinavian unification commission, whose members consisted of Swedish and Norwegian comrades, plus comrades from both Danish camps, plus the Finnish comrade Manner as chair. The Commission demanded unification by a majority vote, against the opposition of the old leading group of the Danish Communist Party. It worked out a proposal on which the two organisations in Denmark

13. Approximately 100,000 metal, textile, construction, and other workers in Denmark were locked out for three weeks in February 1922 because of their refusal to accept a wage cut of 15% and other concessions.

were to vote. There was thus to be a ballot on whether the unification was to take place. The outcome of the ballot was that, in the so-called new party, nearly all the members voted for the proposal of the Scandinavian comrades. In the so-called old party – I believe both were then about the same size – a majority voted against the proposal and a significant minority voted in favour.

In August of this year, representatives of both sides came here to Moscow. The Comintern Executive stood firmly by its demand for unification. It demanded the definitive formation of a unified party and gave both sides specific instructions to this end. The representatives present in Moscow from both sides said they would carry out these instructions. Nonetheless, it must be admitted that this measure by the Executive was not fully carried out in Denmark – success was only partial. The so-called new party carried out the Executive's instructions with complete loyalty. A significant part of the so-called old party also united with it. A unification congress took place, as the Executive's instructions had provided for. But a part of the old party rejected this proposal and is now appealing to the Fourth Congress. What is its proposal? It is somewhat unusual. It proposes that for the time being, the Congress recognise *neither* of the parties. Nonetheless, the Presidium believes that Denmark is much too small a country to contain two Communist parties and that we must recognise the unified party, which loyally carries out the International's decisions.

The Congress also simultaneously appeals to all the organisations that remain outside the ranks of the unified party to join it within the next three months. They are not asked to submit to any humiliating conditions. We do not ask that members who are still outside the unified party should join it only on an individual basis. They should be permitted to join as an organisation. But there is *one* condition that we must pose: that the decisions of the Party and the Communist International be carried out loyally. Unless this condition is met, no natural unification can take place.

We hope that most organisations that are still outside the Unified Party will join with their Communist comrades of that party.

During the recent period, the new Unified Party has, through its work, already largely justified its right to exist. Of course, in the future, we must see much more of this from the Party. The tasks of the Party in Denmark are very great, and the Party is very small. It is not a mass party. It must travel a long road before it can establish living ties with the broad masses. We must not forget that there is a very strongly organised Social Democracy in Denmark, perhaps relatively stronger than in any other country. The Social-Democratic organisation commands the trade unions. Indeed, it represents

the organised working class itself in Denmark. In many major branches of production, ninety-five per cent of the workers belong to the central labour federation. Of course, there are oppositional points of view and strivings in the union movement, but our comrades, the Communists, have so far not been able to take advantage of this and have not yet established contact with the oppositional forces.

Doing so is one of the main tasks facing the Danish comrades in the immediate future.

The draft resolution is very short. I will read it out; it consists of two points.

Resolution on the Communist Party of Denmark

1.) The Congress declares that the present Communist Party of Denmark, formed by a unification of the Communist 'Unity Party' and part of the so-called 'old' party, in accord with the instructions of the Communist International Executive, has also loyally carried out all the International's decisions and is recognised as the only section of the Communist International in Denmark. Only its main publication *Arbejderbladet* [*The Workers' Paper*] and other newspapers recognised by this party are to be regarded as Communist Party papers.

2.) The Congress calls on all Communist organisations that have remained outside this unified party to join it. Organisations and members of the so-called old party who decide in the next three months to join the unified Communist Party and declare their readiness to carry out loyally the decisions of this party and its leadership and of the Communist International will be automatically accepted into the Party.

Chair: I will put Comrade Kuusinen's motion on the Communist Party of Denmark to a vote.

The motion is adopted unanimously.

We will now take up *organising the work of the Executive*. I give the floor to Comrade Eberlein to explain the minor amendments that have been made to the original text.

Reorganisation of the Executive

Eberlein (Germany): Comrades, brothers and sisters: The 'Theses on Reorganisation of the Executive and its Future Activity' have been distributed to you all in translation. The Commission asks you to adopt these theses. No

amendments have been made to these theses. The Sub-Commission received only two motions, which I would like to read out to you. The first is a motion of the Austrian delegation, which reads as follows:

A member of the Communist International Executive Committee elected by a congress can only be replaced by another member of the same section of the Communist International in exceptional cases and with agreement of the Expanded Executive Committee.

The Sub-Commission believes that this motion should be rejected. Our proposals refer expressly to the fact that delegates are elected to the Executive Committee not as representatives of their party but in order to work here as members of the Communist International's central leadership. For this reason, it is not possible to grant the right to this or that section to recall a comrade, even if it is with the agreement of the Executive. The comrades are to stay here and work in the Executive for the International as a whole.

The possibility of changing the composition of the Executive exists only through the nomination of alternate members. And, since there are ten alternates, the possibility exists, in an unusually urgent situation, of carrying out an exchange, with the agreement of the Executive. The Sub-Commission therefore asks that this motion be rejected.

The other motion that we received reads as follows:

The Congress confirms that all Communist publications are obligated, as before, to immediately print all documents of the Executive (appeals, letters, resolutions, etc.), when the Executive so requests.

The Sub-Commission asks that you adopt this motion and that it be integrated into the theses on reorganisation that are before you. The motion states something that is actually self-evident. Nevertheless, we have seen repeatedly during the last year that individual sections have refused to print appeals, letters, and resolutions of the Executive or have conducted extended negotiations with the Executive before bringing themselves to print the material. We would therefore like to specify in the theses on reorganisation that all Communist organisations are obligated, as before, to publish immediately all the designated documents of the Executive, upon its request. I therefore ask that this motion be adopted.

Chair: Before we proceed to the vote on the Commission's motion, I will put the first motion, from the Austrian delegation, to a vote.

The motion is defeated. Since the second motion was adopted by the Commission, I will hold a single vote on all the resolutions, including on this amendment.

Adopted unanimously except for one opposing vote.¹⁴

The next item on the agenda is the *youth question*. The reporter is Comrade Schüller.

Schüller (Austria): The commission established by the Presidium has reviewed the resolution on the Communist Youth International. After making some amendments, it proposes the following text:

Resolution on the Communist Youth International

1.) In accord with the decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, the Second World Congress of the Communist Youth International (CYI) resolved to subordinate the Communist youth organisations politically to the Communist parties. The Congress also resolved to *transform* them from narrow, inward-looking, and purely political vanguard organisations to broad *mass organisations* of worker youth aiming to represent the interests of worker youth in *all* arenas, in the framework of working-class activity and under the political leadership of the Communist Party.

However, the Communist youth organisations were still to remain political in character, with their activity based on participation in political struggle. It was recognised that the most important and direct means of arousing and winning the broad masses of worker youth was the struggle for their immediate economic demands and against bourgeois militarism. The call was raised for a transformation of youth leagues' organisational forms of work and activity in a manner consistent with these new tasks. In particular, the need was recognised to introduce systematic Communist educational work both within the organisation and as mass education of those outside our ranks.

The implementation of the Second World Congress decisions, which could be achieved only through long and tenacious work, ran into difficulties, such as the novelty of the proposed tasks for most of the leagues. In addition, the economic crisis (poverty, unemployment) worked negatively on numerical strength. The onslaught of reaction drove many leagues underground, reducing their size. The temporary ebbing of the revolutionary tide and the weakening of revolutionary moods among the working class as a whole have had an adverse effect on the worker youth as well, and their mood has shifted toward less interest in politics. At the same time, the bourgeoisie and the Social Democrats have strengthened their efforts to influence working youth and to organise them.

14. For the text of the resolution, see pp. 1133–7.

Since the Second World Congress, the Communist youth organisations have carried through on subordinating themselves to the Communist parties. Nonetheless, the mutual relationship between party and youth, in general, does not yet represent a full implementation of the world congress decisions. In particular, the necessary support of the party for the work of the youth league has often been *insufficient*. The CYI has succeeded during the last fifteen months in carrying out *important practical steps to transform the organisation in line with the Second World Congress decisions*, thus creating some of the preconditions for its transformation into a mass organisation. In a number of countries, the Communist youth organisations have also initiated *propaganda* for the economic and political demands of worker youth, a course that will lead them, as they pursue it, to influence broad masses. They have already organised and carried out a *number of campaigns and even specific militant actions*.

The Communist youth organisations have not yet been able to achieve their transformation to mass organisations, with regard either to their numbers, their contact with the masses, or their *ongoing* influence and leadership. These stand as important tasks for the future.

2.) *The capitalist offensive* has struck working youth with all its force. Wage cuts, longer working hours, unemployment, and exploitation in the workplace affect them not only in the same way as they do the adult working class but in more grievous forms and circumstances. The working youth are played off against the adult working class and utilised as cheap labour and strike-breakers, increasing the unemployment of adult workers.

These conditions, disastrous for the entire working class, are sustained and exacerbated by the treachery of the reformist trade-union bureaucracy, which pays no heed to the needs of working youth and even sacrifices them. It excludes the masses of young workers from the struggles of the adult working class. Indeed, often, it even bars youth from joining the trade unions.

The growth of bourgeois militarism also intensifies the suffering of young workers and peasants, who are forced to put on capitalism's military uniform and are destined to serve as cannon fodder in future imperialist wars. Reaction rages against European youth, depriving them step by step of the right to form Communist youth organisations, even where Communist parties exist.

Up to now, the two *Social-Democratic Youth Internationals* have remained inactive in the face of the suffering of working youth.¹⁵ By joining in a bloc, they have attempted to frustrate the desire of both the adult working class

15. The reference is to the youth affiliates of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.

and all the worker youth for a united mass struggle. This bloc was formed to divert the suffering masses of worker youth from the struggle and from a united front of all worker youth. In addition, it was aimed directly at the Communist International and has led to the imminent fusion of the two Social-Democratic Youth Internationals.

The Communist International declares that a united front between young and adult workers is absolutely necessary. It calls on the Communist parties and on all workers around the world to strongly defend the demands of working youth in struggle against the capitalist offensive, bourgeois militarism, and reaction.

It greets the *Communist Youth International's* struggle for a united front of working youth and for their essential demands, as part of the united front of the entire working class. It grants *full support* to the Youth International's struggle for the united front between young and adult workers. The capitalist attacks threaten to drive the worker youth into deep poverty and convert them into helpless victims of militarism and reaction. This must be met by the firm and united resistance of the working class as a whole.

3.) To accomplish the work and the tasks that await it on the road to winning and educating the masses, the Communist youth movement requires *attentive understanding and effective support* from the Communist party.

Intimate collaboration between party and youth in every arena and the ongoing involvement of the youth organisation in the political life of the Party is *essential to maintaining political interest and political energy* in the Communist youth movement. These qualities are indispensable for the Communist party in its struggle and its work to carry out the decisions of the Communist International. The Communist parties must provide the youth with *organisational* help. They should direct young members toward collaboration with the Communist youth, assigning young party members and devoting propaganda to the task of founding youth organisations in places where the party is established. Since the Communist youth are now addressing the task of reorienting their activity toward the masses of worker youth, the Communist party should particularly promote the foundation and work of Communist youth groups (cells and fractions) in the factories and of their fractions in the trade unions. Mutual representation of the party and youth in all bodies (cells, local groups, district leaderships, central committees, congresses, fractions, etc.) should also be promoted.

The Communist youth must sink strong roots in the masses of worker youth by strengthening their economic propaganda, by their ongoing involvement in the life and problems of worker youth, and by their permanent and daily defence of their interests, and thereby lead them into joint struggle with the adult working class. The Communist party must therefore give strong

support to the economic work of the Communist youth through their cells and fractions in factories, schools, and trade unions. Close collaboration between the members of youth and party must be achieved in the trade unions. Party members in the unions must see to it that young workers and apprentices are recruited to the unions with equal rights, that their union dues are reduced, that the demands of worker youth are voiced in union struggles and taken into account in concluding wage and other agreements. In addition, the Communist party should promote the economic and union work of the youth organisation through propaganda and active support for their campaigns and by taking up their demands as part of the goals of the party's own day-to-day struggle.

Given the increased danger of imperialist war and the growth of reaction, the Communist parties should provide strong support to the anti-militarist struggle conducted by the Communist youth organisations, in which the youth must themselves provide practical and effective leadership. The Communist youth must be the most militant fighters in support of the party and in defence of the working class against reaction.

The transformation of the Communist youth with the goal of becoming broad mass organisations endows *communist educational work* with great importance. For, as the masses are won, their Communist education and schooling takes on special importance. The education work of Communist youth needs its own special and separate structure and must be carried out systematically. The party must provide the necessary support through generously providing teachers and teaching materials, help in organising schools and courses, providing places for the Communist youth in the party schools, and inclusion of writings by youth in the programme of party publishing.

The Congress considers it essential that the party publications give increased attention to the struggle of Communist youth organisations, through publishing regular youth supplements and columns and through ongoing attention to the life and struggle of worker youth elsewhere in the publication.

The bourgeois world, whose efforts run into stiff resistance from the class consciousness of the adult working class and revolutionary worker youth, tries in particular to poison and alienate the children of the working class. This lends great importance to the organisation and promotion of *Communist children's groups*. These groups should be organised and led by the youth, and the party should support this work, contributing forces to it and taking part in the leadership of the children's groups. Communist youth organisations have begun publication of Communist children's publications in several countries, and these deserve the party's support.

The collaboration between party and youth must be particularly intimate in countries in which reaction has forced the Communist movement *underground*.

By stressing the special importance of Communist work to win the masses of worker youth, the Fourth Congress points to the exceptional significance of the Communist Youth International. The Fourth Congress greets the CYI as its most eager fellow fighter in the present and its reserve for the future.

Chair: We will pass to the vote on the resolution on the youth.

Unanimously adopted.

Comrades, regarding the sentencing of Comrade Méric, I must make a correction and provide additional information. According to the latest news to reach us, Comrade Méric was sentenced to thirteen months in jail.

It goes without saying that we also express our sympathy to Comrade Blonchart.¹⁶ (*Applause*)

Before we adjourn, the Presidium asks the delegations to meet for a discussion on the composition of the new Executive Committee. Candidates do not necessarily have to be delegates to the Congress.

Adjournment: 4:00 p.m.

16. No information is available on the identity of Blonchart.

Session 30 – Monday, 4 December 1922

Italy; Czechoslovakia

The Italian question. The Czechoslovak question.

Speakers: Zinoviev, Bordiga, Serrati, Graziadei, Radek, Šturc, Šmeral

Convened: 1:45 p.m.

Chairperson: Neurath

Zinoviev: I want to tell you of a chapter in the history of our contemporary workers' movement, a chapter that is written with the blood of the best sons of the Italian working class. It is a chapter that well portrays the overall situation of the working class, or at least, its weaknesses. When historians of the proletarian revolution characterise the current decade, they will say that, in this last decade of bourgeois power, the proletariat was numerically strong enough to overturn bourgeois rule but was too weak in its politics and ideas to carry out this task. Fighters for our class long ago had the physical strength to overturn capitalism, and the objective preconditions for the victory of our class have been in place for some time. However, the tragedy of our class in recent decades has been that our class still contains such powerful survivals of bourgeois ideology, and the bourgeoisie's influence inside our class, despite the workers' numerical superiority, is still so great, that we are unable to achieve an immediate and conclusive triumph over the bourgeoisie.

That is the lesson of the years 1914 to 1919, and this fact is displayed with particular clarity in Italy.

1914 and 1919 are dates of great importance. The role of Social Democracy, of the Second International, that is, of the forces that represent the bourgeoisie's influence within the working class, was best illustrated by what Social Democracy did in the years 1914 and 1919.

In 1914, Social Democracy did not lead but misled the working masses. Social Democracy, the Second International, pushed our class into the War. They stabbed in the back the workers who resisted the War, in order to drive them onto the battlefields.¹ In 1919–20, when the War was over, and the discontent of the masses had everywhere reached its highest peak, when, after four years of dreadful war, the masses in different countries had awoken to consciousness and wanted to throw themselves into struggle against the bourgeoisie, it was the role of Social Democracy to stand protectively in front of the bourgeoisie. They played the role of tripping up the workers and taking from them the possibility of turning on the main enemy, the bourgeoisie. Social Democracy created a situation that can be summed up in this way: 'Only over my dead body will you be able to grab hold of the bourgeoisie.' Social Democracy, the Second International, took up position between the working masses and the bourgeoisie. The workers' fists crippled Social Democracy in many ways.

In 1914, the working class placed the noose around its own neck. In 1919, the working class was ready to throw away this noose and perhaps circle it round the neck of the bourgeoisie. But, once again – and to an even great degree than in 1914 – Social Democracy sowed confusion in the ranks of our class, thus saving the bourgeoisie. The entire situation during these years is characterised by the counter-revolutionary role of the old Social-Democratic party. That is the essence of the tragedy that the working class has experienced during recent years. This fact is particularly evident, as I have said, in Italy.

During the years 1919–20, the mood of the working masses, especially in Italy, was fully revolutionary. I believe I will do well to characterise the situation in Italy with the words used by the Italian Socialist Party to describe it. In a socialist almanac, an official publication of the Italian Socialist Party, the situation in 1920 was described as follows:

1. Zinoviev's description of Social-Democratic betrayal in 1914 does not apply to Italy, which entered the war only in May 1915. The Italian SP opposed their country's entry into the War (see Radek's comments, p. 387). Their representative joined with Zinoviev and other anti-war socialists in organising the Zimmerwald Conference in September 1915. The Zimmerwald Left, led by the Bolsheviks, and the Spartacists in Germany praised the Italian SP deputies for having fulfilled their internationalist duty. From 1919 until January 1921, the Italian SP belonged to the Comintern. See Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 300, 415.

The proletariat rejoiced when the War ended. It saw at last the end of its martyrdom. It saw a new era before it that would bring it victory. It prepared for struggle. It wanted no revenge. Burning with a previously suppressed and hidden anger, bleeding from a thousand wounds, it prepared to seize power from the hands of the impotent, murderous bourgeoisie, and proclaim its rights. The proletarians looked to the Socialist Party. All their fondest hopes were concentrated on this party. Hardly had they cast off the hated uniform than they hurried to join the ranks of our party. They demanded that it provide advice and action. They challenged it and drove it to unite the working masses and lead them to the conquest of power.

That was the mood of the depths of the working class, of the Italian proletarians, in 1919 and 1920. In other countries, it was similar, but, in Italy, this mood was particularly pronounced. The bourgeoisie was impotent and paralysed. The bourgeois government was feeble and rotten. The working masses poured into the ranks of our party by the thousands and tens of thousands. As you have heard in the quotation, the demobilised soldiers streamed in great number to our party and pressed it for revolt.

I cannot avoid quoting Serrati, who described the situation in a report in 1920 to the Communist International Executive as follows:

After the conclusion of the armistice, the situation in Italy became more acute and complex. All factions of the bourgeoisie recognised that the War had ended with total bankruptcy and the complete denial of the principles for which, according to its supporters, it had been undertaken. As for the masses, their irritation and discontent grew every day. Not only the causes of this sentiment but also its forms of expression were not economic but socialist in character. This was most clearly expressed in the constant slogan, 'We do not want to work for capitalists'.

In short, the working masses stood ready, with clenched fists, pressing for a decision. The Party grew enormously. That is shown by the following figures. The Italian Socialist Party had 58,000 members at the beginning of 1914; 83,000 members in 1919; and 216,000 members in 1920. In one year, its membership total had almost tripled. In 1919–20, that is, at the close of the War, the working masses had the greatest trust in our party and came to it in droves.

The trade-union movement went through a similar process during this period. At the beginning of the War, in 1914, the trade unions had only 320,000 members. In 1919 they had 1.15 million; in 1920, 2.15 million. Here, too, the membership total more than doubled in one year. The masses had confidence in the trade unions, hoping that the unions and our party would lead them to struggle and victory.

However, we cannot say that our party, at that time, was fully conscious of the situation. Mind you, if you read the resolutions – for example, from the party convention in Bologna in 1919, you will certainly believe that the Italian Party had understood the situation well. This resolution is framed in a Communist spirit. I will not quote it all; it is enough if I simply recall what was decided by the Bologna Convention:

- 1.) The Italian Socialist Party will be brought into step organisationally with the Communist principles described above.
- 2.) The Party takes its stand for affiliation to the Communist International, the organisation of the world proletariat that champions and defends these principles.

It then continues, and I quote:

The revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the forceful overthrow of bourgeois rule and the organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class must begin. Those who still believe that collaboration with the bourgeoisie is possible, that a life-and-death struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be avoided, that amiable agreements and a peaceful transition will lead to socialism – they have no further rights in our party. Those who hesitate, those who are not with us, begone! We have a world to win! But it is not won with weaklings and waverers. For that, we need courage and complete commitment to the goal! Come to us, comrades!

Brave and golden words were spoken by the convention in Bologna. It seemed that our party was then really on top of the situation and was ready to become the megaphone for these rebellious proletarian masses. But that is not what happened. After all these decisions of the Bologna Convention, the question immediately arose whether the reformists should stay in the Party or not. And, here, we had to witness the sad event that the majority decided to keep the reformists in the Party.

Interesting here is the position of the reformists themselves.

I must say that, if you trace the natural history of reformism, you must give it credit for one thing. Reformism as a world outlook displayed great flexibility and an endless capacity for adaptation. That is, of course, a characteristic that makes it very precious for the bourgeoisie, which needs a reformism that is not set in stone but is flexible and can adapt to all conditions. The Italian reformists showed just how adaptable a creature this reformism is.

In this situation, when the working masses followed the red banner and pressed for decisive struggles, when the soldiers – as stated in my quotation – entered the Socialist Party as soon as they had taken off the uniform – in this

situation, the reformists were able to avoid a break with the Party, to remain within it, and to sabotage it from within.

Russian Menshevism, which we know well – we studied for about fifteen years in this university, and that was rather decisive for us all – was also able in 1905 to demonstrate great flexibility. It clung to us with the slogan of ‘party unity’, and only in 1912 were we finally able to free ourselves from the Mensheviks’ embrace.

The Italian Mensheviks have showed – and this must be conceded – that they possess no less adaptability and flexibility than the Russian ones. The Italian Mensheviks’ outstanding technique is their balancing act. They have been able to achieve much in this field. Turati and D’Aragona declared that they are staying in the Party, giving it their obedience, ready to collaborate – and they are for the revolution too. That was the decisive moment. Many of our friends believed that the more members, the better; if the reformists say they will obey and want to stay with us, that is all to the good.

So it was decided that the reformists would stay in the Party.

Now the masquerade began. D’Aragona, Serrati – he perhaps less than the others – and Turati, a bourgeois for sure, but one who had already for many years operated as a socialist in the ranks of the working masses: these people dressed themselves up as Communists and joined in their comedy act.

D’Aragona and Dugoni and a number of others came to Russia in 1920, led by Serrati. I myself heard speeches from D’Aragona that resounded with the cry, ‘Long Live Communism’. That was a time when Russia was under blockade and the Russian workers were thirsting for international contacts. Any comrade that came from abroad was greeted like a brother, and we had to witness the sad spectacle that our Petrograd and Moscow workers carried D’Aragona and Colombino literally with their hands, because they regarded them as representatives of the revolutionary Italian proletariat and gave credence to their words.

This was then an international phenomenon. Reformists not just from Italy but from other countries hurried to us in Moscow and attempted to win admission to the Communist International. It was the time that we characterised in a resolution with the words: ‘The Communist International is beginning to be in fashion.’² As you recall, in this very hall, Dittmann and Crispian made enthusiastic speeches for the dictatorship of the proletariat, declaring that

2. See the preamble to the Twenty-One Conditions, in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 765.

they were no worse Communists than the others and that they too wanted to belong to the Communist International.³

Reformists and semi-reformists came running to us then from every country. I remember a Spanish professor, De los Rios, who came to Moscow as a representative of the Spanish Party seeking admission to the Communist International. But this professor was simply a professor, who knew nothing of politics. (*Laughter*) The professors present here today will forgive me; there certainly are exceptions. Comrade Graziadei –

Graziadei: I am a former professor.

Zinoviev: There certainly are exceptions. So this professor told us with almost touching naiveté: ‘You see, comrades, I personally am a reformist, but the Spanish workers are pressing me. They want to be part of the Communist International, and they have sent me here so that they will be admitted to the Communist International.’

This professor was truly almost saintly – he blurted it out quite openly. D’Aragona and Colombino were anything but saintly and anything but naïve. These blackguards preferred to come here with speeches honouring communism.

The Twenty-One Conditions were thus very therapeutic for our International. I grant you, there were some who slipped through even that, but, by and large, our front held firm, and not many slipped through.

So it was at that moment that the Italian tragedy – or, if you will, tragicomedy – was played out here in Moscow. But the comedy soon ended. The Italian workers were pushing forward. Decisive events took place. In the autumn of 1920, the Italian workers began to occupy the factories. And, at that point, as you well know, the pleasantries stopped. When the workers began to occupy the factories, when they began to form red guards – at this moment, the reformists cast aside their good nature, and the D’Aragonas had to take off their masks. At that point, D’Aragona had already returned to Italy, while Serrati was still in Moscow.⁴

If we study this episode a bit more closely – the autumn events of 1920, the Italian workers’ seizure of the factories, the workers’ first steps to form red guards – and if we observe the role of the reformists in this, we must ask: can there be any betrayal more blatant than that of these people in the autumn of 1920?

3. For the speeches of Dittmann and Crispian to the Second Congress, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 351–67.

4. In September 1920, when half a million striking workers occupied most factories in northern Italy, Serrati was still in Moscow, where he had attended the Second Comintern Congress the previous month.

For five days and five nights – literally – the leaders of the trade unions and the Socialist Party met in conference. Five days and five nights. At a time when the workers had already occupied the factories and were pressing for further struggles. At such a moment, the worthy leaders sit and deliberate for five days and five nights, in a situation where five hours was decisive. Now that Mussolini has seized power, Turati and D'Aragona – as you will see from what I will say – have been rather quick in declaring their readiness to support him. For that, they did not need to deliberate for five days and five nights. But, at the moment when the workers began to convert the dream of their entire lives into reality, to really combat the bourgeoisie, they told the workers: 'Do not worry, we are already busy deliberating!' And they needed five days and five nights for that. And the results of this thorough discussion were as follows.

The trade-union leaders had a kind of formal agreement with the Socialist Party. The agreement stated that, in all decisive struggles, the trade unions would follow the lead of the Socialist Party. I recall how, in 1920, we alerted Serrati to the fact that the leadership of the unions was held by reformists, and that this could lead to great misfortunes for our movement. He tried to appease us by saying that there was a pact between the Socialist Party and the trade unions, and that provided a sufficient guarantee.

During the struggles of 1920, the reformists obviously threw this alliance into the wastebasket. Here is how they did it. D'Aragona and his co-thinkers said: 'Yes, we have an agreement, and we will hold to it. But if you decide to continue the struggles, we will have to resign and give up the leadership of the trade unions.'

That was quite enough for the Italian centrists. They immediately threw themselves onto their knees before D'Aragona, saying: 'Father D'Aragona wants to resign. We cannot bear such a misfortune. Better that we betray the working class and halt the struggles – only D'Aragona must not abandon us –'

It came to a vote. A million and a half workers took part in it. Despite all the betrayals by trade-union and party leaders, it was decided, by only a very small majority, to break off the struggles. D'Aragona came to the meeting still warm from the embraces of the bourgeois ministers. He did it in this order: first consultation with the bourgeois ministers, then consultation in the *Confederazione del Lavoro* [Labour Confederation], then consultation with the Socialist Party.

You see now quite clearly how this chain of betrayal reached from the bourgeoisie to the leadership of the Socialist Party.

The workers were betrayed and sold out. That was the decisive fact. This was the point where capitalism began its political and economic offensive, which ended with the victory of Mussolini.

What was the role of the Communist International in all these struggles? We can record with pride, comrades, that the Communist International, acting through its Executive, perceived the situation with complete accuracy. Even before the occupation of the factories, at the end of the Second Congress, the Executive wrote an official letter to the Italian Socialist Party that said, in part:

Italy is now experiencing a time in which the revolution's victory is being delayed only by the fact that the working class is insufficiently organised. This is making it quite possible that raging bourgeois reaction will score a temporary victory. Anyone who at such a moment hinders the Party from finding a correct orientation, anyone who at such a moment busies themselves with 'unity' with reformists and semi-reformists, is committing a crime against the workers' revolution, whether they wish it or not.⁵

We wrote that before the September events. We experienced the first disagreements with Comrade Serrati during the Second Congress. If I now ask what Comrade Serrati's basic error was, I must say, assuming the best of him, that the basic error was a false position on the question of working-class unity, of party unity. The reformists utilised the slogan of unity to achieve brilliant victories over us in many countries, Russia being not the least of them. The concept of unity has such great attractive power in the ranks of the working masses that the reformists can use this idea to lead the workers around by the nose. It is easy to understand why this is so, because the working masses *need* unity just as we need the air. The power of the working masses resides chiefly in their numbers. It is only through unity, through numbers, that the working masses gain the strength to defeat the bourgeoisie. The aspiration for unity is elemental, and it often thrusts everything else to the side. The reformist leaders, the experts at reformism's balancing act, are the bourgeoisie's most clever agents. They are quite skilled at making use of this drive for unity, and the masses fall for this quite readily. As I said, if I assume, in the best of cases, that Serrati simply made an error, I would say this is the error he fell into. He let unity be the deciding factor, and all his other errors, it seems, flowed from this basic error.

Among other things, Serrati said the following in 1920:

At present we are winning hundreds, thousands of municipalities. Thousands of cooperatives and thousands of other proletarian institutions are already won or will be won. Everywhere the Party is searching for the best people

5. Zinoviev is paraphrasing an ECCI letter of 21 August 1920, signed by himself, Bukharin, and Lenin. See *Kommunistische Internationale*, 13 (1920), pp. 287–95 and Degras 1956, pp. 188–91.

to work in the municipalities, the communities, the labour councils [*camere del lavoro*],⁶ and so on. There is a lack of competent people, and now the Second Congress of the Communist International writes that we should put Communists in all these posts, without regard to whether they are competent. Here we are in a fantasy world. Imagine the Milan municipal council led by a group of incompetent novices who have just announced that they are eager Communists.⁷

These words of Serrati could be dismissed with a joke, but I believe that, at a moment when the situation in Italy is so tragic, it is inexplicable how a man like Serrati could come to such conclusions. For him, the main issue in 1920 was where to find competent people. He was trying to find people to fill out thousands of village and city councils, and he was particularly concerned to find the right people to sit in the Milan city council. He asks: 'Can we put up novices, untested Communists?' A false attitude to the question of the united front, an attitude of 'the more the better', led to an entirely wrong way of looking at the situation. The slogan of unity became a fetish; belief in unity became an idol. And, in this way, Serrati deprived himself of the possibility of resolving the basic political problem of that time.

He committed the first basic error, and from it everything else necessarily followed – all the other mistakes and all his frivolous conduct toward the Communist International and communism in general. We were told that immediately after the Second Congress, Serrati formed a faction that took the name: 'Socialists-Communists for Unity'. Socialist is good, Communist is good as well, and unity is even better, so if you put them together: socialists-communists for unity, you figure that you have the best thing in the world.

In reality, it was a mishmash, in the best of cases, and objectively it was not what we Communists needed. Before the Livorno Convention,⁸ as we were urged from all sides not to drive Serrati into a split, we responded that we

6. A *camera del lavoro* represented trade unions in a given locality, providing services to unions, workers, and communities.

7. The source of this quotation is not available. For a collection of articles and letters by Serrati in this period, see Comintern 1921a.

8. The Italian SP's Livorno Congress took place 15–21 January 1921, four months after the Party had failed to give leadership to the half-million workers occupying factories during the great September strike wave. By January, fascist attacks, focused on the SP, had become a serious danger. In Livorno, the ECCI representatives demanded that the SP, a member of the Comintern since 1919, ratify the conditions for membership (Twenty-One Conditions) adopted by the Second World Congress five months previously. Serrati, leader of the SP majority current, insisted on the need to apply the conditions flexibly 'in conformity with the context and the history of the country'. (Broué 2005, p. 477) A left current, led by Bordiga, demanded their immediate and full application, particularly with regard to expulsion of the SP's anti-Communist right wing. Serrati's motion received 98,028 votes; that of the Left, 58,173 votes; that

simply cannot be talked into thinking that Turati's *Critica Sociale* is a Communist publication.

We have known this publication for more than a decade. Even the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist, combated this magazine as being half bourgeois and half reformist. We wrote the comment:

All the 'unitarians' of the world will not be able to convince us that *Critica Sociale* is not a bourgeois paper.

We did not then know that *Critica Sociale* and the Banca Commerciale had something to do with each other. (*Laughter*) We viewed the question in terms of theory. Now we know that when *Critica Sociale* is written, we must read it as 'Banca Commerciale', because it is now known that *Critica Sociale* was supported financially by the Banca Commerciale. And they wanted to remain in the same party with these people!

So, comrades, let us imagine the situation at Livorno. In September 1920, the working class suffered the most grievous betrayal. D'Aragona and his friends carried on consultations for five days and five nights, and their achievement was that the Socialist Party threw itself on its knees, and the working class was betrayed. *Critica Sociale*, as the voice of the Banca Commerciale, remained inside the Socialist Party, and that all happened behind a curtain of 'working-class unity'.

In such a situation, a split was unavoidable and necessary. We say frankly and honestly that, if we are ever again in a similar situation, we will regard it as a revolutionary's most sacred duty to take a stand once again for a split. We are now living in a new period, in which Communist forces are being drawn together. The period of splits is by and large behind us. But, precisely for that reason, we must state that we are not against splits in principle, and that if we ever encounter a similar situation in the future, we will once again advocate a split.

Then came Livorno. The centrists preferred to part company with the International in order to retain 14,000 to 16,000 reformists. You will perhaps remember the letter written by Comrade Lenin to Comrade Serrati, in which he said what we all were saying.⁹ 'We do not ask that you immediately make the revolution. We ask only that you be a revolutionary party and prepare the revolution, that is, by excluding those who are against the revolution, the

of the Right, 14,695. The left current then withdrew from the congress and founded the Italian Communist Party.

9. See 'On the Struggle within the Italian Socialist Party', Lenin 1960–71, 31, pp. 379–96.

reformists.’ And you will also recall that Comrade Serrati – I cannot spare him this – responded to Comrade Lenin’s article as follows:

You ask whether reformists can be tolerated in the ranks of the Party. Permit me to respond with another question: who is reformist?¹⁰

This was the almost philosophical question that Comrade Serrati posed after all that had happened in the autumn of 1920. I believe that events have given a clear answer, and Comrade Serrati could now give us a detailed lecture on who in Italy is reformist. Reformists are those who have, for many years, advocated so-called class collaboration. Reformists are those who, like Turati, with his entire heart – and the more heartfelt, the worse for our cause – has abandoned the working class. Reformists are those who in 1920, at a moment when hundreds of thousands of workers were streaming to our banner with the most deeply felt conviction that we would lead them in struggle, slipped into our ranks in order to appease the working masses and hold them back from struggle. Reformists are those who now busy themselves shining Mussolini’s boots. It certainly does not take any great flair for politics to recognise that. I believe the crows flying about Italy these days can answer for Serrati the question of who is a reformist. But, even in 1920, it did not take any great political skill. You had to be blind not to see and deaf not to hear what was then happening in Italy.

In this situation, comrades, it was our duty to *work for a split* in the old party. And now, after two years, when we ask whether the young Communist International and the Communist party should repent of having carried out a split in Livorno, we answer, *Not on your life!* Should a similar situation arise, we would once again have to advocate such a split. We have nothing to repent of here. True, the Italian Communist Party has not yet led our class to power. It cannot do that because it is too weak and the moment was already in the past. Our young Communist Party was not capable of achieving that, but it has rescued the honour of the Italian working class and the revolutionary banner in Italy. (*Loud applause*) We owe it to you to recognise that fact.

What did the reformists make of the Party and the trade unions? As far as the Party is concerned, the figures tell the story. As I said, the Socialist Party had 216,000 members in 1920. *Avanti!* [*Forward*] had a press run of 400,000 copies, which was the most that it was technically able to produce. It was not just a workers’ paper but a people’s paper for all Italy. Those were the paper’s most glorious days. It was a model of a revolutionary newspaper, recalling the best days of the French Revolution.

10. For Serrati’s reply to Lenin, see *Avanti!*, 11 December 1920.

What did the reformists make of this? As you know, comrades, the Italian Socialist Party has been unimaginably weakened. When we called on Serrati in 1920 to break from the reformists, he said that one had to await the moment when the masses would understand this. Well, comrades, it is enough to cite a single fact. In Livorno, Serrati had the support of almost 100,000; the Communists, 58,000; and the reformists, 14,000. In Rome, a few weeks ago, the reformists and the Maximalists of both factions had almost the same number, about 25,000 each.¹¹ So, the reformists have almost doubled in number, while the total party membership is down by three-quarters. The policy of unity has thus brought the Party to the point where the reformists, who, at Livorno, were a negligible factor, have really become a powerful force. And to say that the split would have been misunderstood in 1920 but will be understood in 1922 is pure sophism. The masses would have understood and carried through the split much more easily and better in 1920 than they will in 1922, and the Party would not have gone to ruin.

That is what the reformists made of the Socialist Party. They were convinced: the more members the better! They wanted to maintain the proud old structure of the Party, and they have managed to bring it to collapse, and, in this process, half the members have deserted into the reformists' camp. They have betrayed not only the revolution but also the Party, if the Party can at all be counterposed to the revolution. There are some who do that. Social Democracy said that they would perhaps have fought against the War in 1914, but there were the splendid trade unions and the full treasuries, built and assembled with such great effort, and they did not want to sacrifice that, and so on.

Well, comrades, it is not just the working class that has gone to ruin in Italy, but the Party as well, because the Party is the leading force in the working class.

What have the reformists made of the trade unions? Unity of the trade unions is as necessary as daily bread. We are for unity of the unions, and for the greatest caution on this question. But it has now been shown how severely history punishes us when the trade-union leadership is held by the reformists. The trade unions, which in 1920 counted more than 2.25 million members, now have barely half a million. And we must realise that if we do not take the

11. Since before the War, Serrati's current had been known as 'Maximalists' because of their insistence on the importance of the 'maximum' demands in the Social-Democratic programme, which dealt with the achievement of socialism. After the 1921 Livorno Congress, all Socialist and Communist currents were weakened by the decline of the workers' movement under the blows of fascism. At the Fourth Congress, the CP of Italy reported 24,638 members, less than half their support at the Livorno Congress. See p. 436.

trade unions out of the hands of the D'Aragonas, he will betray them entirely to Mussolini, blatantly playing into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

I will pass on to you a little discussion that took place in the Italian parliament a few days ago.

As you know, Mussolini made a programmatic speech there, which was, in some respects, quite interesting. For example, he said: 'Please avoid so much empty chatter, gentlemen. Fifty-two speakers on the list who wish to discuss my remarks: that is excessive.' Mussolini wound up his speech as follows: 'So may God assist me in carrying through my difficult task to its victorious conclusion.' As you see, Mussolini is now good friends with God. That goes with his profession. Bourgeois dictators must make friends with God.

But it is noteworthy that Mussolini has also made friends with Turati. I will report to you the duet that Mussolini sang with Turati in parliament.¹²

Turati said that he was against the Fascist march on Rome, and continued that what Mussolini had just done in parliament was a parliamentary continuation of the Fascist march, or, as he put it: 'It is the essence of the March on Rome, which is carried out here in a flawless dress suit.'

Mussolini breaks in, saying: 'Not a dress suit, but a black smock.'

Turati continues: 'This means – there is no need for me to document this fact – that, in the view of the government, after the vote of confidence that is now to be held, the Italian parliament will politically cease to exist.'

Turati continues: 'The Italian parliament elected by the Italians has ceased to exist. We do not deny the right to revolution. We are and want to be a revolutionary party.'

The parliamentary record notes at this spot, 'Ironical laughter from the Fascists'. I can well imagine how ironically the Fascists laughed when Turati stated that his party was a revolutionary party.

Turati then said: 'We do not deny the right of the Fascists to revolution, but we say that your seizure of power is not revolutionary in character.'

Mussolini: 'That will be apparent to you soon enough.'

Turati continues: 'And we say that it has not followed a logical course –'.

So Turati finds that Mussolini is not entirely consistent. He continues: '– be it the logic of revolution or of revolt, for there is a logic of revolution. You have not kept your promise to chase away half of the ruling class.'

Mussolini has not carried out this little promise. Mussolini says, 'I will keep this promise.'

Turati then 'praises, as a socialist and patriot, the instructions that Mussolini gave for foreign policy, despite their nationalist phraseology. But he is

12. By the time of this parliamentary exchange, Turati had left the SP of Italy and was leading the Unitary Socialist Party. See p. 68, n. 9.

not in agreement with Mussolini's judgement regarding re-establishing peace within the country. The conflicts will continue –'

Mussolini says: 'In two weeks there were only four deaths. Think of the past.'

Turati continues: 'The government's financial and economic policies have the same line as that laid out recently by the General League of Industrialists....'

'In order to carry out his programme, Mussolini has created his demagogic reserve force, the national syndicates.¹³ Democracy must necessarily triumph. The proletariat has nothing to fear. Democracy is history itself.'

Mussolini takes pleasure in remarking: 'There is no unavoidable path in history.'

That is the discussion between Mussolini and Turati.

Now, please allow me to pass on to you another duet, this time between Mussolini and D'Aragona, in which the latter touches on the trade unions.

He begins with the statement that he is speaking not on behalf of a political party but for the trade-union movement.

I must make a short clarification here. I have already told you that, until 1922, there was an agreement between the trade unions and the Party. This agreement, this gilded document, which Comrade Serrati always carried in his left pocket (and which, he felt, protected him against any betrayal by the reformists), has been solemnly cancelled. After the split in Rome was carried out, the trade-union leaders said the agreement no longer existed.

And, another interesting event. D'Aragona immediately donned the clothes of trade-union neutrality. He said: 'Politics have nothing to do with us. We are neutral and independent. We do not want to conduct any kind of politics.'

This is a very significant development. D'Aragona is one of the founders of the new Social-Democratic party, to which he has led quite a number of workers, given that he has control of the unions.

You see how ill-mannered the reformist card game sometimes gets.

In a single breath, a single moment, at noon he founds a reformist party with an openly collaborationist programme, and at 1 p.m. he says: 'As a trade unionist I am neutral; my unions are independent and do not engage in politics.' The betrayal is that crude. And, nonetheless, many comrades of our class are still so inexperienced that even so crude a betrayal can sometimes be effective.

It is interesting evidence of the reformist party's weakness that it does not dare have its trade unions appear as openly reformist but has them sail under the flag of trade-union independence.

13. The 'syndicates' were fascist-led pro-employer trade unions.

D'Aragona thus says he is speaking not as a party member but as an independent trade unionist. And he says: 'I urge the government (that is, Mussolini, who is sitting alongside), in the response that it will give to this chamber, to inform us with the greatest clarity and precision what are its intentions with regard to the working class and the trade-union movement.'

Mussolini says: 'Good'.

D'Aragona continues: 'We want a trade-union movement within the framework of the law. That has long been my opinion. In any case, history shows that the *Confederazione del Lavoro* [Labour Confederation] was never responsible for illegality.'

That is how he bows to Mussolini.

'I have always maintained that it is easier to offer the working classes a twenty-cent raise in daily pay and an hour's reduction in the working day, than to arouse them to consciousness and educate them.' That is what he tells Mussolini about the working class. This man treats the working class with such impudence and vulgarity.

And he continues: 'I ask the government whether such a movement, which protects the working class, has a right to exist.'

Then Mussolini stands up and says: 'Yes, such a movement has the right to exist.'

Literally – this is all in the proceedings.

D'Aragona continues: 'If that is true, as we are told from various quarters, then it would seem that the government's intention is to permit only those trade unions that have no ties with unions in other countries.'

So: Amsterdam!¹⁴ And D'Aragona, as you know, is decidedly an internationalist.

It should be said in passing that D'Aragona was here in Moscow as a co-founder of the Profintern [RILU]. In the first session, where the Profintern was founded, D'Aragona signed the proceedings as representative of the Italian workers. You can see that in our revolutionary museum, if you wish. So this gentleman now says to Mussolini, with regard to the question of the International: 'We are affiliated to an international movement, as are also the white trade unions and the industrialists themselves. We want to stay in the International and do not believe that doing so conflicts with the interests of our country. How else can we Italians defend the interests of our countrymen who emigrate to foreign countries?'

Do you want to know why Turati belongs to the International? Because he wants to protect the interests of Italians who emigrate to other countries.

14. 'Amsterdam' refers to the International Federation of Trade Unions, the Social-Democratic-led labour International refounded in that city in 1919.

I have heard it said that an even larger portion of our workforce will have to go abroad. I hope that this will prove possible. And we must strive to ensure that our labour is not demeaned by the trade-union movement abroad. There too we wish to protect the dignity of Italy. We want an end to the times in which foreigners say how our emigrants lived in poverty. I was in emigration, as were you. (Mussolini nods in agreement.) And you know that everything that raises the dignity of emigrants also protects the dignity of the fatherland.

As you see, the dignity of D'Aragona is the dignity of all Amsterdam. Their types of 'dignity' are quite similar, and I am really envious of the Amsterdammers that they have such a dignified representative in Italy. I believe that Mussolini will nod his head in agreement that D'Aragona should feel free to stay in Amsterdam.

D'Aragona, however, cannot resist instigating a pogrom against the Communists. He ends his duet with the following words:

We oppose every form of violence, whether it comes from these benches (he points to the far Left) or from the Right, because we believe that the triumph of violence always entails great danger.

So that, comrades, is the present situation in the Italian trade unions. You see that Comrade Serrati did not entirely succeed in holding on to the trade unions of the working class by means of the gilded document that he had in his pocket. This document did not prevent the unions from now becoming a tool in the hands of our worst enemies. I have read the most recent resolution by the leadership of the [Italian] Confederation of Labour, in which it is said that the trade-union congress that the Communists and the Socialists are demanding is to be postponed for an indefinite period. D'Aragona even says, in his resolution, that the congress will be convened in some still to be defined future epoch. First a new epoch must come. D'Aragona has shown that he really thinks only in epochs. During the War, he did not call a trade-union congress for seven years, even though we pressed for it, and now he says that only in a new epoch will he call one. That means that D'Aragona, despite the majority arrayed against him, now wishes to hand over the organisation directly to the bourgeoisie. That has been proven.

That is the situation of the unions in Italy. They are reduced to rubble. What still exists is in the power of D'Aragona. A congress is now impossible, and the delegates will be convened only in a new epoch. What remains of the trade unions is available to D'Aragona to sell on a daily basis to Mussolini, and he will do it, if we do not succeed in mounting powerful opposition.

That is the balance sheet of two years of chasing unity.

They wanted unity; they wanted a large party, a unified workers' movement, a great and firm united movement, and everything now lies in rubble. The working masses have been betrayed and sold out.

D'Aragona has raised the question of making sacrifices. He said: 'I am for you; I only do not want workers' blood to be shed. That is why I am for an evolutionary path.' But we are not going to get an evolution, and we face the losses. Thousands and thousands have already fallen in the struggle, and the Italian proletariat is still only at the beginning of a new coming together and a new struggle. That is the situation.

A basic error made by a party leader in a revolutionary epoch draws after it, inevitably, a series of further errors, and finally leads unavoidably to a catastrophe for the Party and the entire working-class movement. That is what happened in Italy, and that is why it is in this country, which stood closest to revolution, that we have the clearest lessons in general questions of Communist International policy, on the evaluation of centrism, and so on. We tried to draw conclusions from this in the first part of the resolution.¹⁵ The conclusions, briefly stated, are these:

1. Reformism is our main enemy. 2. Centrism poses a deadly threat to a proletarian party. That is the second lesson. These two lessons are the most important that we can draw from the Italian chapter of the broader tragedy of our times, and we must take that to heart at this congress. We must never let this chapter be erased from our mind. We will probably have to experience other defeats in this decade, but the Italian chapter is the richest in lessons. It is not a matter of discovering the guilt of this or that leader, although the history of our workers' movement will, of course, weigh all the errors we have made along with the good that each of us has contributed to the movement. Something greater is at stake here. The task is to *learn by heart the lessons of the class struggle*, of the civil war in Italy. At a time when the working-class masses are truly pressing forward for struggle, we must not rely on this shallow notion of unity at any price, or the slogan of mixing together the Social Democrats and the Communists, of an alliance with the reformists. Rather, we must advance to the masses, with devotion and with bold Communist tactics. That, comrades, is how our commission views the past.

The past is very important, but what is at issue here is the future. What should be done now? The Commission resolved unanimously *that a rapid unification of the Communist Party with the Italian Socialist Party, which has been freed of reformists, should now be carried out*. That is the unanimous decision of

15. For the text of the resolution, see pp. 1138–42.

the Commission. Our friends of the Italian Communist Party majority have resisted this decision. I hope that the objections have been overcome.

I must tell you that I understand the psychological opposition that our friends of the Communist Party majority feel and must feel in this regard. The struggle during those months was often quite poisonous, not from the Communist side, but from that of the Maximalists. It is only too understandable why the average Communist worker feels anger, thinking: 'Yes, in 1920 we could have won everything, but instead we lost it all. We now are at the beginning of a hard and bloody road, for victory was knocked out of our hands.' That is the dominant feeling among the workers. And it is bound to be dominant, indeed, it is a healthy reaction. We understand this mood among the majority in the Communist Party of Italy.

But comrades, we should not allow ourselves to be ruled by moods. We must overcome the psychological factor. The major political question before us is: is the Socialist Party of Italy, so as it is *now after the split from the reformists*, a suitable candidate for unity with the Communists? Is the human material in its majority, its proletarian component, of a sort that is usable? That is the *political* question, and to that, the Commission has replied, 'Yes'. Personally, I am firmly convinced that this question can only be answered affirmatively.

We in the Commission, considered that we had a similar example in Russia. During our revolution, we had a 'party week', a week during which almost every worker who wished to join our party was accepted. Tens of thousands joined us. *When did that take place?* It was at the time [1919] when Denikin stood before Moscow and General Yudenich was close by Petrograd. It was the most difficult moment for Russian Communists. It was a time when Russian Communists had sleepless nights, when each day could bring the decisive blow to the heart of communist Russia. It was a time when everything was balanced on the knife's edge. At such a moment, we thought, we could carry out a test. We called all workers, all proletarians, who wished to share the danger with us, who wanted to come to us at this difficult and decisive hour, to join us.

I believe that the situation in Italy today is similar. Of course, not everything is the same, but it is possible to draw a parallel. The situation for Communists in Italy is now very dangerous. Now it takes courage and personal sincerity to come to the Communist International. It's a matter of life and death – and now is the time to carry out a test. Granted, Mussolini says there have been only four deaths, for now. But we know that we are only at the beginning of the Mussolini period. This is a time when we can confidently say that we must certainly attempt unity with those who have finally shaken themselves free of the reformists and who now want to come to the Communist International.

Of course, the Socialist Party of Italy has failed in much. It has not created an underground organisation. It even revealed rather significant weaknesses during the first days of Mussolini's régime. But, nonetheless, we see that the Socialists have learned something. I have here an appeal of the Socialist Party that I obtained in the last few days. This appeal is very important. In it, the comrades propose a number of measures to prepare for an underground organisation. They say that tasks must be assigned in advance to the leaders of this organisation, and its workers must absolutely be prepared for this. Their stand here is correct. Of course, stating the need for an underground organisation does not yet mean creating it in reality. Nonetheless, it is good that the Socialist Party has understood that this is necessary.

The overall situation in Italy is such that we believe the experiment can be made in confidence. And this is not an experiment in the frivolous sense of the word but an attempt to really unite what can and must be united.

That does not mean that the Socialist Party will necessarily come over to us in its entirety or in its present form. The Commission decided not to accept the deputy Vella and those who declared their agreement with him, and more generally, not to accept those who raise objections to the Twenty-One Conditions. They tell me that Vella is personally an honest man – I do not know him myself – but he made a speech in the Rome Convention where he said he was against the Twenty-One Conditions and for preserving the old name, 'Socialist Party'. He proposed that the Communist Party dissolve itself into the Socialist Party. He is one of those who regard the Communist Party as a tool in the hands of the Russian foreign office. In one of his most recent editorials, Comrade Serrati responded to Vella's claim by saying: 'Yes, let us concede that the International is really only a weapon wielded by the Russian proletarian state, but even if that is true, that is not so bad, because the Russian state is proletarian in character.'

But this assumption of Comrade Serrati is not correct. We all know the situation very well, and it is not as presented in these words of Comrade Serrati.

In a word, Vella is no Communist, and we must keep him and his co-thinkers outside the unified party. That is what the Commission decided, and I hope that the Congress will approve this.

However, it is necessary that the Congress unanimously tell our Communist comrades, that is the majority of the Italian delegation, that unity is absolutely necessary, and that psychological resistance must absolutely be overcome. We are convinced that if we have one single party in Italy, workers there will perceive this as a new era. The ordinary worker will say: 'The time of splits, defeats, helplessness, betrayal, and demoralisation is finished.' A new chapter is opening. We are finished with all the defeats, and dreadful

errors, and we have come to a moment when the task is to unify proletarian forces. And the Italian workers will breathe more freely when they see that the splitting is behind us and that all the revolutionary and proletarian forces are gathering under the banner of the Communist International.

In saying this, I do not mean to conceal that we are not at the end of the Italian chapter, but, rather, in the middle of it, or, better, just at the beginning of a new chapter. We will still undergo difficult struggles. The most irreconcilable Communists say: 'Today, in 1922, you are uniting the two groupings, and in 1923, at the Fifth Congress, you will make a speech on the Italian question similar to that of Comrade Trotsky on the French question.'¹⁶ People are painting dark pictures of this sort. I am certainly not going to claim that these difficulties do not exist. We face many difficulties. A Communist party cannot be created so easily; time is needed for that. There will be regroupment. Even with regard to the most prominent leaders, we cannot say where they are going to land. That will be decided in struggle and over time – I hope it will be a brief time. But the Communist International must do everything possible to enable each leader – without even speaking of the masses – to join with the masses.

This is not the time to argue about who was right. It's a matter of gathering the genuinely Communist forces in the ranks of a single party. Major errors have been made, and many blows absorbed. There is a Russian proverb: 'One who has been beaten is worth two who have not been beaten.' Well, the Italian Maximalists have been beaten good and proper. Perhaps the proverb will really be applicable to them.

There will be problems. But I do not believe that we will encounter problems in Italy similar to those we saw at this congress with regard to the French Party. The very acute difficulties experienced by many currents in the French Party took place in Italy in a different form before the split, and we are entering a period of recovery. True, illness may occur, but I believe the greatest illness, that of centrism, has been withstood, and things have now started to improve. In many ways, it is the reverse of the evolution experienced in many parts of the French Party over the last year.

We will certainly experience difficulties, and it would be thoughtless on our part to say that if we decide something now we will have the united party, and everything will go well. No, there will be regroupment. The Executive is telling the Italian comrades quite frankly that we will consider it our duty to follow the movement closely and to support the forces in the unified party that are truly Communist and that want to construct a Communist party.

16. For Trotsky's speech, see pp. 963–1004.

There will be regroupment. That is shown by the German example.¹⁷ In Germany, the wound has now healed. The term 'united' party was dropped a year or more ago.

In Italy, things will probably not proceed so quickly. We will support the forces in Italy that want to be Communists. We will not ask where you come from – from the old party or the new one. We will only ask: what you are doing now? Where you stand now?

But we can tell you in advance that there will be problems. And the Communist International must see the situation as it is.

The first task: we must strike against reformism with our united forces. That is a task that can now be readily carried out in Italy, because Italy is in an epoch of civil war, and because this task is now clear for every Italian worker.

Second: we must carry out the united front in Italy in both the political and economic arenas. If there is a country anywhere that is designed for the united front, it is Italy today. Every worker, every non-party worker, will now be ready to fight against Fascism.

The second task is therefore to carry out the united front on both the economic *and political* arenas. The Communist Party of Italy has had many failings in this arena, as has been indicated in other debates.

Third: the slogan of the workers' government. There is no country where more can be gained by this slogan than in Italy. With every week, Mussolini's régime becomes more hated. With every week, broader masses raise the question: What next? What government will replace that of Mussolini? Here we must have a popular slogan, which every worker, every peasant understands, and that is the slogan of the workers' government.

Fourth: enter the Fascist trade unions! That may sound somewhat strange, but it must be demanded. Many Italian comrades resist this, and, in my opinion, they are wrong. I have the proceedings of one of the most recent meetings of the Fascist unions' leadership – a couple of weeks ago. The leaders of these unions claim to have 1.5 million members. That is probably – to put it politely – highly exaggerated. Among those represented were associations of the merchant-marine, agriculture, art, theatre, technical-industrial committees, and, moreover, forty-six trade-union secretariats across the country.

Certainly, the Fascist gentlemen are now trying to use coercion to force the workers into these trade unions. But, if we want evidence that Fascism is truly a petty-bourgeois phenomenon, there is nothing to equal the programme of their trade unions. I will provide you with only a short quotation. One of the leaders of Fascist unions, Rossoni, says this:

17. Zinoviev is referring to the fusion of the KPD with the pro-Comintern majority of the USPD in 1920 to form the United Communist Party of Germany (VKPD).

The middle classes have always paid the bill, because they have never been so unscrupulous as to decide to ruin the nation to serve their own interests. The middle classes are the brain of the nation, the classes of culture and talent. National syndicalism, which claims to be a syndicalism of 'choice', counts above all on these middle classes, who – when the War was fought out by the peasants and workers as a mass – provided the cadres for our admirable officer corps.

The government's present situation is characterised by the fact that the number of those who have joined exceeds a million.

We have won, but the revolution is not finished. Our revolution must be complete, in order to build the nation's new harmony in the name of labour and in recognition of the value of syndicalism. Legitimate profit must be divided between industries and workers.

Here, comrades, you see the ideology of Fascist syndicalism. It is a petty-bourgeois ideology that is actually not as far removed from that of Social Democracy as is sometimes thought. The ideology is fundamentally the same, but in a different form. It could be said to be closer to the Noske form of Social Democracy under Italian conditions. It is no accident that the reformists, the Italian Noskes, ally themselves with the Fascists.¹⁸

Now, in such a situation the question is raised: Should we remain outside these unions? Not at all. We must have the courage to pose frontally the demand: 'Into the Fascist unions!' True, they do not contain 1.5 million workers – perhaps only half a million – but there will be more now that the Fascists control the governmental apparatus. We must enter these unions, and also the Fascist cooperatives. Those who go in as true Communists will remain Communist. We must be in these organisations in order to win the majority of the workers. It is quite an unusual situation. Our *Confederazione del Lavoro* could soon be entirely smashed. Our trade unions, where they still exist, are for the moment in the hands of Fascist agents, the D'Aragonas. On the other hand, in the Fascist unions we find many civil servants but also workers, above all agricultural workers and poor peasants, whom Mussolini has been able to attract through social demagoguery. If we wish to be a mass party, we must go into these unions. We must build our cells there. If we do not do that, we cannot act as a mass party. That is why I believe that this slogan must be raised, however unpleasant it is. We, the Russian Bolsheviks, took part in the so-called Zubatov unions, which were founded by a tsarist general. We sent our best workers into them and they worked there for us. That goes with being a conscious, well-organised, and solid Communist

18. Regarding the comparison of Noske's role with fascism, see p. 1156, n. 35.

party. We must also propose a united front to these Fascist unions in certain situations. We should not shrink back from that.

Fifth: we must succeed in becoming a vanguard for the entire anti-Fascist struggle. Our Communist party has made gross errors in this respect. It failed in the challenge of the Arditi del Popolo [People's Commandos],¹⁹ an organisation of demobilised soldiers and officers, revolutionary soldiers, but also some confused people. We were too weak to convert them into a striking force against Fascism. Our Communist Party committed a doctrinaire error – and doctrinairism is in general their greatest error – in ignoring the Arditi del Popolo. Our Italian friends looked down from on high. They said: These people are not Communists. To say this, to say we have a Communist party and we do not need these people, is to commit an error that I already characterised in the Commission with a term used by Lenin. Lenin said, 'We have some Communists who think they know everything and they can do everything. In Russian this is called *komchvanstvo* [Communist conceit].' The Communist knows all and can do all. This Communist conceit is a disease that afflicts many Communist comrades in Italy.

This phenomenon was clearly displayed with regard to the Arditi del Popolo. It was said: 'Should we really get involved with such confused people? They have not even read the third volume of Marx's *Capital*.' That is very true. Perhaps they had not even seen the first volume, let alone read it. But,

19. The *arditi* were élite shock troops or commandos in the Italian army during the 1915–18 war. In June 1921, a veterans' group of *arditi* in Rome launched the Arditi del Popolo (ADP) as a defence organisation against Fascist assaults. Other ADP groups sprang up throughout Italy. Politically unaffiliated and ideologically heterogeneous, the groups defended all workers' parties and organisations, and usually met in the People's Houses – local headquarters of the workers' movement. The ADP quickly grew to about 20,000 members in 144 branches, many of which were led by SP or CP members.

ADP forcible resistance in July threw the Fascists into a crisis, from which they escaped, in part, by inducing the SP to disown the militant movement. As for the CP, although Gramsci's *Ordine nuovo* urged support for the movement, on 14 July 1921 the party leadership disowned the ADP and decreed that party members could not join it.

Despite SP and CP abstention, the ADP scored several victories over the Fascists, notably during the 'first march on Rome' of November 1921.

The ADP achieved their final victory in the defence of Parma in August 1922, before succumbing in the general defeat of the working class. For a description of combat in Bari, in which they were involved, see Bordiga's remarks, p. 412. See also Spriano 1967, pp. 139–51, and Behan 2003.

In January 1922, a letter from the ECCI, probably written by Bukharin, condemned the Italian CP for its 'pedantic and formulaic' hostility to the ADP. But, in the Fourth Congress, apart from an unexplained mention by Bukharin (see p. 213), the ADP question did not figure in discussions of Italy or the united-front question, in plenary sessions or in available records of the Italian Commission and Sub-Commission, until Zinoviev's summary speech in Session 30.

nonetheless, these were people who were ready to fight against Fascism. And that is why it is now necessary above all to unite all sectors of Italian workers who are ready to fight against Fascism, whether they be workers, peasants, or confused soldiers. We have to unite all forces around our banner – which does not yet mean taking them into our party. The Party must remain closed. But we must be able to move on ahead of the masses. The anti-Fascist slogan, which is still too weak today, will become stronger with every day until it finally thunders out in the struggle against the ruling class. We must be able to keep our attention focused on this growing anti-Fascist movement and to act as a genuine vanguard of the proletarian revolution. That is the fifth point.

The *sixth* point is unity. A unified Communist Party in Italy, as decided by the Commission, will be a symbol for the entire working class and will inaugurate a new era, raising the self-confidence of our workers. They have now lost their courage. After all these defeats, all these blows, after the splits and the splintering, it is understandable that some of the workers have lost heart. But unification will create a new mood among the masses. Unification will draw the working masses together into a real struggle against the reformists and Fascists. That is why unity is absolutely essential and must be achieved.²⁰

These are the motions that we are presenting to you. The chapter of errors of the Italian working class is, as I said, written with the life's blood of Italian workers. True, it is not so easy just to put behind us all these errors – and that is certainly a euphemism with respect to what has happened in Italy – and go on with our business. But what has happened has happened. We must now focus on the future. And we hope that the severe defeat, the hard outcome that has struck us in Italy will lead to enabling our party to now turn this page of history and, when the time comes, to take to heart, at least, the lessons of the past.

There is no country in which we have been so led around by the nose by the reformists as in Italy. So, I hope that hatred against the reformists will burn more fierce in Italy than anywhere else. I hope that we will yet experience that when the hour of revolution strikes, we will remind D'Aragona with his long beard and the other reformist gentlemen of those five sleepless nights during which they deliberated, remind them of the dialogues with Mussolini, remind them of all these betrayals that they carried out against the Italian working class. These are things the Italian working class will never forget, and it will make all this good at the proper time. In my opinion, comrades, this moment

20. Despite the Moscow accords, the Comintern and its supporters in the SP proved unable to win the party for fusion. In 1924, Serrati left the SP along with other Comintern supporters in its ranks and joined the Italian CP.

will come and it is not far removed. After the dark night will come the bright morning. And, in the meantime, we will bear in mind that the darker the night, the brighter the stars! (*Loud applause*)

Chair: Before we take the vote on this resolution, submitted to us by the Italian Commission, we will hear some statements from the Italian delegation.

Bordiga: The majority of the Italian delegation explained its opinion regarding the fusion of the Communist Party of Italy and the Italian Socialist Party in both the full Italian Commission and the Sub-Commission.

The majority of the Communist Party of Italy regards the entire problem of the situation in Italy and relations to the Italian Socialist Party from the point of view of the task set by the Communist Party of Italy when it was formed in Livorno. This task was to win the Italian masses for the Communist International and the revolutionary current through the gradual recruitment to the Communist Party of Italy of workers who have left the other parties. This goal logically excludes any fusion even following the Socialist congress in Rome.

The Communist International has a different assessment of this problem, and, given the Commission's resolution, for which all delegates voted unanimously, it is quite clear that the Fourth Congress is in favour of the fusion.

Following the Italian debate, the majority of the Italian delegation took part in discussions on the practical guarantees for unification and made its proposals. It will not repeat its views now, when the Commission's resolution has been developed and finalised.

In the present situation, especially given that the Communist International's motion is clear and definite, the vote cannot serve as to a theoretical expression of a viewpoint that in any case has been thoroughly expounded. Rather, it represents a political action that will provide a basis for judging the loyalty with which the Communist Party of Italy carries out the International's resolutions. The Party therefore declares that all its actions and policies will be carried out on the guidelines established by the Fourth Congress, without objections or hesitations.

In order to provide convincing evidence of their discipline, the majority of the Italian delegation will limit its participation in the debate to this declaration, will vote for the commission resolution, and will do its utmost to carry it out.

Serrati: After the presentation of the proposals adopted by the Commission on the Italian question, and after discussing the text of these proposals, the delegation of the Socialist Party of Italy declares:

- 1.) The most recent congress of the Socialist Party of Italy, held in Rome, voted unanimously for entry into the Communist International. It did this after expelling the reformists and all open or hidden advocates of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie.
- 2.) Our adherence signifies the unambiguous acceptance of the Twenty-One Points and our firm resolve to fuse with the Communist Party into a single section of the International.
- 3.) We join on the basis of the motion presented to us by the Congress, which accepts our immediate fusion under the conditions established by the Commission on the Italian question. We will set about immediately here to work out these conditions in all their details and to implement them in Italy.
- 4.) However, since our mandate reads '*ad referendum*',²¹ and we are obligated to inform the leadership of our party regarding our action, we ask for the permission to send part of our delegation to Italy, in order to obtain the leadership's consent and agreement to the personal decisions we have taken here, so it may empower us to continue working out the practical organisational conditions for the two parties.
- 5.) The motivation for this request is simply the unanimous desire of all our party's delegates to avoid any polemic when we our return and so to be able to proceed with fewer difficulties to the realisation of the revolutionary-communist movement's unification.
- 6.) The conditions under which the split took place in Rome, just as reaction was dealing out the most severe blows against the Italian proletariat and the entire revolutionary movement, have subjugated our party to a very clear and radical selection. The hour of the opportunists and careerists is ended. Those who have remained with us are genuine supporters, who march resolutely with the Left, while the opportunists in Italy and all other countries are headed to the Right. This fact is a pledge of the sincerity of our entry and a guarantee of our determination to work with all energy and discipline for the programme and policies of the Communist International. Let the polemics of the past stand as a reminder and a lesson for the future. No more should anyone use them as a means of split and of struggle among those who seek unity of all true Communists in defending the proletariat against reaction and in fighting for the victory of social revolution.

21. '*Ad referendum*' means subject to agreement by others and finalisation of details.

Graziadei: Although the fusion obviously carries with it dangers and difficulties, against which the minority has demanded the necessary guarantees, *the minority votes with full conviction* for the resolution before us.

The minority is certain that the unquestionable discipline of comrades of the Italian delegation's majority reflects the hearty and convinced acceptance this fusion will receive from the working masses, who will view it as a necessary precondition for the revival of their movement.

Chair: Before we take the vote on the Italian resolution, I would like to point out that some changes in the original text were made in the Commission. The resolution has been distributed to delegations and their members in the version that contains the changes. You are therefore familiar with the text of the resolution.

Is there anyone who still wishes to speak on this resolution?

That is not the case. So we come to the vote. Is anyone against the resolution? Does anyone abstain?

That is not the case. I record the *unanimous* adoption of this resolution, so important for the Italian and international proletariat. Long Live the Italian Proletariat! Long Live the Communist Party of Italy! (*Loud applause*)

Chair: We now come to the Czechoslovak question. I give the floor to the reporter, Comrade Radek.

Czechoslovakia

Radek: Comrades, brothers and sisters: the commission that took up the Czechoslovak question presents to you its unanimously adopted resolution. This is all the more important because, as you know, the dispute in the Czechoslovak Party was sized up to some degree as a fundamental conflict between the Party's Left and Right. There were comrades in our commission who were, on principle, not always in agreement with the Executive on many points and can be considered part of the left wing, so to speak. Nonetheless, we arrived at a unanimous resolution.

The Communist International is less familiar with the essence of the dispute in the Czechoslovak Party than it is with similar disputes in other parties, because, in Czechoslovakia, it became evident only in the last few months. Nonetheless, it has a rather lengthy prehistory. In summary, this prehistory consists of the fact that the Czechoslovak Communist Party was formed by the majority of the old Social-Democratic party, which had evolved to communism. In the process, some cadres who led this evolution in political and intellectual terms were hesitant at some points on organisational questions.

Thus, Comrade Šmeral, for example, who, from the beginning, played an outstanding role in the struggles of the Czechoslovak Party, took the position at the end of 1920, when conditions were already ripe for formation of a party, that this was still premature. And the quarrels in the Party at that time over what was the right moment to structure the Communist Party generated a mistrust in certain circles of the Party. The present disputes in the Czechoslovak Communist Party arise from the struggles in the Party as it was forming – which we were aware of even before the Third Congress – and with the survivals of this mistrust.

The Czechoslovak Communist Party, like all our large mass parties, has only just worked its way through to a communism of practice. Not a single one of our mass parties was born just like that, as a consolidated Communist party with all its practical engagement. And, in the same way, that was not the case with the Czechoslovak Communist Party. It has existed for only a short time and was created through the connecting up of a whole number of Communist organisations of different nationalities. Its political centralisation is insufficient and falls short of the Party's tasks in the struggle.

The Party suffers from a large number of inadequacies. We discussed them in detail in the Expanded Executive in July [June] with the representatives of the present opposition and the Party Executive. Among the inadequacies were the fact that the Party had not got far in building its trade-union fractions, which meant that, in the struggle against the Amsterdammers, it often let things take their course. In addition, the conduct of the Party's fraction in the Czechoslovak parliament was insufficiently demonstrative and agitational. The Communist Party deputies still did not do enough to link their parliamentary activity with that of the Party outside, across the country.

Take the question of our agitation among the soldiers, which caused such a storm in the bourgeois press in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government seeks to present this as if a dreadful conspiracy were being hatched here in Moscow against Masaryk and his republic. In Czechoslovakia, the soldiers have the right to vote and also, under the constitution, the right to take part in political life. Therefore, we told the Party: 'You have the duty to utilise the rights given you through the constitution so that Czechoslovak soldiers do not know merely what is at stake in the struggle there but also the degree to which they as workers and peasants are on the side of the working people.'

And, if the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie believes that it must attack the Party on this question, we reply that this attack is aimed above all at the political rights of the soldiers. We will see whether the bourgeoisie is then willing to risk making such an attack. Previously, the Party has done little in this arena. And, because of its inadequate activity, when unemployment began to rise

more and more, the Party did not succeed in forging ties immediately and sufficiently with the jobless, in fighting for their cause in parliament and in the trade unions, and in bringing the workers and jobless together in struggle.

These weaknesses and shortcomings strengthened the suspicion of a group of old and good party comrades. If these comrades had been content to make the inadequacies known to the party leadership and the Communist International, to stress them, and to provide practical help in overcoming them, such criticism and positive work would arouse no objections. It would be a healthy part of the Party's overall work. Unfortunately, however, the comrades gave way to mistrust and fell into an attitude of rejecting everything. The comrades made assertions in the Party that were entirely without foundation. Thus, comrades of the opposition spread the rumour that the party leadership under Comrade Šmeral were secretly preparing a coalition with the bourgeoisie. All it needed was for some bourgeois get-together to take place in Marienbad [Mariánské Lázně]. It didn't matter that Comrade Šmeral was not in Marienbad. He was in Carlsbad [Karlovy Vary], and moreover he was not in a bourgeois meeting but in a party meeting, but it was enough. 'Bad' [bath] is 'Bad', and just who he was having that bath with, we don't know. (*Laughter*)

But reports about some kind of goings-on between the party leadership and the bourgeois parties were spread through the Party, poisoning its unity. In our opinion, these reports are sheer lunacy. For, just imagine: the Party calls for a united front and a workers' government; Šmeral carries out all that; and, at the same time, he is supposedly negotiating to enter the government. If he was that crazy, he might get into the government, but he certainly would have to leave the Communist Party.

All it takes is for some bourgeois papers to write about the dispute in the Party, saying that Šmeral is ridding the Party of left elements, and the comrades of the opposition say: 'Here is the evidence that Šmeral is up to something together with the bourgeoisie.' This mood has led good comrades to desperate efforts to establish a publication for their faction. In the old Czech Social-Democratic party, when we were in opposition, we had our paper, *Komunista*. It worked like dynamite for us in the Czech Social-Democratic party. This paper still exists, but only accidentally, because Comrade Štunc was its publisher. The opposition went as far as to write an appeal to party representatives, for which they received a warning from the party leadership that they should not alarm the broad masses of the Party with fallacious assertions.

The opposition did not submit to the party leadership's decision. At the party conference, it was demonstrated that their claims were untrue and they

were told to withdraw them. The opposition did not withdraw them, and for that they were expelled from the party conference. The [Comintern] Executive did not uphold this decision to expel the opposition, and for that it came under attack here from the majority of Czech comrades. This action, the Executive's critics said, had undermined the Czech Party's discipline.

Well, comrades, as for the Czech Party's discipline, the situation is not good. Here is the sort of thing that happens. An editor of a newspaper in a smaller centre says: 'I have been here long enough.' He is told: 'Stay where you are; we do not have a replacement.' So then the comrade gives three months' notice that he is leaving and goes to Prague. Or, to take another example, the editors write articles that do not present the Party's point of view but also do not carry a by-line. And, then, the editors say: 'We are the Holy Ghost and our politics are autonomous.'

This indiscipline is an heirloom from old Social Democracy, and we must put a stop to it. But when this indiscipline has been tolerated for so long, and now Comrade Štunc and other comrades are just tossed out of the Party without further ado, that just did not make sense. We said you could have waited for the World Congress, in order to have a serious discussion with us and the comrades of the Czech opposition.

But these were not the only factors in our decision. Every opposition attracts forces who – I would not want to bet they will be members of the Party for very long. But there are also veteran, sincere comrades in this opposition whom we want to hold in the Party, not because we think they are superior, but because we are convinced of their proletarian sentiments. If they could shake off their great mistrust, they could become good comrades.

We really made great efforts in the Commission to check out all these matters. Charges were raised against Comrade Šmeral regarding which we had to say: 'No, these charges are not true; we're not going along with that.' But, even so, we came to the conclusion that the expulsion from the Party should not be upheld. However, the comrades had in fact committed a gross breach of discipline. And we have an interest in helping the Czech comrades understand that no party of struggle can exist without discipline. So we are in favour of the comrades not being expelled but being suspended from their posts in the Czech Party until its next congress. If they show, after the World Congress, that they really want to collaborate seriously in the Party, there is nothing to prevent the Czech comrades from voting for them again.

However, comrades, I want to say a few words that I hope comrades will take to heart. In the Commission, we often had the experience that we would demonstrate irrefutably that a charge was absurd, and ten minutes later, comrades would stick their hands in their pockets and insist that it had been

clearly proven here that this very charge was true. Comrades raised the accusation against the Party that its leadership seeks to link the Party with the bourgeoisie. We determined that nothing of the kind had happened and that the Czech Party is a good proletarian party. Then the comrades responded: 'You are only confirming that we were right.'

I want to speak here in particular to Comrades Bolen and Šturc. If you are going to carry on in this fashion, and the Party acts to protect itself, the International will not be in a position to hold them back. There must be an end to the flinging about of such unsubstantiated charges. If you see something bad in the Party, fight against it, and appeal to the International. But the Party must feel confident that it is not led by traitors and turncoats but by comrades who have grown up in the Party's work and who have the confidence of its membership. If you want to describe Comrades Šmeral, Kreibich, and others as traitors, we must say we have known these comrades far too long to accept anything like that as true. We point out the weaknesses present in the Party. And the opposition is no less to blame for these weaknesses than others in the Party. (*Very true!*)

The only way to emerge from this situation is through common work carried out in a fraternal spirit. The Czech Party is in a situation more grave than any other party of the International. The country has three million industrial workers and six hundred thousand unemployed. It has twelve million inhabitants, among whom there is grave dissension – among the Slovaks, among the Germans. There is raw material for major national and social conflicts. This situation makes Czechoslovakia one of the countries where we may experience great surprises. I doubt that the Czechoslovak Party is equal to these surprises. Our efforts must therefore be directed at putting the Party in a position to carry out successful work, so that it will not only be able to refute charges and overcome mistrust but become a good party capable of carrying out constructive revolutionary work.

We propose that you adopt the resolution we are presenting to you. It was approved unanimously in the Commission, both by comrades who, you might say, have a bit of a limp in their left leg and those of whom it is said that they steal glances to the right. It was adopted unanimously after lengthy discussions, and after working our way through a great deal of documentation, which we were required to digest, even though it was not pleasant to read. All this documentation provided evidence that what we have here is the starting point for an anarcho-syndicalist current. We do not want them outside the Party; we want to resolve the issues through constructive work in the Party. We therefore ask you to refrain from discussion and to adopt the Commission's resolution. (*Loud applause*)

Chair: Since all delegations, or almost all delegations, were represented in the Czechoslovak Commission, and the members of the Commission are familiar with the resolution, I imagine that I do not even need to read it out. But I must ask whether the meeting is in agreement that we will not read it out. (*Interjections: 'Read it out'.*)

So I must read it out. Here is the text.

Resolution on the Situation in the Czechoslovak Party

1.) The opposition

Comrades Jílek, Bolen, and others were expelled as a result of their repeated breaches of discipline.²² Their representative, Comrade Jílek, and also Comrade Šmeral of the Party's Central Committee gave their agreement in Moscow to a resolution that established that there were no fundamental disagreements in the Czechoslovak Communist Party, but criticised a number of deficiencies in its activity.²³ After the adoption of this resolution, every comrade who recognised that these inadequacies existed had the task of working to eliminate them.

Instead of that, the opposition demanded its right to a factional publication, *Komunista*, which is contrary to the Third Congress resolution forbidding the formation of factions.²⁴ In its struggle for a faction publication, the opposition committed a gross breach of discipline, by sending out an appeal that contained very grave accusations against the Central Committee, a few days before convocation of the committee and of a party conference and despite warnings by the Central Committee. The opposition greatly provoked the party committee and the party conference by refusing to withdraw its accusations, thus unwisely provoking its expulsion.

22. Regarding the expulsions, see p. 109, n. 30.

23. See *Inprecorr*, 2, 90 (20 October 1922), pp. 686–7.

24. The Third Congress resolution on organisational structure deplores 'struggles for power or leadership within the Party'. (Comintern 1921c, p. 108; compare Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 235) However, no general ban on factions is found in the Third Congress resolutions. Elsewhere in the Fourth Congress, the existence of factions in many of the member parties is never referred to as inherently contrary to Comintern norms. Trotsky, for example, says: 'I believe that there will always be a differentiation into tendencies, and that in the moment of decisive revolutionary action the overwhelming majority of members of all factions will meet together in a common framework' (p. 965). However, the right to form a faction was not understood to include producing a public faction journal. This was implicitly barred by the Third Congress resolution on party organisation, which stated, 'No paper can be recognised as a Communist organ unless it is subject to *Party control*'. Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 251.

Before the forum of the International, the opposition accused the majority of the Central Committee and Comrade Šmeral of working for a governmental coalition with left elements in the bourgeoisie. This accusation stands in contradiction to the known facts of the Party's activity and must be rejected as completely without foundation. The opposition's programmatic demands, expressed in the draft by Vajtauer, contain syndicalist and anarchist concepts that are contrary to Marxism and communism. The fact that the opposition expresses support for these views shows that on basic issues they represent an anarchist-syndicalist deviation from the principles of the Communist International.

Nonetheless, the Fourth Congress believes that the expulsion of the opposition from the Party was inadvisable, and it replaces this measure with a sharp reprimand and a suspension from party offices until the next convention of the Czechoslovak Party. Its refusal to uphold the expulsions, considering them inadvisable, should not be regarded as indicating any agreement with the opposition's programmatic line. Rather, its decision was prompted by the following considerations:

The Party's Executive failed to make it clear to the opposition from the start that establishing a factional publication was not permitted, leading the opposition to believe it was in the right in fighting for the existence of this factional paper. A number of its previous breaches of discipline had gone unpunished, weakening the opposition's awareness of the need for discipline and a sense of accountability.

The Fourth Congress allows the expelled comrades to remain in the Party, while stressing the need to hold strictly to the commitment the opposition has made to submit unconditionally to the Party's discipline. This submission to party discipline obliges the opposition to refrain from all the assertions or charges that have been shown in the Commission to be unfounded and untrue. It obliges them to follow all directives of the Central Committee. If any comrade is convinced that he has been unfairly treated, he can appeal to the next competent party body (expanded Executive Committee, national conference) and ultimately to the control commission of the Communist International. Pending the decision of the highest body, everyone must submit unconditionally to the decisions adopted by party bodies.

2.) *The press*

The party press must be led in unified fashion by the Central Committee. It is impermissible that the Party's official publication can presume not only to follow its own political line but to regard this separate line as its right. Even when the editorial board considers that the Party's responsible leaders have

committed errors in some specific matter, it is their duty to accept the decision that has been made. The position of an editorial board does not have equal weight with that of a higher body. Rather, the editorship, like all other aspects of the Party, should be subordinated to the Central Committee. That does not deny the right of party editors to express a different view in signed discussion articles. Discussion over party matters should be conducted in the general party press. Such discussion should not, however, be carried out in a way that endangers party discipline. The Central Committee and all party organisations have the responsibility to prepare their campaigns through discussion in the party branches.

3.) *The Party's shortcomings*

The Fourth Congress fully endorses the theses of the July [June] meeting of the Expanded Executive,²⁵ which assess the shortcomings of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and explain them as coming from their transition from a Social-Democratic to a Communist party. The fact that these shortcomings are recognised by the Central Committee as well as by the opposition increases the responsibility of all comrades to work keenly to overcome them. The Congress finds that the Party has been very slow in eliminating these shortcomings. Thus, the Party has not done enough, for example, to ensure that the ideas of communism are spread in the Czech army, although this is made possible by the Party's legality and the fact that Czech soldiers have the right to vote.

The Fourth Congress instructs the Communist Party to increase its attention to the question of unemployment. Given the broad scope of unemployment in Czechoslovakia and the precarious conditions of the jobless, the Party needs to do more than to rest content with a demonstration here or there. The Party should carry out a systematic campaign of agitation and demonstrations among the unemployed throughout the country. It should intervene energetically in parliament and municipal councils in the interests of the jobless, uniting action in parliament with that of the trade unions and the masses.

The Party's actions in parliament must have a much sharper cutting edge. They must bring home forcefully to the masses the gulf that divides the Communist Party from the politics of the ruling class and rouse in them the will to seize state power.

Given the great economic struggles taking place in Czechoslovakia, which can at any moment turn into great political struggles, the Central Committee must be organised in a manner that enables it to take positions quickly and

25. For the ECCI resolution, see Comintern 1922a, pp. 119–22.

decisively on every question. Party branches and members have the duty to maintain the Party's discipline unwaveringly.

The Party has handled correctly the general question of the united front and the workers' government. Isolated errors, such as the view of Comrade Votava that the workers' government is a matter simply of a parliamentary alliance, have been properly rejected by the party executive. The Party must be aware that a workers' government in Czechoslovakia will become possible only when it succeeds, through widespread agitation, in convincing substantial numbers of national-socialist,²⁶ Social-Democratic, and apathetic workers of the necessity to break with the bourgeoisie. The Party must convince sectors of the peasantry and urban petty-bourgeois layers who are suffering from inflation to break from the bourgeoisie, integrating them into the anticapitalist alliance. To achieve this, the Party must stand firm in all social conflicts, acting decisively and broadening the conflicts when conditions allow. It must convince the masses that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is the focus for all anticapitalist forces in their united-front efforts, and that it is determined to change the relationship of forces in favour of working people in the mass struggles taking place in Czechoslovakia.

To enable the workers' government to arise and hold power, the Party must do its utmost to unite in strong trade unions the workers expelled from the Amsterdam unions. It must win at least a section of the proletarians and peasants in army uniform for the interests of the working class, and thus banish the danger of the rise of fascism and of the bourgeoisie suppressing the working class through armed force. Propaganda and struggle for a workers' government must therefore always be carried out together with similar efforts for mass proletarian councils (councils for defence, councils for workers' control, factory councils). It is equally necessary to keep explaining to the masses the programme of the workers' government (transfer of the burden of state expenditure to the propertied, control of production by councils of the working class, arming of the working class), in order to demonstrate the difference between a bourgeois-Social-Democratic coalition and a workers' government based on the workers' organisations.

All party members must take part in this work. Not idle grumbling, not the spreading of false accusations, not the sowing of distrust against the party leadership, but objective criticism of its deficiencies, constructive daily work to overcome them – that is what will make the Party into a battle-ready Communist party, equal to the great tasks posed by the course of events in Czechoslovakia.

26. Regarding the Czech national socialist party, see p. 134, n. 11.

Štunc (Czechoslovakia): Comrades, brothers and sisters: We came to Moscow in order to reveal on behalf of the oppositional workers the significant indications that our party is bogging down and decomposing. Our warnings have not been sufficiently heeded, and our presentation not sufficiently examined. The Congress is therefore resolving the crisis of our party through a compromise – just what we have warned against. The proposed resolution will not eliminate in good time the danger that we highlighted. We submit to the decisions of the congress majority, but we also consider it our duty to warn that we speak for the broad masses of discontented workers that will not understand this resolution. It will be hard to restrain them from continuing the work of eliminating all the unhealthy aspects of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Šmeral (Czechoslovakia): Comrades, brothers and sisters: In the name of the Czechoslovak delegation, I declare that we are in agreement with the resolution and will vote for it. What concerned our party executive and the national conference was not expulsion at any price but the maintenance of discipline. Prior to the Congress, given how things stood, we were helpless and at a loss in the face of the point of view advanced so insistently by the expelled comrades. The resolution notes correctly that their stubborn intransigence directly provoked the decision of the national conference. However, we hope that the discussions at the World Congress will be sufficiently instructive, and that a truly Communist discipline will prevail in our party, with the aid of the new Executive.

The Party's authority and discipline is absolutely required for it to rapidly remove the inadequacies enumerated in the resolution, of which we are aware. Our party is only a year old, and it is functioning in rather complicated circumstances. We believe we may say that during the last year our work has achieved important and constructive results. Nonetheless, this is not the time to speak of what has been achieved. We consider it our duty to work for the further perfection of our party, and we will devote all our energy to this task. Just as we demand discipline in the Party, we wish to subject ourselves entirely to the supervision and discipline of the International. In this way, we hope to shape the Party organisationally in a truly communist spirit. We also aim to make it into an active and battle-ready component of our international army, which can win the International's trust through its deeds in the struggle. During the coming year, we anticipate there will be important events in Czechoslovakia. We are convinced that the united, firmly consolidated, and disciplined Communist Party of Czechoslovakia will be a match for the great tasks that await it, and that, during the coming year, we will bring significant victories to the International as a whole.

In the name of the Czechoslovak delegation, we therefore declare that we will vote for the resolution that has just been read out.

Chair: Before the vote, I believe I need to say something on behalf of the Presidium. In his declaration, Comrade Šturc stated that the Czech question had not received sufficient examination. I wish to state that this is not accurate. The opposition has, of course, the right to make statements here, but we need to reject the assertion that the Czech question received inadequate examination.

We come to the vote. Is there anyone opposed to the resolution presented by the Commission? I record the adoption of the resolution with one vote opposed.

Comrades, that brings us to the end of our work for today. It is no longer possible to hear the report on the American question today. I will only inform you that there will be a discussion among all women comrades at 11 a.m. tomorrow morning. In addition, delegations are requested to submit proposed nominations for the Executive to Comrade Humbert-Droz by tomorrow morning.

Adjournment: 4:00 p.m.

Session 31 – Tuesday, 5 December 1922

Workers' Aid; Yugoslavia; Norway

The question of proletarian aid for Soviet Russia. The Yugoslav question. The Norwegian question.

Speakers: Münzenberg, Kon, Stanić, Radić, Marynko, Bukharin

Convened: 12:50 p.m.

Chairperson: Neurath

Chair: As the next item on the agenda, we will deal with the resolution on economic aid. Comrade Münzenberg will report on the amendments.

Münzenberg: Comrades, the question of economic aid was considered in several meetings of the commission elected by the Congress to take up this question, and also by the Presidium yesterday evening, and finally by a commission set up by the Presidium. This commission has asked me to present the Congress with the following resolution. I ask for its unanimous adoption.

Resolution on Proletarian Aid to Soviet Russia

1.) Workers of every country, without distinction of political or trade-union alignments, have a stake in the survival and consolidation of Soviet Russia. It is this awareness, combined with deeply rooted feelings of proletarian solidarity, that has moved all workers' parties to support the campaign of famine

relief for Soviet Russia and led millions of working people in all countries to make the greatest sacrifices. This proletarian aid campaign grew into the mightiest and most extended international solidarity campaign in the history of the workers' movement. With its aid, Soviet Russia has come through the worst days of famine and has conquered hunger.

But, already during the famine relief campaign, a large number of the workers' organisations engaged in it realised that a one-time effort to deliver food supplies was not enough to help Soviet Russia. The economic war of the imperialist states continues against Soviet Russia. The trade blockade persists in the form of a refusal of credits, and, in every case where capitalist groups do initiate economic relations, it is done with the goal of walking off from Russia with profits and exploiting Soviet Russia.

As in all other conflicts of Soviet Russia with its imperialist enemies, the workers of all countries have the duty to intervene in the economic war in support of Soviet Russia against its enemies, and to support Soviet Russia with all means, including those of effective and practical economic assistance.

2.) The best support to Soviet Russia in the economic war is workers' revolutionary political struggle, and increasing pressure on the government of every country around demands for recognition of the Soviet government and creation of favourable trade relations with it. However, given the importance of Soviet Russia for all working people, political efforts need to be accompanied by the mobilisation of the maximum economic effort by the world proletariat to support Soviet Russia.

Every factory and workplace that Soviet Russia is able to bring into production without capitalist credits provides it with effective help in the struggle against imperialist robbery. Every reinforcement of Soviet Russia, the first workers' state of the world, strengthens the international proletariat in struggle against its class enemy, the bourgeoisie.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International therefore considers it the duty of all workers' parties and organisations, and above all the Communists, alongside their revolutionary political struggle, to carry out a campaign of economic aid among the broadest masses to provide Soviet Russia with immediate and practical assistance in rebuilding its economy.

3.) The most important task of proletarian economic aid outside Soviet Russia consists of providing means that make it possible to buy machines, raw materials, tools, etc. for Soviet Russia. In addition to the techniques utilised so far – collections, donations, the organisation of special events, and so on – we must consider the participation of party branches, trade unions, cooperatives, and broader circles of workers in the workers' loan for Soviet Russia.

Propaganda for proletarian economic aid also provides an outstanding opportunity to develop agitation on behalf of Soviet Russia. It should therefore be carried out in close liaison with the national sections in each country.

Since the question of economic support for Soviet Russia is one of general importance for the entire working class, it is necessary that the campaign be organised and led by committees including delegates of diverse worker organisations, similar to the workers' famine relief committees for Russia – or that entirely new associations be created. These committees or associations have the task of interesting the broadest layers of workers in economic assistance and winning them to it.

These agencies will be under the supervision of the Communist International.

4.) The distribution of funds raised by the committees and associations must be carried out in close consultation with the existing Russian economic agencies, both state and workers' organisations.

5.) Given Russia's present economic situation, a massive immigration into Russia of workers from abroad would not provide support, but, rather, would make Russia's reconstruction more difficult, and should not be encouraged under any circumstances. The immigration into Russia of workers from abroad should be limited to individual specialists who are urgently needed in the factories. Even in such cases, however, it is first necessary to receive agreement and approval from the Russian trade unions.

6.) Proletarian economic aid must strive to harmonise two aims: the focusing of international workers' solidarity on assisting the world's first proletarian state, and efforts to achieve tangible economic results.

7.) In accordance with the principles of socialist cooperation and economic management, any surplus that is achieved may be used only to expand the scope of the campaign.

Chair: We will now vote on the resolution, including the amendments made by the Commission and the Presidium.

Is anyone opposed to the text of the resolution just read out by Comrade Münzenberg, including the amendments?

That is not the case.

The resolution is therefore adopted.

We come to the next point on the agenda: a report on the work of the *Yugoslav* Commission.

Yugoslavia

Feliks Kon (Poland): Comrades, before I present the report on the Yugoslav Party on behalf of the commission set up for that purpose by the Congress, I would like to recall a quotation from the speech by Comrade Zinoviev: ‘We were born in the bosom of the Second International and have brought with us many of its traditions, which cannot be eradicated overnight. But even if it takes several years, we must demand that the process be speeded up.’¹ That certainly applies to the Yugoslav Party.

In giving the Congress a report on this party, we must start from an understanding that the great strength of communism consists of being able to speak the truth, even when this truth is a bitter one.

Sadly, and unfortunately, when we take up the Yugoslav Party, we must speak such a bitter truth.

The Yugoslav Party was born in 1919–20, a time when the masses were attracted by the slogans of communism. The upsurge in Italy, combined with the enthusiasm of the working class in every other country, offered an opportunity to build a broad movement. And that is what we witnessed when the Yugoslav Party, until then quite small and only recently freed from reformist forces, suddenly became one of the strongest parties, winning many municipal elections, sending fifty-nine deputies into parliament, and in general, so it seemed, representing a significant force.

But this party, so large numerically, and precisely because of this influx and the easy victories it produced, was extremely slow to consider that without a baptism of fire in the struggle no Communist party can be born. It’s not enough just to paste on the Communist label. The Party retained as before all the negative features of the former Social-Democratic party. It remained a party of resolutions, which attached enormous importance to its participation in parliament, and reckoned that it could, in this way, influence the bourgeoisie and defend the working class. They failed to bear in mind that, when the masses energetically demand struggle – a will to struggle that was made evident by the influx into the Communist Party – this attracts the attention of the proletariat’s class enemy, which intensifies the measures for suppression. In this regard, the Party seemed to cling to legality with all its energy and by every means.

We must draw to your attention the fact that the Yugoslav sister party is one of the parties – fortunately very few – who have not published the Twenty-One Conditions for admission to the International. Nor has it published the Communist International’s resolution presenting its attitude to parliamentary

1. See Zinoviev’s ECCI report, p. 110.

activity – as if it feared that this would undermine its position in parliament.² It took no notice of the fact that objective conditions were visibly heading towards converting this easy victory into an equally easy defeat. Instead, during this entire period, the Party took no measures to prepare itself – not with resolutions, but with deeds and struggles.

Then the notorious decree on state security appeared.³ It was to remain in force only six months, and had to be confirmed by parliament in order to become law. The Party counted on the notion that parliament would not confirm the decree and would not convert it into law, and it did not launch a struggle. Things came to the point where municipal governments with a Communist majority were dissolved, and Communists were driven out of parliament.

And all this happened under conditions not seen in any other country. The masses were not called on to protest; no movement was launched. Nowhere was there a sign of life, a protest, an attempt to struggle in the usual Communist manner. None of this was seen in Yugoslavia. The victory won by the proletariat's class enemy, without struggle and without encountering resistance, came so easily that the victors themselves seemed baffled. Repressive acts rained down on the Communists and the working class. Their publications were closed. Their trade unions were banned and the workers handed over to the organisations of the compromisers [reformists]. People were thrown in jail. But the Party did not give evidence of the slightest struggle against these counter-revolutionary excesses.

At the same time, the Party was struck down by reprisals, and the result was a phenomenon very familiar to us from Russia and other countries where the struggle has been waged underground. The majority of the active comrades could avoid imprisonment only by seeking refuge abroad.

And, so, we had the emigration, with all its distinctive associated features. For the Yugoslav Party, this was new. When a party has existed underground for decades, all this is familiar. The leaders – thrown off the rails of daily life, robbed of direct contact with the proletarian masses, and tossed into uncertainty – engaged in lengthy and sweeping discussions of the causes of their defeat. As usual, they shoved the blame now on one person, now on another.

No Marxist analysis was conducted of the events in Yugoslavia. Instead of that, we could observe what is known as 'emigrantism'. Even though there

2. The Comintern adopted a resolution on 'Communist Parties and Parliamentarism' at its Second Congress in 1920; see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 470–9.

3. The chronology of the events described here is given in the resolution that follows; see p. 1073.

were no disagreements on principle, disputes arose, rooted in mutual mistrust, in the sense that one current did not trust the other to interpret resolutions correctly. It was not a matter of policy differences but of mistrust felt by one group of leaders regarding the political tact, sensitivity, and capacity of another group. And this was strongly expressed at the time when the Vienna Conference was called [in July 1922].

Comrades, here, I must speak of things that old veteran revolutionaries are ashamed to deal with – ashamed with regard both to themselves and the comrades of whom they must speak. When the Yugoslav Party was legal, it worked out explicit organisational statutes. Since then, everything has been turned upside down. And there, where it seemed that all the preconditions were present for the struggle to develop, almost nothing is left but rubble. Something had to be convened, whatever the cost – whatever you choose to call it: a conference, a congress, a consultation. It was urgently necessary for the active comrades to come together in order to discuss how to get out of this situation and how to rebuild the totally devastated organisation.

It is obvious that under such conditions you cannot go by statutes drawn up for conditions of legality. You cannot start by checking whether the conference has been convened in conformity to this and that clause. The Party's life and the interests of the working class, it would seem, must take priority. And we must acknowledge that, given the conditions in which the Vienna Conference was convened, the attempt was made to observe the statutory provisions as much as possible. And, while some points were not applied – I can confirm that – it was convened in a manner that conformed to many of the provisions. But, if the Conference had not been convened because of a failure to observe all these provisions, those who failed to call it would have been guilty before the court of the Communist International.

Happily, the Conference was convened. We should note here that specific political and organisational resolutions were drafted, which received the approval of the Comintern Executive. These resolutions did not arouse any disagreements, either on one side or the other. Comrades, the commission that had to arbitrate the affairs of the Yugoslav Party under these circumstances was witness to the fact that something had divided the active comrades into two camps, despite all their assurances that, in fact, there were no differences. That compelled us to consider whether there were, in fact, differences that had not yet taken on a definite shape.

And, so, the Commission set itself the goal of analysing in the presence of the comrades all the political issues that have led to differences of opinion in the other parties: the assessment of the political situation; the Party's relationship to the trade unions; the national question, of crucial importance for

the Yugoslav Party; the question of mutual relations between the legal and underground organisations – we raised all these questions in the Commission and gave them a good airing. And we must now report that in all these questions there are no differences between the two groups.

This inevitably poses the question of the cause of this entire spectacle. Comrades, I have already pointed out the reason why it arose. It always arises among those in emigration following a defeat, and it is necessary to address the issues in that framework. Comrades, this is an extremely important moment for us. If there are no political differences, specific organisational norms must be established that enable all those who are capable to take part in the work, for that is what makes it possible to overcome mutual mistrust through common work. This has already happened in some other parties.

In this regard, we developed an array of organisational norms, which we are recommending to the Comintern Executive for adoption. We are dealing here with a party whose activity is mostly underground and illegal. Comrades will therefore agree that such organisational questions should not be discussed here in plenary session, but should be referred to the Comintern Executive.

As regards the political situation facing the Party, I will convey to you the resolution drawn up by the Commission. In conclusion, allow me to express not only the hope but the deep conviction that all comrades of the Yugoslav Party, from this moment on, will unconditionally submit to the decision that the Party's highest body – the Fourth Congress – is taking here. May they not only take note of this decision, as has happened until now, but carry it out to the full. May they roll up their sleeves and apply themselves to the task that is awaiting them in this country. And I am convinced that, at the next congress, we will see before us a unified and battle-ready party, based on the abundant ranks of proletarians – the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

I will now read out the resolution. Comrades may find it a bit longer than most such resolutions, but the Commission felt it was necessary in this resolution, which is destined for publication, to dot every 'i', in order to avoid misunderstandings or incorrect interpretations.

Resolution on the Yugoslav Question

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia was formed from the old Social-Democratic parties in the different regions that now make up the country. First the right-wing forces, and later also the centrists were removed from the Party, which affiliated to the Communist Party [Vukovar Congress, 1920]. The general revolutionary ferment in Central Europe at that time (the Red

Army's advance on Warsaw; occupation of the metalworking factories in Italy), combined with the strike movement that had broken out in Yugoslavia with elemental force, led to the growth of the Communist Party. In a short time, it developed into a mass party that exerted significant influence on the broad masses of workers and peasants. That was shown by the results of the municipal elections, in which the Party won control of many municipal governments (including that of Belgrade). Moreover, in the later elections for the Constituent Assembly, the Party won the election of fifty-nine deputies.

This threatening growth in the Communist Party's influence so alarmed the ruling oligarchy of generals and bankers that they unleashed a campaign of systematic destruction against the Communist movement. After the forcible suppression of the general strike of transport workers [April 1920], they expelled Communists from the municipal council of Agram [Zagreb] [June], suspended the Communist municipal administration in Belgrade [August], and, in a decree issued 29 December, banned all Communist and trade-union organisations, suppressed the Communist press, and handed over the Party's clubs and institutions to the social-patriotic party. In June, the law on order and state security illegalised the Communist Party and expelled it from its last refuge in parliament and the municipal administrations.

The destruction of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia can be ascribed not only to the objective conditions, but also, to a significant degree, to its own internal weaknesses. It lacked both a developed and consolidated organisation appropriate to its overall growth, and also sufficient Communist consciousness among its membership. The Party did not have enough time to complete its evolution toward Communism. Nonetheless, it is now clear that the party leadership was guilty of major errors and mistakes, which can be traced back to their incorrect concepts regarding the Communist International's methods of struggle.

These errors and mistakes made the task of the counter-revolutionary government much easier. The working masses demonstrated their revolutionary energy and will through a number of powerful strikes, but the Party displayed very little revolutionary initiative. Thus when the police banned the 1920 May Day demonstration in Belgrade, the party leadership did not even make the attempt to rally the masses in a protest meeting. The next year, the same thing happened. Similarly, the Party did not undertake any mass actions to defend the municipal councillors in Agram, who were forcibly expelled. When the municipal administration in Belgrade was ripped out of the Party's hands in most brutal fashion, it did nothing. Its passivity gave courage to the government to go to the limit. At the end of December, the government took advantage of the miners' strike to ban the Party and the trade unions. At this crucial

moment, the Party, which had received approximately 210,000 votes in the elections and had sent fifty-nine delegates to parliament, did not respond with any mass action.

The Party's passivity under the brutal blows of reaction arose from its lack of a sufficiently Communist orientation. It had not yet fully shaken free of the old Social-Democratic outlook. The Party had originally affiliated to the Communist International with enthusiasm – evidence that the masses were ready for struggle. But the party leadership felt a certain unease about this new course. So it did not venture to publish the Twenty-One Conditions adopted by the Second World Congress or the Theses on Revolutionary Parliamentarism.⁴ It thus left the Party and its masses of supporters fully unaware of all that the Communist International demands of its member parties in order to become genuinely Communist.

The party leadership, for its part, took no serious steps to prepare the Party and the masses to struggle against the threat of reaction, whatever the circumstances. Its attention was fixed above all on the Party's electoral successes. It was careful not to scare away petty-bourgeois forces by revealing to them the nature of the Communist Party and its methods of struggle. And while the Belgrade oligarchy of bankers and generals were preparing for a decisive, hard, and ruthless struggle against the revolutionary workers' movement, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia concentrated the Party's attention and energy on parliamentarism, a quite secondary question, and left the Party's back exposed, without organised protection. That was its fundamental mistake.

The Party was shown to be powerless and unable to defend itself against the white terror. It did not have any underground apparatus that would have made it possible to work and to maintain a link with the masses under the new conditions. It was the parliamentary fraction that served, until its dissolution, as the link between the centre and the regions. Subsequently, this link was broken. After the arrest of leading comrades in the centre and the regions, the movement was beheaded. The Party suddenly ceased to exist, as it were. The local party branches suffered the same fate, creating the danger that the workers, left to their own devices, would be scattered. The Social Democrats, supported by the police, made efforts to gain from this favourable situation, without any real success.

Under the reign of white terror, the party leadership moved gradually to adopt the organisational forms and methods of struggle demanded by the new situation. For a long time, it remained passive, expecting that the terror

4. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, 470–9, and 2, pp. 765–71.

would die down without the active intervention of the proletarian masses, and relying exclusively on the contradictions and struggles within the ruling classes and parties. It hoped that the Communists appearing for trial would be acquitted, and then that they would be pardoned on the occasion of the king's marriage. Only when these hopes had been dashed did the leadership move to reorganise the Party and bring it back to life.

In July 1922, at last, the Party convened in Vienna in its first extended plenum. This conference was the first attempt to reconstitute the Party, and it must be warmly welcomed, even though its composition did not fully correspond to the provisions of the party statutes. The prevailing conditions in Yugoslavia, in which a number of members had been arrested or had betrayed, and the changes resulting from one and half years of inaction, made it impossible to hope that a plenum with a quorum could be convened, one truly representative of the Party. The Communist International Executive Committee therefore acted rightly in authorising the expanded plenum to act on behalf of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The Executive confirmed its decisions, although with some quite reasonable changes regarding the composition of the newly elected Central Committee. For the same reason, the attempt by some Yugoslav comrades to leave the conference on 16 July, and thus to break with it, must be condemned, despite their good intentions, as an action objectively harmful to the Party.

The decisions of the Vienna Conference on the general situation in Yugoslavia and the immediate tasks of the Communist Party, on the trade-union movement, and on the Party's reorganisation have not revealed any significant disagreements between representatives of what have been called the party majority and minority. Nor is this the case with the resolutions of the Third Communist Conference of the Balkans,⁵ which were endorsed without change by the Communist International Executive Committee. This unanimity with regard to the most important questions before the Party is convincing evidence that there are no grounds at present to divide the Yugoslav Party into factions termed majority and minority, and that the split that took place in the leadership at the Vienna Conference was due entirely to disagreements of a personal nature. At the moment of its rebirth, the Yugoslav Party must be treated as fully united.

At the same time, however, it is absolutely necessary to safeguard its unity in the future. Nothing would be so disastrous for the Party and the revolutionary movement in Yugoslavia as a factional split in the face of the capitalist and Social-Democratic reaction raging in the country. Therefore, the new party

5. The third conference of the Balkan-Communist Federation took place in Moscow, 19–22 July 1921.

leadership must do all in its power and take all necessary steps to reassure the unquiet spirits in the Party, in order to restore the necessary trust within the Party and to unite around the party banner all the activists who have held firm during the counter-revolutionary storm.

This goal can be achieved, first, by implementing the Vienna Conference decision regarding ridding the Party of compromised elements and, secondly, by integrating the active comrades of the Vienna Conference minority into responsible work. Here, the Yugoslav Party can receive fruitful support from the Balkan Communist Federation. But for this it is essential that it follow the example of the other Balkan Communist parties by immediately naming and sending its representatives to the Balkan Executive Committee. In its process of reconstruction and internal consolidation, the Yugoslav Party can also count on the support of the Communist International, whose Executive must maintain more intimate ties to the Party than has been the case in the past.

But the Party's future rests above all in the hands of the comrades who have remained firm both politically and morally. Enriched by the hard experiences of the recent past, unified organisationally and in their ardent belief in the victory of international revolution, they will succeed in gathering and uniting the proletarian elements now scattered and left without leadership. They will organise and strengthen the Yugoslav section of the Communist International.

The Congress instructs the Executive of the Communist International to take the organisational measures dictated by the circumstances.

Feliks Kon: Comrades, in order for this resolution to be as authoritative as possible and have the greatest possible impact in Yugoslavia, where our decision is much needed, you are asked to adopt this resolution unanimously. (*Applause*) I must add that the plan developed by the commission for organisational measures by the Executive has already been distributed.

Chair: Two comrades have asked to speak on the report of the Yugoslav Commission. First of all, I give the floor to Comrade Stanić for a statement.

Stanić (Yugoslavia): In the name of the minority, that is, the left wing of the Yugoslav Communist Party, I declare our agreement with this resolution. That is, we agree with the criticism of how the opportunists have acted and the errors committed by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the last two years. The resolution fully confirms our criticisms. But there is a profound contradiction between the Commission's criticisms and the organisational measures that it proposes to resolve the internal dispute, because the resolution places the leadership of the Party following the Vienna Conference in the hands of comrades supported by the opportunists.

We asked the Commission and ask again that the party leadership be composed of two equal parts. We say this even though we had every right to demand control, since we represented the majority in this dispute, and our Communist position was anti-opportunist. We are asking only for what has already been granted in the case of the French Party.⁶

Chair: Comrade Radić of the Yugoslav delegation has also asked to speak in order to give a statement.

Radić (Yugoslavia): On behalf of three of the four members who make up the Yugoslav delegation, I would like to state the following:

We call to mind the fact that the most recent expanded conference of the party council in Vienna was authorised to definitively settle all questions and also to elect a new executive, a stand upheld by the Communist International Executive and also the commission on the Yugoslav question, with the goal of removing all misunderstandings and uniting all the forces so needed by the Party. Nonetheless, we accept the Commission's decision. We will apply all our energy to carrying it out and will vote for the resolution. (*'Bravo'*)

Chair: There is a third statement – by Comrade Marynko.

Marynko (Yugoslavia): Comrades, the delegation of the Yugoslav Communist youth league is in full agreement with the presentation by Comrade Kon. It declares that the Communist youth of Yugoslavia will not only accept the political and organisational resolution but will also apply all their strength to implement it in life – all the more since it corresponds in this respect to the youth league's previous work. (*'Bravo!'*)

Chair: We now come to the vote on the resolution proposed by the Yugoslav Commission. Is anyone opposed to the resolution? That is not the case. Does anyone abstain? That too is not the case.

The resolution is unanimously adopted.

We now come to the report of the Norwegian Commission. I give the floor to the reporter, Comrade Bukharin.

Norway

Bukharin (*Greeted by applause*): Comrades, sisters and brothers: as you all know, there is a rather severe crisis within the Norwegian Party. The crisis is expressed in the existence of two factions, locked in mutual struggle. One of

6. Stanić misinterprets here the congress organisational resolution on the French question, presented on pp. 1013–16.

the factions has a relationship with the International that is far from ideal – at least there are various events and facts that seem to indicate a crisis in relations between the Norwegian Labour Party and the [Comintern] Executive.

First, I will describe the two Norwegian factions in general terms.⁷ The existence of these factions has rather deep historical roots, which can only be understood in terms of the Norwegian Labour Party's history. The first current, which now has a majority inside the Labour Party, can be termed as partly syndicalist and partly reformist in tendency. The existence of these tendencies in the Norwegian Labour Party is expressed in the following trends.

The first is federalism. The syndicalist current promotes federalist trends. Earlier, when all the comrades of this current were combating the Social-Democratic current, they utilised this syndicalist federalism as a sort of weapon to destroy the old Social-Democratic organisation. At that time there was the centralised Social Democracy and the centralised trade unions and also the revolutionary opposition and especially the opposition in the trade unions. This latter opposition was based on the federalist principle.

It can be said that some of the leading comrades of this trade-union opposition, who were students of the American current, the IWW, were a revolutionary-federalist current. They applied the teachings of the IWW to Norway, and it cannot be said that this, in principle, was harmful. Exactly the opposite. It was a rather efficient tool to disorganise the old organisation and win strategically important posts inside the union movement.

But these same federalist tendencies – or their continuation – are still at work in a context where the majority adheres to us, the revolutionary current, and the Social Democrats are fully defeated and shattered. It follows that, in the present period, these federalist principles have been transformed into their opposite and have become erroneous. But this error is being committed by a current within our Norwegian party.

The second feature of this current is its emphasis on trade-union struggle and the stress on unions in general. It is easy to understand why this is the case. The majority of the Party comes from this trade-union opposition. Our forces grew up on this basis, and that is why it is understandable that even now they assign a priority to the unions.

That is our comrades' theoretical point of view. And that also explains the Party's distinctive and quite original structure. Until recent times – and even now – our Norwegian sister party is based on the unions. The unions entered the Party en bloc, and for that reason we have the quite novel situation that

7. Of the two currents identified here, Bukharin's 'first tendency' is the party majority led by Martin Tranmael. The 'second tendency' is the minority more closely aligned with Comintern policies, led by Olav Schefflo.

we have non-Communists in a Communist party. That can be explained by the entire history of the Norwegian movement.

The third trend is the tendency to separate off politics from economics. That also can be readily grasped in terms of the Party's historical development. When the trade-union struggle is regarded as primary, and the unions are viewed as the primary organisations, it is then theoretically and logically possible to maintain, to a greater or lesser extent, that economics is in one pocket, so to speak, and politics in another.

This point of view is absolutely wrong. We all know that politics is merely a concentrated expression of economics. Yet such a tendency is present within the current that I am now considering.

Then we come to the fourth point, also a characteristic of this tendency. That is the inability to manoeuvre. This is justified theoretically with formulations that sound very revolutionary. For example, it is said that you must have a firmly proletarian political line. You must not enter into any compromises; you must keep to a direct and straight path. There is no need to take advantage of the battles of different forces fighting each other within the bourgeoisie.

That sounds very revolutionary. In reality, however, this can be explained in the following manner. The current in question conceives of the capitalist order, the entire capitalist system, as something given, something frozen. In the framework of this system, you defend the specific job-related interests of the workers and do not concern yourselves at all with other layers that can be used as auxiliary forces in the struggle to destroy the capitalist system. This original point of view may superficially seem very revolutionary. But, in reality, with your permission, it is rooted in a rather reformist conception of the course of history. Of course, I do not maintain that all these thoughts are to be found fully formed in the minds of comrades of this tendency. But an objective analysis of all these developments, along with an analysis of other questions and tactical problems, lends support to my view.

The second current in the Party, the second faction, arose historically from the development of the youth movement. Where the first current was based on the old trade unions and especially on the opposition that developed within them, the second current rests on the youth movement. This movement developed especially during the War as an extreme revolutionary movement. The characteristic feature of its tactical orientation, compared to that of the first faction, is a much greater emphasis on the need for political struggle. Compared to the somewhat apolitical tendency of the first current, the second faction emphasises the importance of politics and of winning political power. It can also be said that this faction is, from a Marxist point of view, more orthodox in its Marxism, paying much more attention to Marxist teaching.

In our parliamentary fraction, until now, no current has held hegemony. For a number of reasons – especially the fact that revolutionary-parliamentary activity is so completely novel – this second current has made a number of errors in this field, including some major ones. The errors were strongly criticised by the Executive at the time, and we cannot dismiss this.⁸

The overall situation in the Party is therefore as follows. The first faction contains disparate forces, some with syndicalist inclinations, others inclined to reformism. And a third tendency within this first faction combines, in a sometimes quite original manner, the inclination toward reformism with the syndicalist framework.

The second faction is also far from homogenous. It contains comrades who must be called very good Marxists, and also some opportunist forces.

It is thus often possible for the first grouping to combat the second, objectively from a reformist standpoint, while using revolutionary phraseology. This whole combination of different currents, tendencies, groupings, and subgroupings inside our Norwegian party is rather hard to characterise concisely. In my opinion, that is why the problem is so difficult. By and large, the two factions are as I have described them. The first faction has the support of the majority in the party leadership. There have been many cases of tactical and political errors of different kinds, and also the theoretical errors from which they arise.

I would like to say a few words on these specific errors. First, that of federalism. It has been blatantly expressed in the Party's relationship to the Communist International. We are on the way to a constantly increasing centralisation. Our congress has already taken a decision on the organisational question, taking a step that clearly expresses our course toward increasingly pronounced centralisation. That is the opinion of almost all delegations, almost all sister parties. The Norwegian sister party, however, has a different view.

When we had a dispute between the Executive and the Norwegian Party, its main publication printed an official statement, which was supposed to clarify the position of the Central Committee on the relationship of the Communist International's national sections to the International as a whole. This article contained various harsh formulations that clarify our Norwegian sister party's approach to its relationship with the Communist International. With regard to the dispute, the official publication of the Norwegian Labour Party, *Social-Demokraten*, wrote the following, and I quote:

It is regrettable that an international organisation intervenes in an internal party dispute, as the Communist International has done in this case.

8. Regarding ECCI criticisms of parliamentary activity in Norway, see p. 204, n. 17.

What does this signify? It means that the Norwegian sister party regards it as regrettable development when the Communist International Executive gets involved in the internal affairs of the Party. This formulation could not be more blatant.

Elsewhere, the same declaration of the Norwegian publication states:

A specific faction has attempted to drag the Executive Committee into internal Norwegian party affairs, thus succeeding in undermining the authority of the International.

From these lines, we can conclude that it is to be regretted if any component of a party appeals to the International. This is a very clear point of view that can be formulated in this way: the Communist International can take various decisions, and the Congress can lay down these decisions, but the Communist International must not get involved in the internal affairs of the Party. This is an application of blatant federalism inside our international Communist organisation, a federalism beyond criticism. Of course, we must all strongly protest this.

Or, take another case.

Our commission invited the Norwegian comrades many times, and we asked them many questions. Among these questions, we posed sharply to several Norwegian comrades the question of their party's relationship with the Communist International. In response, they expressed doubts as to whether the Communist International really ought to get involved in the internal affairs of the national sections in such a 'rough' fashion.

Then we have a very regrettable matter that is related to our present congress. That is the so-called Tranmael case. Previously, there had already been various misunderstandings and minor disputes between the Norwegian Central Committee and the Executive. We therefore asked that the outstanding representative (Tranmael) of the current that holds a majority in the Central Committee be sent to this congress. We expressed this request to the Norwegian Party three times. First, Zinoviev sent a telegram, then the Executive, and then the Executive once again, when the Norwegian delegates were already here.

This request of ours, expressed officially in the name of the Communist International Executive, was rejected by the Central Committee majority, and personally by Comrade Tranmael. Of course, various reasons were provided: technical reasons, internal political reasons, and various others. We do not see this matter as in any sense normal. There is a precedent in our relationship to the French Communist Party. But as you know, one of the leaders of the French Communist Party majority, Comrade Cachin, did decide to take part in

the Congress. The Tranmael case is therefore unique in this regard. Repeated requests, letters, appeals, and demands by the Executive that the Party's outstanding representative be sent here did not receive a positive response. This has aggravated the situation considerably.

All these matters have a principled cause. It is, of course, not because of the personal fault of Comrade Tranmael, but, rather, expresses the entire political atmosphere and orientation that has until now prevailed in the Norwegian Party – perhaps not among the masses of workers who belong to this party, but certainly and completely in the Party's leading bodies. It expresses this federalist tradition, and it is the deep roots of this tradition that make the problem so difficult. That is why we should be very patient in seeking to overcome this crisis and change this tactical political orientation.

This same tendency toward a bad relationship with the Communist International was revealed in a failure to carry out various of the International's directives – or, better said, in a delay in carrying out these directives. This applies, first, to the question of party organisation. It is clear from what I said earlier that we must reorganise the Party. Under present conditions, we need a fully united party, and a party is not united when it includes non-Communists, who have joined the Party quite automatically together with other comrades.⁹ That is why, when Comrade Zinoviev first represented the Communist International Executive in Halle [1920], he personally concluded a 'treaty', and, of course, treaty is in quotation marks, with the representatives of the Norwegian sister party, and personally with Comrade Tranmael, that the Party must be reorganised.

Since then, much time has passed, and the Norwegian party reorganisation is proceeding only very slowly. Even today, the task has not yet been carried out. Of course, it is objected that there are very great obstacles in Norway: transportation is difficult, the Party's financial conditions are poor, there are longstanding traditions, and so on. We acknowledge all these difficulties, but we have counterposed to the Norwegian comrades two examples in the life of our party. We went through two great reorganisations in Russia: first, the cleansing of our party, and, second, the reorganisation of our trade unions.¹⁰ And we carried out both within a few months.

9. The Labour Party was federated in structure and included trade-union affiliates, some of whose members were not Labour Party supporters.

10. A cleansing ('purge') of the Russian CP membership was begun in July 1921, aimed at excluding careerist, corrupt, or 'passive' officials. According to a March 1922 press report, 136,386 members, close to 20% of total membership, were excluded by year end. Schapiro 1960, p. 232. The trade-union reorganisation was launched by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions in February 1922, based on a resolution drafted by Lenin. See Lenin 1960–71, 33, pp. 184–96.

We expelled 170,000 members from the Party. That was a huge task, which took place across the enormous distances of Soviet Russia. And, nonetheless, we accomplished this task within a few months. And then the trade-union reorganisation! After we began our so-called new course, our New Economic Policy, we immediately recognised that the earlier situation in our unions, where all workers employed in a factory automatically belonged to the union, was absolutely untenable under the New Economic Policy. For, obviously, the New Economic Policy and, along with it, the expansion of privately owned factories, required that the recruitment of members to the unions take place not automatically but in a more organic way. This massive organisational task, which placed our unions on a totally new basis and involved their full reorganisation, was carried out within a few months, and our unions have several million members. And we have a completely ruined transportation system, bad finances, hunger, and all the rest. And, still, we carried out these two reorganisations in a relatively short period of time.

Given all this, we asked our Norwegian comrades: why can you not speed up the tempo of your reorganisation, and carry out this work, whose absolute necessity is not disputed by anyone, with more dispatch? During a number of tough discussions, we went so far as to characterise the conduct of our Norwegian comrades as unconscious sabotage of the Communist International's decisions. I will not express myself so harshly here, but it is clear that the affair has dragged on too long, and, therefore, our resolution demands that the Norwegian Party throw its full energy into the party reorganisation and complete it in the shortest time possible.

Then there is the question of the Party's name. It seems very strange that the party majority, with its syndicalist coloration, has so long postponed the renaming of the Party. From a formal point of view, the Second Congress of the Communist International resolved to eliminate all references to 'Social-Democratic'.¹¹ Since then, we have written a number of letters to the Norwegian sister party. But, despite the passage of two years, the old name is still in place. Comrades, you have heard Comrade Meyer say from this platform that the question of the name is a minor matter.¹² How do we view the question? We have already had several precedents around the name question –

11. The party's name was 'Norwegian Labour Party'. According to Point 17 of the Twenty-One Conditions, adopted at the Second Congress, 'Every party that wants to belong to the Communist International must bear the name: *Communist Party of such and such country* (Section of the Communist International)'. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, p. 770.

12. See comments by Haakon Meyer and Bukharin on the names of Norwegian party newspapers, *Social-Demokraten*, on pp. 202 and 207, respectively.

I recall the Vella case in the Italian Party, for example.¹³ We are quite well aware how important this question of the name is, and our enemies also understand it. I quote from the publication of Norway's right-wing Social Democrats, *Arbeider-Politiken* [*Worker Politics*], where we read the following in an article published 8 September this year:

'Social-Demokraten' is an expression of the confusion within the Communist Party of Norway.

The right-wing Social Democrats thus consider the word *'Social-Demokraten'* as an accurate expression of the confusion inside our Norwegian sister party. The Commission therefore proposes that the question of a change of name be settled as rapidly as possible. For us, it is not a triviality but an important political matter.

Now, I will move on to a rather important question, that of general policy. As I have said, there is a divergence between two factions. The difference between them can be expressed in the following way. The first faction, the majority, says: 'We are a genuinely proletarian party and must wage the class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie. We are against manoeuvres, and so on.' The second faction, the minority, led by Comrade Schefflo, says: 'Of course we must fight against the entire capitalist order, but we must differentiate between different sectors of the bourgeoisie, particularly between the big capitalists and landowners, on the one hand, and different sectors of the peasantry on the other.' The Executive have given political support to the second tendency, and therefore I too will defend it here.

We addressed this question in our resolution, because it plays a rather important role in Norway. Of course, if we assume that we should defend only the interests of the working class arising from employment, and that we do not need to bother with the broad layers of working people that could form a reserve to be utilised in time or revolution, then the stance of the first tendency is entirely justified. But that is not the situation in Norway. We already see the beginnings of fascism there. We demand that our party set the goal of the socialist transformation of society, that is, of revolution. There are sharp contradictions between different layers of the bourgeoisie.

A sector of peasants is already voting for us, while another sector, the wealthier peasants, are dominated by a radical-bourgeois party. It is absolutely necessary for us to constantly broaden our base. That does not mean that we should recruit these peasants into our party, but that we should utilise them in our war of manoeuvre against the entire capitalist order. We should not rest content with layers that are already for us. We should conduct a

13. For the Vella case, see p. 1049.

policy capable of splitting the Venstrepartiet [Left Party], a radical-bourgeois and also a peasant party, in order to win layers of the peasantry that are now for the bourgeoisie to our side. That is our duty. It is no sin against Marxism but, rather, the practical application of Marxist teaching to the present situation in Norway.

This is quite an important question. In our discussions with the Norwegian comrades in the Commission, everyone noted what an important political role this question plays in Norway. It should therefore be addressed in our resolution.

But, on the other hand, we must tell comrades of the Schefflo tendency that, while their parliamentary activity has been conducted on the basis of a generally correct political orientation, they have made some major mistakes. The greatest of these was the parliamentary fraction's support for compulsory arbitration.¹⁴ During a period of conflicts between the employers and the workers, our comrades voted in parliament in favour of compulsory arbitration. By this action, our comrades gave their approval to the great power possessed by the capitalist class. Various motivations have been offered. The factual situation was genuinely rather complicated. The comrades said that arbitration of this sort, established in law, would counter the worsening of working-class conditions. But, objectively, it was a major error – especially because there is an old tradition in Norway to fight very hard against this procedure. I remember how a few years ago there was even a general strike in Christiania [Oslo] against forced arbitration. So we should say once again that this was an error, and not deny it. But, at the same time, we must say that utilising the contradictions among forces within the bourgeoisie is correct. It is absolutely Marxist and Communist.

Let me now take up the question of the journal *Mot Dag* [*Toward the Dawn*].¹⁵ Comrade Zinoviev has already talked of this, and also Comrade Meyer, in another context. This is a group of Communist academics – a closed group, in the sense that a new member can join only with the agreement of the existing

14. In 1920 Norway's capitalist parties enacted a law, against Labour Party opposition, to set wages through compulsory arbitration. The judicial decision on wages expired in March 1922, in conditions of increased unemployment, smaller union membership, and insistent calls from employers for significant wage reductions. Leaders of the labour federation demanded continuation of compulsory arbitration and called on the Labour Party, which held the deciding votes in parliament, to support its renewal. Labour Party deputies followed the unions' bidding. Subsequently, decisions of the renewed compulsory arbitration tribunals reduced wages by about thirty per cent and halved vacations, to one week. See E.W. Bull and Trond Hegna, 'Die Entwicklung der Arbeiterbewegung in Norwegen 1921–22', in *Inprekorr*, 2, 216 (9 November 1922), pp. 1514–16.

15. Regarding *Mot Dag*, see p. 203, n. 14.

members of the group. And we know well that all such groupings are always the embryo of a faction. And, since this faction already, as an embryo, has a wrong tactical orientation, the Congress and the Communist International should combat this disoriented tendency and also take some organisational measures.

The Commission voted unanimously in this matter, deciding that the group cannot exist in this closed form. That does not mean that there should be no academic group at all, only that it should be an open group, so that every Communist student can belong to it and it can represent, so to speak, an open Communist student cell.

As for this group's journal, we decided that it is not to exist as a loose journal that is not subordinated to the Party. In the Commission, we quoted various articles from the journal – for example, one by the editor, which called our entire German sister party an intellectual clique. Of course, this cannot be tolerated. The dissemination of such false rumours about our Communist parties is obviously quite impermissible.

In our early drafts, we proposed two options: either cease publication of this journal or transform it into a party publication. The Norwegian comrades told us that they favour the second option, and we made this concession.

Now, I come to the Communist press and the official publication. Regarding the content, we will say here only that the Norwegian comrades should carry out in their press, their official publication, what was decided by previous congresses of the Communist International. Even the appearance of *Social-Demokraten* is quite unusual. As for its contents, you can find everything there; everything is up for discussion; and there is almost nothing that presents a firm political line. There is discussion of the relationship to the International, discussion of Central Committee decisions, discussion of every conceivable question – a permanent discussion. Discussion is a good thing but should not be taken too far. The Party should carry out a defined and clearly delimited policy. But there is no trace of that in our official publication. Therefore, we would like to stress once again that our Norwegian press and, above all, the main publication should carry out the decisions of the Communist International and of our previous congresses.

Now two 'personal' questions.

There are two comrades in Norway who have been the cause of disputes in the Party, which also found expression in the meetings of our commission in which Norwegian comrades participated. These are comrades Karl Johanssen and Halvard Olsen.

Here is the Johanssen case. He is a quite new member of the Party who was previously a bourgeois journalist. He started up an offensive inside the Party

against the revolutionary workers' movement. This has created an unusual situation. A former bourgeois journalist, one of the most active collaborators of our sister party's main publication, writes articles that, by and large, direct harsh criticism at the Communist International. We look at this gentleman as an agent within our Norwegian sister party.

We have already decided conditionally – the Executive put this in a conditional form – to expel this gentleman. The Norwegian comrades have told us that it is a personal case that should not be decided by the Congress. We now propose to the Congress to expel him outright. And, if we look at the overall situation, comrades, we have discovered such tendencies on many sides, and when they are put together, they must be viewed as a dangerous development. It is particularly dangerous to have such a direct agent of the bourgeoisie in our ranks. We have already seen that in Italy and then in France, and now again here among the Norwegian comrades. Speaking on the basis of our entire rich experience, we ask that this fellow be thrown out.

The other case concerns Halvard Olsen. He is a veteran worker and long-time party functionary. In the past, he was a loyal comrade, but he has really committed very serious errors. He broke party discipline at the congress of the metalworkers' union in Norway. He voted against the candidate of our Norwegian sister party and in favour of the syndicalists and right-wing socialists. He made various statements at this congress that are certainly not Communist. The Party expelled him, but we want here to follow the same approach that we did in the Czechoslovak matter. We make a distinction between the bourgeois journalist Karl Johanssen and the worker Comrade Halvard Olsen. We want to give him the possibility to turn over a new leaf. We, therefore, consider it correct to take this comrade back into our ranks. That does not mean, however, that we will tolerate further mistakes and stupidities from him. If he repeats his earlier errors again and again, the Executive will expel him. But we cherish the hope that he will improve. We therefore propose, in the name of the Commission, to resolve this matter by reinstating Comrade Halvard Olsen in our ranks. The Executive will base its subsequent decisions on how this comrade conducts himself.

Comrades, I will conclude this report by reading out the draft resolution on the Norwegian question. This draft was adopted by the members of the Commission. We kept the personal matters out of this draft. Nothing is said with regard to what I have told you about the Tranmael case and so on. We have made major concessions to our Norwegian comrades regarding the Party's reorganisation, the deadline for changing the name of our party papers, and so on. We, therefore, hope that this resolution will be adopted unanimously and will thus contribute to overcoming the crisis within our Norwegian party. The draft resolution reads as follows:

Resolution on the Norwegian Labour Party

After having heard the report of the Norwegian Commission, the Congress resolves:

- 1.) To inform the Central Committee of the Norwegian sister party of the need to carry out more precisely the decisions of the International, both of its congresses and its executive bodies. Party publications and resolutions and decisions of its leading bodies should leave no doubt that it is acceptable for the International to intervene in the internal affairs of the national sections.
- 2.) The Congress instructs the Party to carry out its reorganisation on the basis of individual membership within a period of at most one year following its next national congress. Periodic reports will be made to the Executive – at least once every two months – informing it of the practical measures and results of the work in this arena.
- 3.) Regarding the content of the press, the Party is obligated to carry out immediately the decisions of earlier world congresses and the directives contained in the Executive's letter of 23 September this year.¹⁶ The Social-Democratic name of the party newspapers must be changed within three months reckoned from the last day of the Comintern congress.
- 4.) The Congress confirms that the Executive was correct in pointing to the errors of party representatives in parliament. The Congress considers that communist deputies in Parliament are obviously subject to party supervision and criticism by the Party's press. But this criticism must always be factual and comradely.
- 5.) The Congress considers it permissible and necessary, in the struggle against the bourgeoisie as a whole, to make use of contradictions among the different layers of the Norwegian bourgeoisie, especially that between large-scale capitalism and the big landowners, on one side, and the peasantry, on the other. The struggle for the peasantry must be one of the prime tasks of the proletarian party in Norway.
- 6.) The Congress confirms again that the parliamentary fraction and the Party's publications must be completely and unconditionally subordinated to the Party's Central Committee.
- 7.) The *Mot Dag* group, a closed association, is dissolved. Obviously, it is quite permissible for there to be a Communist student group, open to every Communist student and under full supervision of the Central Committee. The journal *Mot Dag* will become a party publication, with the condition that its editorship is selected by the Central Committee of the

16. See *Imprekorr*, 2, (31 October 1922), pp. 1444–6.

Norwegian Labour Party in consultation with the Communist International Executive.

- 8.) The Congress accepts the appeal of Comrade H. Olsen. Since he is a veteran and loyal comrade and worker and was always a very active party staffer, the Congress restores his rights to membership, while stating definitely that his conduct at the metalworkers' union congress was incorrect.
- 9.) The Congress resolves to expel Karl Johanssen from the ranks of the Communist International and the Norwegian Labour Party.
- 10.) In order to establish stronger links between the Norwegian Party and the Executive and to overcome conflicts with as little friction as possible, the Congress instructs the incoming Executive to send a representative with full powers to the next party convention.
- 11.) The Congress instructs the Executive to draft a letter explaining this resolution.
- 12.) The above resolution and the letter from the Executive are to be printed in all party publications and made known to all party branches before the election of delegates to the next party convention.

Bukharin: That is our resolution. I ask you all to support it. (*Loud applause*)

Adjournment: 3:25 p.m.

Session 32 – Tuesday, 5 December 1922

Various Resolutions; Election of ECCL; Close of Congress

The Norwegian question. Resolution on the terror in Ireland. Question of the Versailles Peace Treaty. Tactics of the Communist International. The Eastern question. Educational work. France. Resolution on the Russian Revolution. Election of the Executive Committee. Closing speech by Zinoviev.

Speakers: Haakon Meyer, Connolly, Hoernle, Bordiga, Clara Zetkin, Kolarov, Billings, Grün, Torp, Kolarov, Zinoviev

Convened: 6:50 p.m.

Chairperson: Neurath

Haakon Meyer (Norway): The majority of the Norwegian delegation states that it is not happy with the proposed resolution. A number of its points do not reflect our views. In some cases, we believe that the Commission has handled specific matters in too abstract and schematic a fashion. This applies, for example, to the cases of Halvard Olsen and Karl Johanssen. As for the latter point, a proposal had been made by the entire delegation to formulate this differently, but it was rejected by the Commission. In other cases, we believe that the resolution is insufficiently objective. That applies to the point concerning *Mot Dag*, which, in our opinion, is not a closed group, and also for Point 4 [of the resolution], which deserves criticism.

However, after thorough discussion of all the disputed questions in the Commission, we will not initiate further debate in the plenary, but, rather, state that the majority of the delegation will vote for the resolution.

Chair: We will now take the vote on the resolution proposed by the Norwegian Commission. Is there anyone opposed to this resolution? Are there any abstentions? That is not the case. The resolution is adopted.

Comrades, the American Commission has informed us that some points have not yet been fully clarified. For this reason, the materials must be forwarded to the session of the Expanded Executive. Let us register our agreement.

Similar information has been received from the Polish and the Korean Commissions.¹

We now come to a resolution concerning the murder of five national revolutionaries in *Ireland*. Comrade Connolly has the floor.

Connolly (Ireland): Comrades, on behalf of the Irish Communist Party, I propose the following resolution.

Resolution on the Executions in Ireland

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International vigorously protests the execution of five national revolutionaries by the Irish Free State on 25 November.² It draws the attention of all the world's workers and peasants to the bestial excesses of pervasive and vile terror in Ireland. Already, more than six thousand brave fighters against British imperialism have been thrown into prison and exposed to dreadful conditions. Many women have been compelled to go on hunger strike. Five months of struggle against the terror have produced examples of horrible atrocities, similar to those of the Black and Tans, the Fascists in Italy, or the thugs used by trusts in the United States. This has claimed 1,800 lives.

1. No resolutions on the United States, Poland, or Korea appeared after the congress in the Comintern's central publications. However, a US resolution was adopted and is available in *Spartacist: English Edition*, 40 (Summer 1987), pp. 27–8. It is summarised in Palmer 2007, pp. 163–4. Its central conclusion was codified in a US convention resolution published in *Imprecorr*, 3, 17 (3 May 1923), p. 317. The resolution on Korea, drafted by the Korean Commission and dated 29 December 1922, appears in Shirinia and Vada 2007, pp. 225–9.

2. The creation in January 1922 of the Irish Free State, with restricted self-government, in the southern part of Ireland was followed by a year-long civil war between those who accepted the agreement with Britain partitioning the island and the revolutionary wing of the Irish republican movement.

The Free State has not hesitated to use the artillery, munitions, rifles, and ammunition supplied by the British government. It has even used airplanes with death-dealing machine guns against revolutionaries, both armed and unarmed. And it has capped off all this by executing the five revolutionaries, on the feeble grounds that they had weapons in their possession. This desperate shooting of prisoners is the direct result of the admitted bankruptcy of the Free State and is its last resort in breaking the resistance of the fighting Irish masses against their enslavement by the British world empire.

The crushing of the Republicans can result only in firmly establishing an imperialist and terrorist government. Such a government will not hesitate a moment in using these same brutal weapons against the Irish workers' movement, the moment it gives the first indication of advancing to power or of fighting for better conditions.

Given this indisputable fact, the action of the Labour Party majority led by Johnson in approving the executions represents a betrayal beyond anything that these betrayers of the working class have ever done before. That was graphically demonstrated by the fact that even Ireland's most reactionary capitalist newspaper, which in 1916 demanded the blood of Connolly, deplored the government's action.

The Communist International warns the working class of Ireland against this betrayal of the ideals of Connolly and Larkin. It points out to the Irish workers and peasants that the only means of escape from Free State terrorism and imperialist oppression is an organised and coordinated struggle in political, economic, and military arenas. Armed struggle alone, without its extension and support through economic and political actions, will end in failure. In order to achieve success, the masses must be mobilised against the Free State. This can only be done on the basis of the social programme of the Communist Party of Ireland.

The Communist International sends fraternal greetings to the struggling Irish national revolutionaries and expresses its confidence that they will soon take the path to true freedom, the path to communism. The Communist International will support all efforts aimed at conducting a struggle against this terror and at assisting the Irish workers and farmers to victory.

Long live the Irish national independence struggle!

Long live the Irish Workers' Republic!

Long live the Communist International!

Chair: We come to the vote. Is there anyone opposed to the resolution? That is not the case. The resolution is unanimously adopted.

The commission charged with drafting a resolution on the *Versailles Treaty* informs us that a definitive text of the resolution has been prepared and that

this resolution has already been distributed to all the delegates.³ There is thus no need to read out the resolution. We can proceed immediately to the vote. Is anyone opposed to the resolution? That is not the case. The resolution on the Versailles Treaty is unanimously adopted.

Hoernle (Germany): Regarding the theses on Comintern tactics, two delegations, from Germany and Austria, submitted proposed amendments. A small editorial commission was therefore established to review these amendments. The editorial commission submits the following amendments.⁴

In the theses before you on Comintern tactics,⁵ on page 5, the second and third paragraphs are deleted, and in their place the following wording is inserted.

Recent events in even such a small country as contemporary Austria are important as a symptom of the political situation in present-day Europe. By a stroke of the pen in Geneva, an edict of Entente imperialism has destroyed Austria's celebrated democracy and replaced it by the undisguised dictatorship of an Entente agent.⁶ This democracy was the pride of the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International. Protecting it provided them with a pretext for abandoning workers' interests. They confided its protection to the right-wing Monarchists, the Christian-Social Party, and the Greater Germany advocates,⁷ who utilised it only to re-establish their power. Even the bourgeois parliament has in fact been eliminated; its place has been taken by a bailiff appointed by the Entente bankers. After a brief and demagogic pretence at resistance, the Social Democrats have capitulated and are voluntarily helping to bring the shameful treaty to reality. They have even declared themselves ready to re-enter the coalition, in a scarcely disguised form, in order to block any resistance by the proletariat.

These events in little Austria, like the recent Fascist coup in Italy, have suddenly highlighted the instability of the whole situation. They provide the best demonstration that democracy is only an illusion, representing in reality the veiled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. And, wherever it seems

3. For the text of the resolution, see pp. 1143–8.

4. These amendments are not reflected in the published Russian text of the Theses on Tactics (Béla Kun 1933), which forms the basis for the translation in Adler (ed.) 1980. For the final text of the Theses, incorporating the amendments, see pp. 1149–63.

5. See Section 3 of the resolution, pp. 1150–2.

6. Regarding the Entente's Geneva edict, see pp. 917–19.

7. Monarchists in Austria favoured restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty; the Christian-Social Party was the main right-wing bourgeois party; Greater-Germany advocates called for Austria's absorption into Germany.

expedient, the bourgeoisie substitutes for this democracy the brutal face of white guard, terrorist reaction.

This amendment strongly emphasises the role of Austrian Social Democracy and refers to the most recent events.

Then, on page 9, first paragraph,⁸ the second sentence, which begins 'Since increasing poverty also affects the middle classes', has been somewhat expanded, in order to avoid the implication that the causes of fascism are found only in the fact that the middle classes and peasantry are no longer a completely compliant tool of the bourgeoisie.

The sentence now reads as follows:

Since increasing poverty is revolutionising the masses more and more, including the middle layers and civil servants, the bourgeoisie is now shaken in its confidence that its bureaucracy represents an absolutely compliant and sufficient tool. It no longer finds the legal methods of gaining support to be sufficient. It is therefore resorting everywhere to the creation of special white guards...

The establishment of special white guards is thus explained by the increasingly revolutionary character of the masses, which are more and more embracing layers of the lower civil service, and so on.

Then, on the same page 9, at the end of the second paragraph, a clause has been added. The second paragraph begins with the words, 'The characteristic feature of Italian Fascism, the "classical" fascism' and so on, and ends with the words, 'even in certain sectors of the working class'. Here a clause is to be added:

...they cleverly utilise the unavoidable disappointment with so-called democracy for their reactionary purposes.

In the third paragraph on this page, between 'Bavaria' and 'the United States', the word 'Austria' is to be added, because expressions of fascism are now also evident there.

The most significant amendments concern the section on workers' governments. The Commission was concerned to define and highlight the question of the workers' government as clearly and distinctly as possible. On page 19, in the discussion of preconditions for the participation of Communists in a workers' government, a new condition has been added.⁹ The text will now read:

8. See Section 5 on pp. 1154-5.

9. See p. 1160.

- 1.) Participation in a workers' government can take place only with the agreement of the Communist International.

That sentence is new.

We then continue with the same words as in the original draft:

- 2.) Communist participants in such a government must be subject to the strictest supervision of their party.
- 3.) The Communists participating in this workers' government must be in very close contact with the revolutionary organisations of the masses.
- 4.) The Communist party must unconditionally maintain its own public identity and complete independence in agitation.

For all its great advantages, the slogan of a workers' government also has its dangers, as does the whole united-front tactic. To head off these dangers, the Communist parties must keep in mind that although every bourgeois government is also a capitalist government, not every workers' government is truly proletarian, that is, a revolutionary instrument of proletarian power.

The original version reads here, 'a socialist government'.

The Commission deleted these three words and substituted, 'that is, a revolutionary instrument of proletarian power', because the word 'socialist' is too ambiguous. The point is to define what is the class nature of the government.

The section then continues:

The Communist International must consider the following possibilities.

Now we come to the five possibilities – and this passage has also been somewhat reformulated. (The passage begins:)

- 1.) A *liberal* workers' government, such as existed in Australia and may exist in Britain in the foreseeable future.
- 2.) A *Social-Democratic* workers' government (Germany).

In the original version, there was a third point, 'a workers' and peasants' government'.

It was rightly objected that this term could be applied in some countries to a coalition government of the Social Democrats with some Christian peasant party that represents not poor and small peasants but rich ones. This was the case in Austria. In order to clarify the meaning here, the paragraph now reads:

- 3.) *Government of workers and the poorer peasants.* Such a possibility exists in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, and so on.

The fourth point originally read, 'Social-Democratic-Communist coalition governments'. The Commission thought that this formulation is too narrow. The reference here is not merely to a coalition between Social Democrats and Communists. It is quite possible that those with no party affiliation, syndicalists, and, conceivably, also workers in Christian unions could be encompassed in such a government. It has therefore been rewritten as 'workers' government with Communist participation'.

The fifth point is unchanged.

- 5.) A genuinely proletarian workers' government, which in its pure form can be embodied only in the Communist Party.

The next paragraph contains a large insertion. It was necessary to say that the first two of the above-named forms of workers' government are not revolutionary workers' governments but, in reality, nothing other than hidden coalition governments. The position of Communists on such governments must be spelled out. The Commission therefore proposes the following text:

The first two types are not revolutionary workers' governments at all, but in reality hidden coalition governments between the bourgeoisie and anti-revolutionary workers' leaders. Such 'workers' governments' are tolerated at critical moments by the weakened bourgeoisie, in order to deceive the proletariat regarding the state's true class character or even, with the help of corrupt workers' leaders, to fend off the proletariat's revolutionary onslaught and win time. Communists cannot take part in such a government. On the contrary, they must relentlessly expose to the masses the true nature of such a false 'workers' government'. However, in the present period of capitalist decline, when the most important task is to win the majority of the proletariat for proletarian revolution, these governments can also contribute objectively to hastening the decomposition of bourgeois power.

Communists stand ready to march with the workers who have not yet recognised the necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat, be they Social-Democratic, Christian, unaffiliated, syndicalist, and so on. Communists are also ready, under certain conditions and with certain guarantees, to support a non-Communist workers' government. However, Communists declare openly to the working class that only the dictatorship of the proletariat brings the working class true liberation.¹⁰

Finally, we have the discussion of the two additional types of workers' government, that is, a government of workers and poor peasants and a workers'

10. These two paragraphs of the amendment are reworked in the final German text (see pp. 1161–2). They are included with only minor changes, however, in the German edition of congress resolutions (see Comintern 1923g, p. 17).

government with participation by Communists. The first sentence of the last paragraph on page 29 is deleted. It will then read:

The two additional types of workers' governments in which Communists can take part (#3 and #4), do not represent the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are not even a historically unavoidable transitional form leading to this dictatorship. But, where they come into existence, they can constitute a point of departure for a struggle for this dictatorship. Only the genuine workers' government (#5), consisting of Communists, represents the fully achieved dictatorship of the proletariat.¹¹

The Commission believes that this version establishes adequate clarity regarding the different forms of a workers' government and the position of Communists on these different forms.

Finally, on page 21, a new paragraph is to be added as Section 14:

14.) *The Comintern as a world party.* The Communist International must strive increasingly not only to structure itself organisationally as a Communist world party but, at the same time, to act as one politically. In particular, it should direct its attention to leading the necessary campaigns in entire groups of countries.¹²

The final section on international discipline is therefore now Section 15.

The Commission asks the Congress to adopt unanimously the resolution with the amendments that I have read out.

Bordiga (Italy): Comrades, the majority of the Italian delegation would like to make some comments regarding the Theses on Tactics just distributed to the Congress.

Indeed I have edited and distributed another draft of the theses, which differs in some of the sections. But, at this point in the Congress, and given political circumstances flowing from the special situation of our country, we believe that it is not absolutely necessary to insist on a debate on the question of tactics.

Our draft of the theses contains some changes regarding the question of the united front and the workers' government. We hope – indeed we are convinced – that these questions will be discussed in sittings of the Expanded Executive or, at least, will be taken up at the Fifth Congress, which will deal

11. This paragraph is slightly reworked in the final German text (see pp. 1161–2).

12. In the final resolution, this paragraph appears as Section 13.

with the question of the International's programme and will, in our opinion, have to undertake some systematic modifications on questions of tactics.¹³

For this reason, we ask the incoming Executive to retain the draft that I have presented as a document that can serve as information and as a basis of discussion and thorough study of the question.

Having made this statement, we will now vote for the proposed resolution. (*Applause*)

Chair: We will now take the vote on the Theses on Tactics. Does anyone vote against the Commission's proposal? Are there any abstentions? No, in both cases. I declare that the resolution on tactics is unanimously adopted, including the proposed amendments. (*Applause*)

The commission charged with preparing the resolution on the *capitalist offensive* had the task of drawing up an open letter to the Amsterdammers concerning the capitalist offensive and the united front. The Commission informs us that this work is not yet fully completed and that this material should be referred to the Executive.¹⁴

The Commission on the *East* has completed and duplicated its resolution and distributed it to the delegates.¹⁵ There is therefore no reason to read it out. We will now take the vote on this resolution.

Does anyone oppose this resolution? That is not the case. The resolution is unanimously adopted.

The resolution on the *question of education* has also been duplicated and distributed, so that we can vote on it at once.¹⁶

Is there anyone opposed to this resolution? That is not the case. This resolution too is unanimously adopted.

The delegates also have the *action programme for the French Party*.¹⁷ The Presidium has been informed that all three factions of the French delegation are in full agreement with the fundamental points formulated in this action programme.

We will take the vote. Does anyone vote against this action programme? Are there abstentions? No, in both cases. The action programme of the French Party is unanimously adopted.

13. The Fifth Comintern Congress, held June–July 1924, did not adopt a programme, but did modify the Fourth Congress Theses on Tactics in the direction of objections raised by Bordiga and Fischer at the Fourth Congress.

14. For the text of the Open Letter, see pp. 1174–9.

15. For the text of the resolution on the Eastern question, see pp. 1180–90.

16. For the text of the resolution on education, see pp. 1191–3.

17. For the text of the action programme, see pp. 1194–8.

We now come to the resolution based on the report, 'Five Years of the Russian Revolution'. Comrade Clara Zetkin has the floor.

Clara Zetkin: (*reads the proposed resolution*).¹⁸

Resolution on the Russian Revolution

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International expresses its deepest thanks to the productive population of Soviet Russia and boundless admiration for the fact that its revolutionary struggle has not only won state power and established the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also that it has defended the gains of the Revolution victoriously, to this day, against enemies both within and without. In so doing, it has earned eternal renown in the liberation of the exploited and oppressed of all countries.

The Fourth World Congress is very satisfied to register that the first workers' state of the world, created by proletarian revolution, has, in the five years of its existence, fully demonstrated its viability and capacity for development, despite an exceptional accumulation of difficulties and dangers. The Soviet state emerged strengthened from the horrors of civil war. Thanks to the unparalleled heroism of the Red Army, it crushed the military counter-revolution, armed and supported by the world bourgeoisie, on every battlefield. In the political sphere, it defeated every attempt of the capitalist states to force it, through diplomatic tricks and economic power, to relinquish the proletarian content and communist goals of the revolution, by recognising the right to private property of the social means of production and giving up the nationalisation of industry. Against the onslaught of the world bourgeoisie, the Soviet state has staunchly defended the fundamental precondition for proletarian liberation: social ownership of the means of production. It has protected the workers and peasants of the Soviet Republic from the danger of accepting a huge national debt that would reduce them to the status of colonial subjects of foreign capitalists.

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International notes that Soviet Russia – the proletarian state – is no longer forced to take up arms in defence of its existence. With incomparable energy, it has addressed the task of constructing and developing the economy of the Republic, its view fixed on the transition to communism. The individual stages and measures toward

18. The positioning of Clara Zetkin's name in the German edition and the style of the German text indicate that Zetkin drafted this resolution.

this goal, the transitional period of the so-called New Economic Policy, are results of, on the one hand, the given particular objective and subjective historical conditions in Russia and, on the other, the slow tempo of development of the world-revolution and the isolation of the Soviet Republic amid capitalist states. Despite the enormous difficulties that this has created, the workers' state can record significant progress in economic construction.

The Russian proletarians have paid dearly, on behalf of workers of the world, in winning and defending political power and establishing the proletarian dictatorship. It is also they who, searching and experimenting, and with heavy losses, have had to address the problems and tasks of the transitional period from capitalism to communism. Soviet Russia is and remains the richest store of revolutionary historical knowledge for the world proletariat.

The Fourth World Congress notes with satisfaction that the policies of Soviet Russia have secured the most important precondition for the construction and development of communist society, namely, soviet-power, the soviet-order, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This dictatorship is the only means to break down all bourgeois and capitalist resistance against the full emancipation of workers. It thus guarantees that capitalism will be fully overcome and the road will be opened to realise communism.

In addition, the Fourth World Congress notes the decisive and glorious role played by the Communist Party of Russia, in its purposeful and brave stance as the class party leading the proletariat, in enabling the proletariat, supported by the peasantry, to win and maintain state power. The Party's ideological and organisational unity and strong discipline has made the masses sure of their revolutionary goal and path, arousing their determination and readiness to sacrifice to the highest pitch of heroism, and creating an indestructible organic link between the leadership and the activity of the masses.

The Fourth World Congress warns proletarians of all countries that the proletarian revolution can never fully triumph in a single country. Rather, it must be victorious internationally, as a world-revolution. Soviet Russia's work and struggle for existence, for the gains of the Revolution, is a struggle to liberate the proletarians, the exploited and oppressed of all countries, from their chains and subjugation. The Russian proletarians have done more than their duty as revolutionary vanguard fighters of the world proletariat. The world proletariat must now do its part. In every country, the workers, the dispossessed, and the enslaved must actively express moral, economic, and political solidarity with Soviet Russia. Not merely international solidarity but their own interests demand that they take up a vigorous struggle against

the bourgeoisie and the capitalist state. Their slogan in every country must be: Hands off Soviet Russia! Official recognition of Soviet Russia! Energetic support of every kind for economic construction in Soviet Russia! Anything that strengthens Soviet Russia weakens the world bourgeoisie. Soviet Russia's five years of existence is the hardest blow that world capitalism has yet absorbed, one from which it will not recover.

The Fourth World Congress calls on proletarians of all non-capitalist countries, inspired by the Soviet Russian example, to prepare the death blow to capitalism and to dedicate their efforts to world-revolution.

Chair: We come to the vote. Is there anyone who is against the proposed resolution? That is not the case. The resolution is unanimously adopted. (*Applause*) We will now move on to the next point on our agenda, which is the election of the Executive. A commission was established, and Comrade Kolarov will report on its behalf.

Kolarov: As provided by the resolution on organising the Executive, the future Executive will consist of a president, twenty-four members, and ten alternates.

In line with this resolution, the Presidium has asked each delegation to propose candidates and to prepare full lists. Some have presented full lists, while others have indicated only alternates.

The Sub-Commission had to solve a very difficult problem. As you know, our International consists of sixty-two Communist parties. All these parties would like to be represented in the Executive, and this, of course, presents an insoluble problem.

The Sub-Commission was forced of necessity to give preference to certain parties that are of particular importance for the International on the grounds either of their numerical strength or their political role in the International.

In addition, the Sub-Commission made efforts to ensure the representation of the entire globe in the new Executive. We believe that the Sub-Commission succeeded in more or less satisfactory fashion in resolving this problem. In the list presented to you, it has been able to include all continents, all large parties, and all groups of parties that face somewhat similar circumstances.

The list drawn up by the Sub-Commission has been approved, with some amendments, by the Presidium, and I have been asked to present it to you. Here it is:

Proposed Executive Committee

	Members	Alternates
President	1: Zinoviev	—
France	2: Frossard, Souvarine	1: Duret
Germany	2: Zetkin, Hoernle	1: Böttcher
Russia	2: Bukharin, Radek	2: Lenin, Trotsky
Czechoslovakia	2: Šmeral, Neurath	1: Muna
Italy	2: Gennari, Gramsci	1: Bordiga
Youth International	2: Schüller, Shatskin	—
Britain	1: MacManus	1: Newbold
United States	1: Carr	1: Damon
Scandinavia	2: Höglund, Scheflo	—
Poland	1: Próchniak	—
Finland	1: Kuusinen	—
Balkans	1: Kolarov	1: Macavei
Australia	1: Garden	—
South America	1: Stirner	—
South Africa	1: Andrews	—
East	2: Katayama, Safarov	1: Roy
Total	25	10

Kolarov: The Italian Party is accorded the right to make new proposals for its representatives on the Executive after its unification convention. These must, however, be approved by the Executive.

On behalf of the Executive, I ask you, if possible, to adopt this list unanimously.

A number of parties whose representatives could not be included on this list made several proposals. I explained the reason for this restriction at the beginning of my brief report. I call on the delegations whose proposals could not be encompassed not to insist on their adoption and to support the motion made to you by the Presidium. (*Applause*)

Chair: I propose that we proceed as follows. If any amendments are made that are not accepted, we will first deal with these proposals, and then vote on the proposed list as a whole. So far, I have been informed only that part of the American delegation is not entirely in agreement with the way in which the delegation handled the question of alternates. I would like to say on behalf of the Presidium that every delegation has the right to propose alternates, and that the Congress will make the decision on that now.

So I ask, does anyone wish to move an amendment to the proposal of the Commission? It seems there is no way to avoid a discussion. However, we hope that this discussion will address only very general factors, so that we can then move directly to a vote.

Billings (United States): Comrade Chairman and comrades, I would like to protest against the choice of Comrade Damon [Ruthenberg] as a candidate for the Executive Committee. The comrades who nominated Comrade Damon did so in disregard for party discipline, with regard to the fact that the majority of the American delegation has the right to nominate candidates for the Executive. The minority made this nomination without previous consultation with the majority of the party delegation.¹⁹ At the delegation meeting, a vote was taken that Comrade Carr would be our candidate for a member of the Executive Committee, with Comrade Billings as the alternate. I therefore protest on behalf of the delegation majority against the nomination of Comrade Damon, and I would like to see Comrade Carr, and Comrade Billings as his alternate, placed on the list.

Grün (Austria):²⁰ I have been asked by the delegations of the Austrian, Swiss, and Dutch Parties to make a motion that these three parties of intermediate size be given an opportunity to be represented. They have a combined membership of more than twenty-three thousand members, and their countries have a total population of seventeen million. The Commission's proposal provides for double representation for the Scandinavian countries, which taken together have barely more than ten million inhabitants, and whose three parties, taken together, are not much larger than the three parties on whose behalf I am speaking.

I believe it will be quite adequate that the Scandinavian parties be represented in the Executive by one member and one alternate. Also, possibly the alternate from the American Party, which is just beginning to establish its importance, could be dropped. I ask that, through adopting this basic motion, the three delegations be given the opportunity, after a brief break, to make a nomination.

Torp (Norway) (*speaks in Norwegian; translated by Wallenius*): In the Commission's proposed list, Comrade Scheflo is named as a member of the Executive from Norway. The Norwegian delegation has sent a telegram to Norway asking if this position was not intended for Comrade [Haakon] Meyer. It has received the answer that the party leadership is opposed to

19. 'Majority' and 'minority' refer here to representatives of the Geese and Liquidator factions, respectively, who disagreed on whether the US Party should continue to function underground. See pp. 215–6, nn. 29 and 30.

20. The proceedings do not indicate whether Josef or Anna Grün is speaking.

a vote for [Scheflo].²¹ I propose that Comrade Meyer be elected in place of Comrade Scheflo. In my opinion, this change will make it possible to more readily overcome the profound crisis that the Norwegian Party is now traversing. It will also be easier to come to agreement with the Executive. In addition, Comrade Scheflo is a parliamentary deputy and therefore cannot be in Moscow, while this is easier for Comrade Meyer. I move that the Congress elect Comrade Meyer as a member of the Executive.

Chair: The debate is now closed. I give the floor to Comrade Kolarov, speaking on behalf of the Nomination Commission.

Kolarov (Bulgaria): Comrades, the protest by Comrade Billings of the United States is quite uncalled for. The proposals from the delegations have an informational and provisional character, and are certainly not binding on the Presidium and the Commission. The decision of this congress itself provides that the Congress has the right to disregard proposals made by individual delegations. We want to be an international party and to have an international committee, an Executive Committee, that is elected and named by the Congress itself.

It is of course clear that in electing its Executive Committee, the Congress will take into account the different parties, their strengths, their policies, and their needs, but it would be quite wrong to believe that the Congress should conform to the wishes of every party and every delegation.

Comrade Damon, whom the Presidium has placed on the list, is a veteran American revolutionary. In proposing this comrade as a candidate member for the United States, the Presidium is doing no more than asking you to elect a revolutionary comrade who is worthy to be an alternate member of the Executive Committee.²²

The parties of Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have taken this occasion to form an alliance. I do not know whether this alliance represents needs other than merely naming a delegate. I must repeat that it is absolutely impossible to satisfy all parties. We have too many of them, and we hope that next year there will be even more. As a result, many parties will be left without direct representation through their own delegate, and will be

21. The German text says 'opposed to a vote for Meyer', an apparent misprint. For the context, see Maurseth 1972, p. 144.

22. Another likely consideration in the Presidium's decision in this case was that both Carr (Katterfeld) and Billings (Huiswoud) supported the 'Goose Caucus' in the US Party, which favoured maintaining it as an underground organisation. Damon (Ruthenberg) was a leader of the faction in the US Party that favoured doing away with its underground status, a position endorsed by the Fourth Congress's American Commission.

represented only through the Executive Committee that represents the international party as a whole.

The delegate from Norway proposes, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Norwegian Party, to replace Comrade Scheflo by Comrade Meyer.

On behalf of the Presidium and the Nomination Commission, I must state that this proposal is not acceptable, and we will tell you frankly why this is so. The comrade who spoke before me referred to the fact that in the divisions that exist within the Norwegian Party, Comrade Scheflo took sides with the minority, and that he therefore does not represent the desires, thinking, and policies of the party majority.

Comrade, the question before us is not what is the outlook and orientation of the majority of the Norwegian Party, because it is not a matter of electing a member of that party's leading committee. It is simply a matter of electing a member of the Executive Committee of the International. It is therefore important to know what is the Communist International's orientation and policy.

We declare that in Norway, Comrade Scheflo represents the orientation of the Communist International, and that we have the right and the duty to put forward his name as a member of the Executive Committee.

For this reason, on behalf of the Presidium and the Commission, I propose to you that the amendments put before you be rejected. (*Applause*)

Chair: Comrades, we think it is appropriate, in proceeding to the vote, to separate the electing of the president from that of members of the Executive. If there is no objection, we will proceed in this fashion.

Since no objections have been made, we will now take the election of the president. The Commission proposes Comrade Zinoviev.²³ (*Sustained, prolonged applause*)

Comrades, we now come to the vote. I ask all those who agree with the Commission's proposals to raise their hands. I ask for those opposed. I declare that Comrade Zinoviev has been unanimously elected as President of the Communist International Executive. (*Renewed applause*)

Now, comrades, we will take the other votes. First, I must point out that we must have separate votes on three proposals. First, that of a portion of the American delegation, to elect Comrade Billings in place of Comrade Damon. Comrades, you have heard the motivation of Comrade Kolarov. The Commission sees no reason to deviate from its proposal.

I therefore ask you, who votes in favour of the proposal, namely, to elect Comrade Billings in place of Comrade Damon? Who is opposed, that is, who

23. The German text reads, 'the Comintern proposes', an apparent error.

votes for the proposal of the Commission? The question is closed: Comrade Damon is elected.

We now come to the Norwegian proposal. A portion of the Norwegian delegation proposes to replace Comrade Scheflo with Comrade Meyer. I ask again: who is for the proposal of the Norwegian delegation to not adopt the Commission's proposal but rather the elect Comrade Meyer in place of Comrade Scheflo? Who is for the Commission's proposal? I declare that Comrade Scheflo is elected.

Then we have a proposal from the Austrian delegation. Our procedure here is to deal first with certain proposals made by the delegations and then to take a stand on the Commission's proposals. The new proposals should and could relate only to the proposed nominations. What Comrade Grün is proposing is only indirectly related to our topic and the debate that we are now conducting. Nonetheless, we will put it to a vote. Comrade Grün proposes that the three countries of Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland be taken together and receive representation. Comrade Kolarov has said that the Commission sees no reason to revise its position. So I ask you: who is for the proposal of the Austrian comrades? Who is for remaining with the proposal of the Commission? The Commission's proposal is adopted.

We now come to the vote on all the nominations. Would you like us to vote on each nomination separately? (*Interjections: 'No!'*) Good, we will vote on them en bloc. Would the delegates who are for the Commission's proposal please raise their hands. Those opposed? Are there any abstentions? I declare that the list of nominations proposed by the Commission has been unanimously adopted. (*Applause*)

Closing address

Zinoviev: Comrades, our Fourth Congress focused on studying questions, differentiating between them, and analysing them more specifically and with more precision. Our congress met at a time when we did not have to define new and special tasks. We had a different task, that I have already briefly defined as taking the decisions made at the first three congresses, especially the Third Congress, and making them more specific, more precise, more differentiated. In my opinion, the Congress has carried out this task brilliantly. We have met for the first time as a genuinely international world party. That found outward expression in the fact that we gave special attention at the Congress to the most important matters affecting a whole number of parties.

What was it exactly that made up the majority of our congress's work? The fact that we separated out the most important questions and studied them in commissions, of which each one was really a mini-international conference. Among the commissions were those on France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Poland, the United States, Spain, and other questions. The questions considered were crucially important for the movements in these countries, and we studied all these issues together with the best representatives of other parties, that is to say, utilising the entire experience of all our parties. This shows that our International is finally beginning to become a real world party.

The commissions examined with great care all the political and organisational issues that have cropped up in the individual parties. Just as, let us say, a good, attentive doctor treats his patient, so our congress has investigated each party, each different nuance, and each issue disputed in the parties. The decisions reached here are genuinely the result of collective experience and the collective thinking of our international organisations. Although minorities exist on this or that question (that is always the case), these minorities must keep in mind that what has been decided here on each individual question is really what the International as a whole considers to be for the best. For the first time, we could afford the luxury of a precise and thorough investigation of the internal questions of a number of parties.

There was the French question. I hope that we have assisted our sister party in France in overcoming features left over from the old party. We have talked frankly with our French friends regarding the weaknesses in the Party. We have given the Party a great deal of advice, which comes from the International as a whole. We can now confidently await the result of these deliberations, in the hope that our French sister party overcomes its ailments.

Then we had the Italian question. Here something else was at stake. Here, the task was to give back to a fragmented revolutionary working class new energy, new confidence in victory, uniting the best forces in the Socialist Party with the Communist Party and taking to heart the hard lessons of the past.

We had the Czech crisis, which I hope has now been resolved. The task here was to help a group of workers – true, a small one – which had stumbled onto a false course as a result of a difficult situation, to get back on the rails. The majority of the Czech delegation was fully justified in its indignation regarding a breach of discipline committed by a sector of the Party in Czechoslovakia. Nonetheless it gives us great satisfaction that this majority was in full agreement with the decisions of the Congress which, we hope, will make good all deficiencies that have existed in Czechoslovakia.

We also had a Norwegian question. There a struggle is taking place, as Comrade Bukharin explained today fully and clearly. There are survivals in

this party that are both half-reformist and half-syndicalist in character. Federalist traditions are mixed together in this party with half-Social-Democratic forces. Our task was simply to speak the full truth to our Norwegian Party, one of the strongest parties in the Communist International and in fact in the world workers' movement.

We have dealt with quite a number of other questions, and we hope they have been resolved satisfactorily.

As the Congress closes, there are minorities that are perhaps not fully satisfied with the decisions. We ask that they await the experiences that will follow. They will then be convinced, as was the Congress in the Italian question, that the Communist character of the entire Communist International is really something much more significant than our party or any of the parties belonging to the International.

There were sixty-five delegations at our congress, representing sixty-two countries. At the Third Congress, there were only fifty-two. Our International is engaged in growth, and that makes it particularly necessary that we begin to prepare our work in more detail, with precision, going into specifics, and attempting to assist the parties not only with the general political slogans and tactical formulae that were called for in the past, but with quite specific advice. This process, taken as a whole, signifies that the Communist International is not only an association for propaganda, for collective political agitation, but is a unified world organisation of the proletariat.

Nonetheless, we addressed a number of general questions, and, in these questions too, our task was to lend more precision and definition to previous resolutions. The resolution on tactics that we have adopted today had the very modest task of extending the guidelines adopted at the Second and especially the Third Congresses and adapting them quite specifically to political tasks posed in the present situation.

We held our first thorough discussion here of the question of the workers' government. In the course of the discussion, there was much that we altered or made more precise. That is exactly what the Congress is for – so that we will influence each other and, ultimately, formulate the experiences of the International as a whole. Our friend Hoernle, with whom we worked in the Sub-Commission, said regarding our work, 'Well, even now the formulation of the workers' government is perhaps not quite complete.' And I agree with him on this. I responded to him that we now need to have two or three workers' governments in fact, then collect these experiences, and carry out a really revolutionary struggle around this slogan. I hope that it will not be long before we have such experiences in one or several countries.

In the question of the united front, we defined the tactic quite precisely. In December [1921], the line was marked out in general, but, at the Fourth

Congress, we were able to draw together the experiences of almost an entire year and to characterise the resistance to this tactic that we encountered. I hope that we have now formulated the united-front tactic for a whole period of time, and the task is now to apply it.

This is also true, for example, of the agrarian question. Our general position was brilliantly formulated, from a theoretical point of view, at the Second Congress.²⁴ Our task here was to apply this general line in each country to the specific conditions and relationships of the present period. And that is what the Fourth Congress accomplished. We did not encounter at this congress an opposition warning that Communists should in general not pay much attention to the peasantry.²⁵ On this, our position has now been firmly established in the Communist International. We now have a clear line on the agrarian question, and that is half the task of preparing our victory. The working class can only really triumph and maintain its victory if it succeeds in winning the majority of the working class to the banner of communism. But the second half of the task consists of succeeding, in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in neutralising one segment of the peasantry and winning over the other. Through the decisions on theory at the Second Congress and the practical decisions on action taken at the Fourth Congress, we have established a firm foundation for our entire agitation in the countryside and for our agrarian work as a whole.

Now let us consider the *question of the East*. As early as the Second Congress, we adopted a general position on theory, which has been shown to be absolutely correct. Our relationship to the revolutionary-national movements that are not Communist is clearly laid down in the resolution of the Second Congress.²⁶ Our line on theory remains the same as before. Something more important is at stake now. The task is to apply it in practice in a number of countries that are undergoing a revolutionary development. And I hope that the Fourth Congress has succeeded in taking an important step forward with respect to the practical work being carried out among millions and millions of peoples of the East.

We did not adopt the programme of the Communist International at the Fourth Congress, but we did lay the foundation stone of our programme. The

24. See 'Theses on the Agrarian Question', Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 660–70; and also the theses on this topic adopted the same year by the Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, Riddell (ed.) 1993, 194–9.

25. Zinoviev may have in mind speeches by Graziadei and Serrati at the Second Congress that minimised the importance of the peasant question. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 646–9, 653–4.

26. See in particular the comments by Lenin, in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 212–13, or Lenin 1960–71, 31, p. 242; and the resolution, Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 283–90.

discussion we had here and the drafts that were presented will, of course, have to be substantially reworked. We will try during the coming year to encompass the collective thinking of the International. But, nonetheless, the first steps have been taken, the first measures to unify the discussion are in place, and we already have the general line of our future programme.

We have had a thorough discussion of the *youth question*, the *woman question*, the *consumers' cooperatives*, all the practical questions of the movement – questions that taken together make up the content of our work as a whole.

We took an important decision in the *trade-union question*. We have forged a bloc with the best segment of the syndicalist world as a whole.²⁷ And our agreement with the syndicalists is not marked by any diplomacy. It is a fraternal and open agreement, as befits revolutionaries. It is true that we have important disagreements with our syndicalist comrades, who are not Communists, even though they call themselves so. We disagree with them on major theoretical and also many practical issues. But what we have done here – quite openly, so that every worker can receive a report – signifies an agreement between our Communist International, which attempts to incorporate the true spirit of the working class as a whole, and a portion of the working class that is not yet ours, but wants to struggle for communism. This agreement with the syndicalist world represents a very important decision, a very important factor in preparing for international proletarian revolution.

All in all: take the agrarian question, that of drawing to us the peasants; take the Eastern question, that of attracting the oppressed peoples; take the question of coming to agreement with the syndicalists, involving drawing to us important sectors of the working class that do not yet belong to us; take the decisions on the workers' government, that is, of drawing to us non-party, syndicalist, and even Christian workers, who want to struggle against the bourgeoisie, as well as the sector of the Social-Democratic workers who want to struggle together with us: when you take all that together, you will have a picture of a methodical, conscious, serious, and *practical preparation* of all the factors that contribute to genuine victory for the proletarian revolution.

We cannot, at this time, take any specific decisions on our offensive. The moment was not yet ripe for that. But the Fourth Congress took all the preparatory steps in order, when the time is ripe, to call for an offensive, and through this call, at the appropriate moment, to mobilise the working class.

In this regard, I believe, the Congress has carried out a prodigious labour. The Congress was a great university for us all. We have all learned a great

27. The RILU congress, held simultaneously with the Fourth Comintern Congress, removed the formal organisational tie between the two organisations, clearing the way for the affiliation of the syndicalist CGTU of France. See p. 536, n. 7.

deal. For the first time, we have taken the measure of each component party, studied it, and got to know it well. We are now acquainted not only with these parties' central committees but with the parties themselves, their weaknesses, their problems, their internal difficulties, their goals, their spirit. That is an important development for the entire international workers' movement.

In the trade-union question, we once again strongly emphasised the slogan of trade-union unity, because that is what is demanded by present-day requirements. We must now intervene as a single force for labour unity around the world, because the Amsterdamers are preparing a split. But that does not mean that we deny our Communist principles. Not at all.

On 11 December, a peace congress opens in The Hague, called by the Amsterdamers.²⁸ They were so gracious as to invite the Russian trade unions and cooperatives. It is true they did not invite our Communist International. They probably think that our International is not fighting against war or is insignificant in this struggle. Well, we will not hold that against these people. Obviously, they are afraid to invite the Communist International, and they have reasons to feel that way. But they have invited the Russian unions and cooperatives, and our comrades have hurried off to get there.

The Russian comrades have informed us that a member of the Executive, Comrade *Radek*, has travelled to The Hague as a representative of the Russian trade unions. Comrade *Lozovsky* has also travelled there, also representing the Russian unions. Our comrades there – if the Amsterdamers do not prevent them from speaking, which should be expected from these worthy democrats – will openly take up the struggle and tell the Amsterdamers to their face what must be said.

That means they will tell them, 'Well, gentlemen, if you want to fight against the War, the first step is for you to give up the slogan of "defence of the

28. The Hague Conference of 10–15 December 1922 was convened by the International Federation of Trade Unions to discuss implementation of a resolution of its Rome Congress earlier that year to respond to the outbreak of war with an international general strike. The Russian delegation at the Hague Congress, headed by Radek, welcomed this decision as an implicit repudiation of the Social Democrats' support of the war effort in 1914, but pointed out that this step was undercut by their continuing political alliance with the bourgeoisie and support of the Versailles treaty system. Moreover, Radek criticised the hollowness of this pledge, noting that 'a mass strike against war is social revolution, and the day of social revolution cannot be determined beforehand'. Russian delegates called for united anti-war action committees in every country and for a week in January of concerted education against war, ending in a one-day international general strike. These proposals were rejected. Instead, the conference called for modifications in the peace treaties and the League of Nations, an end to secret diplomacy, and a struggle – whose forms were not specified – against militarism and armaments. See *Inprekorr*, 2, 239 (18 December 1922), pp. 1792–6; and *Inprecorr*, 3, 1 (3 January 1923), pp. 4–5.

fatherland". You cannot fight against war on the platform of defence of the fatherland. If you want to combat war, you must recognise the need to carry out propaganda in the army, underground work in the army. If you want to proclaim a general strike against war, you must prepare for it. You should begin by at least, to start with, holding a one-day strike against militarism. And you must start to prepare to turn the army against the war. Because, when the soldiers have been educated for twenty years in the spirit of the bourgeoisie, you can not just turn around one fine day, in the twenty-first year, and say, "Now we want to propose to the army that it go on strike".

That is what we will tell the Amsterdamers, to their face. We will remind them that they signed the Versailles Treaty, and thus they too share responsibility for the entire situation. We will remind them that, in 1914, the trade-union International was a major force wielded by the belligerent bourgeois governments. We will give them nothing for free in The Hague; we will throw all that in their face.

But, despite this, comrades, we will stand everywhere for the unity of the trade unions, for unity at any price, so that we are not left empty-handed on the eve of the revolution. The unions are the only genuinely mass organisation of the proletariat. They are an indispensable tool of the liberation struggle of our class – indispensable from the moment when they pass into the hands of the Communists. We must preserve them from destruction. We must safeguard the unity of the trade unions, whatever the cost.

Comrades, that, in broad strokes, is the content of our decisions. We have not sounded the trumpets at this congress. We now face a tireless task in all parties of *preparation*, a task of rehabilitation. If we have expelled a bourgeois journalist on one or another occasion, that could seem to be a minor matter. On the contrary, comrades, it is not a minor matter, it is the preparatory task of rehabilitating the parties. The Congress, rolling up its sleeves, so to speak, has carried out this indispensable rehabilitation in a number of parties. This is a mundane and not always very pleasant task. But anyone who wants to prepare a genuinely Communist international party for struggle must utilise each day to analyse the parties, so that we can become a genuine Communist party capable of playing its historical role in the present situation.

Comrades, we have adopted very important organisational decisions. We have got rid of everything in our structure that was federalist, or almost federalist. We hope that, at the Fifth Congress, it will be inconceivable for there to be a debate on the election of the Executive similar to what we have had today. We can debate whether this or that individual belongs in the Executive. We should do that, saying with confidence who has our trust and who does not. There must be no more such situations as today, where blocs of two or three countries want to have their own representative in the Executive,

moreover purely from a national point of view. I hope we have seen the last of this kind of theatre. We are a unified Communist world party. That means we must have a unified central committee of the world party. The members of this central committee may come from the Balkans, from Japan, from Germany, or from Russia. We take our best proletarian forces from the locations in the movement where we find them. From this time forward, we will combat everything that is federalist and implement a genuine discipline.

Let me speak further on discipline. Sometimes, comrades stress that they are disciplined because they carry out the decisions with which they are in agreement. That is not discipline at all! Discipline begins only where you have to carry out a decision with which you are not completely in agreement. (*‘Very true!’*) Comrades, we ask the minorities that possibly do not approve of this or that decision affecting them to show discipline in these cases. Where you are in agreement, no discipline is necessary; you act from conviction. But the moment I have to do something that does not entirely suit me, that is where international discipline begins.

And I believe that the reorganisation of our Executive has very great meaning.

This is not merely an organisational measure. It is a political measure of great consequence, a measure that signifies we are becoming a world party and must carry out genuinely international discipline in every case. We stressed in our resolution that this was already said at the Third Congress. We have merely repeated it. We have said that every great strike, every limited uprising, indeed, every significant parliamentary crisis, can in today’s unstable equilibrium become the starting point for a great revolutionary movement, even for the revolution itself. We weighed and assessed every word in this resolution twenty times before choosing the final text. This sentence is absolutely accurate and can be scientifically proven. No one can say how long this unstable period will last, how long the capitalist offensive will continue. No one can say when the time will come when we change over from the defensive to the offensive. But there is no question that we are thinking in terms not of decades but of years. It’s a matter not of decades, but of years.

With regard to the scope of our revolution, it’s not a matter of individual parties but of the situation as a whole. And, with regard to time, it’s not decades, but years. That is the situation. There is not need to be optimistic; we can state that to the world quite confidently. Our main immediate task is to win the masses of workers. That is the goal of our preparatory work and of the Communist International as a whole. A few more years, and we will have the solid foundations of Communist parties that will put us in a situation where we have nothing more to fear.

The five years of the Russian Revolution have not gone by in vain. There has been no end of problems. The great pride of Russian workers and peasants consists in saying that, despite everything, you will soon see that we have succeeded in doing something to lead the working masses in other countries to rise up and get organised. (*Applause*)

So, a few more years of work, as I said, and we can breathe more easily. We see that the preparatory work is accomplished. In every country, we have a solid Communist party, and that is of historical importance. The construction of a firm nucleus of a Communist party in some distant country has more historical significance than the Versailles Treaty, the Lausanne Conference, or all those so-called world conferences frequented by high-powered diplomats. The formation of a solid nucleus of a Communist Party in India, for example, is much more important from a historical point of view than all these conferences.

So, comrades, let's turn to the work! We are headed into difficult times. As we noted in our resolution, international fascism is on the march. That means that hundreds and thousands of our best fighters will go to jail and be killed by the bourgeoisie and the social patriots, who work hand in hand with the white guards. We are headed into difficult times.

But the time that has gone by has not been in vain. The bourgeoisie, together with the wondrous Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, have done everything to defeat us. They did not succeed. The united-front tactic gives us a tactical key to unlock the entire situation, the whole present position.

We are now addressing an open letter to the Second International and the Amsterdam International. They will reject the united front, just as the social patriots have done. I read an article today in *Populaire*, the official publication of the French social patriots. When our French comrades challenged them to come, they answered: 'We cannot join with you in a united front. You see what Lenin has written about us in the following quotations.' And then there followed a number of charming statements by Lenin regarding the French social patriots. On the next page, they said: 'See what Trotsky says about us!' And there followed a number of even better quotations. (*Laughter*) And, finally, there were a bunch of quotations from your humble servant. I have also honoured them with many compliments. They pull all that together and say, 'we can't form a united front with you'.

Perhaps the Second International will do that too. Perhaps these people think we will pamper them, we will forget their crimes against the working class, we will stop whipping them before the working class. *Never!* Our main task in the next period is to continually rebuke the Second International for those crimes. The Amsterdam International is one of betrayal, because it is

a tool of the bourgeoisie. And, despite everything, we are for a united front with all workers that want to fight against the bourgeoisie!

It is with this thought that we conclude our deliberations. We are convinced that the Fourth Congress has achieved something important for all the sixty-two affiliated parties. Let's get to work, comrades. We wish you great success in overcoming all the difficulties that must be faced. In returning home, take with you the news that the International is now politically armed by quite specific decisions, that you have thoroughly studied all our actions and helped each sister party, step by step, to emerge from the difficult situation it faces. Take them the news that we are more united than ever, that our parties have begun a new period of unifying all genuinely revolutionary forces; in short, that we have begun to become a united world party of communism. Let the bourgeoisie and their white or yellow Second International tremble! The future belongs to us! Long live the Communist World Party!

(Resounding, sustained, prolonged applause. The Kremlin cadet-school choir sings the 'Internationale', standing before the participants. This is followed by loud applause and interjections from the Presidium, 'La Carmagnole'. The Italians and French sing 'Bandiera Rossa'. Applause.)

Kolarov (*in French*): I ask you to authorise me to express our thanks to our Russian comrades in the name of all delegations from abroad, and I ask you to permit me to do this in the language of the Russian comrades. (*Applause*)

(In Russian:) Dear comrades of Russia! I have the pleasant duty of expressing to you, on behalf of the delegations from abroad at the Fourth World Congress, and through you to the Russian Communist Party and the entire Russian proletariat and revolutionary peasantry, our heartfelt thanks for the fraternal welcome you have offered us.

You have provided the World Congress with all possible and conceivable conveniences, in order to assure the proper and orderly progress of its lengthy and arduous work. Perhaps we have extended our labours over too long a time and abused your hospitality, but you will be lenient with us.

You have offered us, the delegates from abroad, a chance to learn of the indescribable enthusiasm and inexhaustible energy that the great October Revolution has awakened in the Russian proletariat. Russian working people face immense internal difficulties and all the threatening dangers posed by the surrounding imperialist states. Yet we have been able to see with our own eyes how, through tenacious work, and relying only on their own strength and the growing sympathies of workers and oppressed peoples the world over, the working people of Russia have created a new Soviet state and a communist society.

Through your direct and energetic participation in the congress deliberations, you have provided a foundation for its decisions – the rich experience of the Russian Revolution and the well-honed concepts of Marxism. All the congress debates were influenced by the great proletarian revolution and its great leaders.

In addition, you surrounded us with an atmosphere of fraternal love and warm affection. We were already familiar with the affectionate disposition of the Russian people, but now we see proof that the Revolution strongly promotes the development of all the great virtues that stand as the basis for the solidarity of working people around the world.

We will repay you for your fraternal reception by following resolutely and boldly the path blazed by the October Revolution, and energetically pursuing the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the power of world capitalism.

Once again, our heartfelt thanks.

(In French) Long live the Russian Communist Party! Long live the working people of Russia! *(Long applause)*

Chair: The Presidium has decided that at this moment all delegates are obliged to understand all languages, and there will be no translation. *(Laughter)*

The Bureau expresses its warm thanks to all the technical staff for their diligent and effective work. *(Loud applause)*

In the name of the Presidium and, if I may add, in the name of all the delegates, we express our warm thanks to the workers of Russia for the hearty welcome they have given us in both Petrograd and Moscow. *(Shouts of strong agreement)* It is only here in Russia, here in the land where the Russian peasants and workers have unrestricted control of the situation, that the envoys of the international class-conscious proletariat are able to work confidently and undisturbed, debating and studying the most important problems of the workers' movement. We came here gladly to take these most important decisions and to prepare the struggles that will culminate in the mighty international struggle, the decisive battle between capitalism and labour. Nonetheless, we say to the Russian workers and peasants that we see it as our noble task to strive, on the basis of the decisions of this congress, to gradually create a situation in which we no longer come here as guests but can rather act as hosts, receiving the Russian proletarians as guests, in the country in which we first overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. *(Loud applause)* In this spirit, we convey our greetings to the Russian peasants and workers. Long live the Russian working class! Long live the brave Russian Communist Party! Long live the international proletariat! Long live the world-revolution! *(Resounding applause)*

I declare that the Fourth Congress of the Communist International is now closed.

(On the shouted request of Bordiga, another verse of the 'Internationale' is sung, with musical accompaniment, and also the 'Carmagnole'. Finally, a special tribute is played, to the sound of music, to the individual members of the Communist International.)

Adjournment: 9:45 p.m.

Appendix: Resolutions and Appeals

Appendix 1

Statement by Domski

Correction:

The comments by Zinoviev directed against my supposed Polish nationalism are based on factual misunderstandings.¹ I wrote the incriminating article not during the offensive on Warsaw but much earlier – about the beginning of July. In this article, I did not present any fundamental theory that it is impermissible to bring proletarian dictatorship into a country on bayonet points. I consider such a theory to be entirely incorrect. Under the specific conditions existing in Poland at that time, I thought such an attempt to be a mistake and wrote in the belief that the Soviet government would not make this mistake. I took the liberty, some time later, in a confidential letter to our Russian friends, to make reference to the error. The fact that it was an error was publicly acknowledged the following year by Comrade Lenin.²

As for the charge that in my speech I rejected the workers' government only in Poland – another nationalist conception – I did not make any such statement.

L. Domski (Poland)

1. See Zinoviev's comments on p. 282.

2. See Lenin's comments to the Bolsheviks' Tenth Congress in March 1921, Lenin 1960–71, 32, p. 173.

*Appendix 2***Protest by the American Commission**

In a speech to the November 12 plenary session, Comrade Sullivan used harsh language to attack the Workers' Party publication, the *Worker*.³ He quoted a sentence from an article in this newspaper and promised to present the article in question to the American Commission. After examining the article in question, the Commission declares that the sentence in question in this article has a meaning opposite to that implied by Comrade Sullivan. The Commission also strongly disapproves of the manner in which this newspaper, which has achieved much in the struggle to disseminate Communist ideas in America, was treated by Comrade Sullivan.

The American Commission

(signed) Walecki

3. See Sullivan's remarks on pp. 257–8.

*Appendix 3***Political Resolution on the French Question***The crisis in the Party and the role of the factions⁴*

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International notes that the evolution of the Communist Party of France from parliamentary socialism to revolutionary communism has proceeded exceptionally slowly. The explanation for this is certainly not found exclusively in the objective conditions, traditions, the national psychology of the workers, and so forth. Rather, it is due above all to the direct and at times extremely stubborn resistance of non-Communist forces, who are still very strong in the Party's leading circles and especially in the Centre, the faction that has chiefly held the leadership of the Party since the Tours Convention [1920].

The main cause of the present acute crisis in the Party lies in the indecisive, vacillating, and dilatory policies of the leading forces in the Centre. Confronted by the urgently posed needs of the party organisation, they try to buy time. In this fashion, they try to create a cover for their policy of direct sabotage regarding the trade-union question, the united front, the party organisation, and so on. The time gained in this way by the leading forces in the Centre has been time lost for the revolutionary development of the French proletariat.

The Congress instructs the Executive to follow attentively the internal life of the Communist Party of France and, relying on the unquestionably revolutionary and proletarian majority, to free the Party from the influence of forces that have provoked this crisis and that continue to aggravate it.

The Congress rejects any thought of a split, which is not justified by anything in the Party's situation. The overwhelming majority of party members are sincerely and profoundly committed to the cause of communism. Only a lack of clarity regarding party doctrines and a lack of self-confidence has enabled its conservative, centrist, and half-centrist forces to arouse great confusion and provoke factions. A determined, persistent effort by the Party as a whole to clarify the essence of the disputed questions will win the overwhelming majority of its members, and, above all, of its proletarian base, to the decisions of this congress. There are also forces who, while members of the Party, are also tied to the morals and customs of bourgeois society by their entire mode of thinking and living, and who cannot grasp genuine proletarian politics and cannot subordinate themselves to revolutionary discipline.

4. The resolution was drafted by Trotsky and is found in his collection of Comintern writings, Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 275–84.

Cleansing the Party of such forces is a necessary precondition for its recovery, consolidation, and capacity for action.

The Communist vanguard of the working class has need, of course, for intellectuals who bring to the organisation their theoretical knowledge and their agitational and literary capacities. But there is a precondition: these forces must fully and finally break with the morals and customs of the bourgeois milieu. They must burn all the bridges linking them to the camp from which they have come. They must demand no exceptions and privileges for themselves, but rather subordinate themselves to party discipline just like any militant in the ranks.

The intellectuals, so numerous in France, who have joined the Party as amateurs or careerists, not only do great harm to the Party but also distort its revolutionary appearance, discrediting it in the eyes of the proletarian masses and hindering it from winning the trust of the working class. The Party must be freed from such forces, whatever the cost, and must keep its doors closed against them in the future. This can best be done by a re-registration of party members under the direction of a special commission of workers of irreproachable Communist morality.

The Executive attempted to reduce the organisational impact of the crisis by constituting the Party's leading bodies on the basis of parity between the two main currents, the Centre and the Left.⁵ The congress notes that this attempt was thwarted by the Centre, under the unquestionable influence of its most conservative elements. They invariably gain the upper hand in the Centre whenever it counterposes itself to the Left.

The Congress considers it necessary to explain to all members of the Communist Party of France that the efforts of the Executive directed toward achieving a temporary agreement between the main factions had the goal of facilitating the work of the Paris Congress. In no sense were they an infringement of the unquestioned rights of the Congress as the highest body in the Communist Party of France.

The Congress considers it necessary to note that the Left, whatever individual errors it may have committed, tried, in the main, to carry out the policies of the Communist International, both before and during the Paris Congress. The Left took a correct stand on the most important issues facing the revolutionary movement – the united front and the trade-union movement – in contrast to the positions of the Centre and the group of Comrade Renoult.

5. The reference is to preparations for and events at the 15–20 October 1922 Paris Congress. See p. 970, n. 7.

The Congress urgently calls on all truly revolutionary, truly proletarian forces in the centre faction – the unquestionable majority in its ranks – to call a halt to the opposition by conservative forces and join with the Left in common endeavour. The same holds true for the third-largest faction, which has conducted a particularly sharp and clearly erroneous struggle against the policy of the united front.

The extreme left wing

By eliminating the federalist structure of its organisation, the Seine Federation has rejected the clearly false position of the so-called extreme left wing. This current, represented by Comrades Heine and Lavergne, has nonetheless considered it permissible to give Citizen Delplanque an imperative mandate, obliging him to abstain in the vote on all questions and not to accept any assignments. Such conduct by the above-named representative of the far-left wing shows that it has understood nothing of the meaning and essence of the Communist International.

The principles of democratic centralism on which our organisation is founded completely exclude the possibility of an imperative mandate, whether in regional, national, or international congresses. A congress has meaning only to the degree that the collective decisions of the organisation – local, national, or international – are taken through the free exchange of opinion and by free decision of all the delegates. Obviously, the debates and the exchange of experiences and arguments at the Congresses would be devoid of meaning if the delegates were bound in advance by imperative mandates.

The violation of the International's fundamental organisational principles is made worse in this case by the refusal of this group to accept any obligations whatsoever toward the International, as if the mere fact of membership in the International did not impose on all its members the unconditional duty of discipline and of carrying out all decisions that have been adopted. The Congress calls on the Central Committee of our French Party to investigate on the spot this entire incident and to draw all the appropriate political and organisational decisions.

The trade-union question

The decisions adopted by the Congress on the trade-union question include certain organisational and formal concessions designed to make it easier for the Party to draw closer to the unions or the masses organised in unions who do not yet accept the Communist point of view. But it would completely distort the meaning of these decisions to interpret them in the sense of

approving a policy of trade-union abstention. This policy has been dominant in the Party, and is still advocated today by many members.

The tendencies represented by Ernest Lafont stand completely and irreconcilably opposed to the revolutionary tasks of the working class and the overall conceptions of communism. The Party cannot and does not want to infringe on the autonomy of the trade unions. However, when some of its members demand autonomy to carry out their own disruptive and anarchist work in the unions, this must be implacably exposed and punished. This is a highly important arena of work, one in which the International is least of all inclined to tolerate any further deviation from the Communist path, which alone is correct with regard both to theory and international practice.

Lessons of the protest strike against the Le Havre murders

The strike in Le Havre,⁶ despite its local character, provides irrefutable evidence of the French proletariat's growing willingness to struggle. The capitalist government responded to the strike by murdering four workers, as if in haste to remind the French proletariat that it can win power and overthrow capitalist slavery only at the cost of bitter struggle, great self-sacrifice, and many victims.

Responsibility for the quite inadequate response of the French proletariat to the Le Havre murders falls not only on the Dissident and reformist trade unions, whose betrayal has become routine, but also the obviously erroneous conduct of the CGTU and the Communist Party. The Congress considers it necessary to dwell on this question, because it represents an eloquent example of a fundamentally incorrect approach to the question of revolutionary action.

By making a fundamentally false division of the proletarian class struggle into two spheres supposedly independent of one another – the economic and the political – the Party failed on this occasion to display the slightest independent initiative, merely limiting its work to the support of the CGTU – as if the murder of four proletarians by the capitalist government were an economic action rather than a political event of the greatest importance. As for the CGTU, under pressure of the Paris construction workers' union, it called on the day after the Le Havre murders, Sunday, for a general protest strike on Tuesday [29 August 1922]. In many places, the workers of France were not able even to receive news of the murders, let alone hear of the call to general strike.

Under such circumstances, a general strike was doomed in advance to failure. There is no doubt that in this case, as in others, the CGTU adjusted its

6. See p. 581, n. 15.

policy to that of anarchist forces, for whom an understanding of revolutionary action and its preparation is totally alien, and who replace revolutionary struggle by the revolutionary appeals of their circles, without even bothering to actually carry out what they have demanded. The Party, for its part, silently capitulated to this obviously erroneous move by the CGTU, rather than trying in a fraternal but firm manner to convince the CGTU to postpone the protest strike, in order to develop large-scale mass agitation.

The first duty of both the Party and the CGTU, when confronted with the scandalous crime of the French bourgeoisie, was to immediately send a large number of the best party and union agitators out to Paris and the regions in order to explain to backward layers of the working class the meaning of the events in Le Havre and to prepare the popular masses for protest and resistance. The Party was duty-bound, in a case like this, to issue an appeal to the French working class and peasantry, in millions of copies, regarding the atrocity in Le Havre. The Party's official publication had to pose daily the question to the social traitors – socialists and syndicalists alike: 'What form of struggle do you propose as a response to the murders in Le Havre?' For its part, the Party and the CGTU should have popularised the idea of a general strike, without setting its date and duration in advance, but, rather, allowing this to be determined by the development of agitation and the movement across the country. Attempts should have been made to create temporary protest committees in individual factories, neighbourhoods, cities, and districts. Into these committees Communists and revolutionary syndicalists, as their initiators, should have drawn members or representatives of the local reformist organisations.

Only such a campaign – systematic, concentrated, comprehensive, intense, and tireless; extended over a week or longer – could have been crowned by an immense and impressive movement in the form of a mass protest strike, numerous street demonstrations, and so on. Such a campaign would have brought as its lasting result a strengthening of contact with the masses and a reinforcement of the authority and influence among them of the Communist Party and the CGTU, while drawing the two movements closer into the arena of revolutionary work and increasing their ties with the portion of the working class that today still follows the reformists.

On 1 May 1920, there was a so-called general strike, which the revolutionary forces did not succeed in preparing, while the reformists criminally sabotaged it.⁷ This event was a turning point in the internal life of France, weakening the proletariat and strengthening the bourgeoisie. The 'general protest strike' of

7. The date of the strike is wrongly given as 1 May 1921 in both the German and Russian texts. See p. 979, n. 17.

August 1922 was fundamentally a repetition of both the betrayal by the Right and the errors of the Left.⁸ The International urgently calls on the French comrades, whatever the branch of the proletarian movement in which they are active, to pay the utmost attention to problems of mass actions; to carefully study their conditions and methods; to subject the mistakes of their organisation in every specific case to detailed critical examination; to prepare for every possibility of mass action through careful, extended, and intense agitation; and to fit their slogans to the readiness and capacity of the masses for action.

The reformist leaders base themselves in their treacherous actions on the advice, inspiration, and suggestions of bourgeois public opinion as a whole, to which they are tightly bound. Revolutionary syndicalists,⁹ who are, of course, only a minority in the trade unions, will make far fewer errors, the more the Party as such turns its attention to all issues in the workers' movement, carefully studying relationships and circumstances and, through its members in the trade unions, making specific proposals that are in accord with the entire situation.

Freemasonry, the League of the Rights of Man, and the bourgeois press

The incompatibility between freemasonry and socialism was recognised by the majority of parties of the Second International. In 1914, the Socialist Party of Italy expelled the masons from its ranks, and this measure was certainly among the reasons why this party was able to carry out an oppositional policy during the War, since the Italian masons functioned as tools of the Entente in favour of Italy's joining the War.

In defining the conditions for admission to the Communist International, the Second Congress did not include a special point regarding the incompatibility of communism with freemasonry, but only because this principle had already found expression in a separate resolution adopted with the agreement of the Congress.¹⁰ At the Fourth Congress, it unexpectedly came to light

8. In the Russian text of this resolution and its translations into English, the date of the general strike is incorrectly given as October 1922. See Kun 1933, p. 347; Trotsky 1972b, 2, p. 280; Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 350. The translation follows here the date given in the German text.

9. Both the German and Russian texts at this point use variants of the French word 'syndicalistes', which can refer either to the syndicalist political current or to trade-unionists in general.

10. The Russian text of the resolution reads, 'The Second Congress of the Communist International did not include among the conditions of admission to the International a special point on the incompatibility between Communism and Freemasonry solely because this was deemed self-evident'. (See Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 351 and Kun 1933, p. 347) The Second Congress proceedings show that such a motion was proposed by Graziadei and then put to a vote, on Henri Guilbeaux's proposal, as an amendment

that a significant number of French Communists belong to masonic lodges. In the eyes of the International, this fact constitutes the most striking and also the most regrettable evidence that our French party has preserved not merely the psychological heritage of the epoch of reformism, parliamentarism, and patriotism, but also very specific relationships, highly compromising for the party leadership, with secret political and careerist organisations of our enemies.

While the Communist vanguard gathers proletarian forces for irreconcilable struggle against all the groupings and organisations of bourgeois society and for the dictatorship of the proletariat, a whole number of responsible party staffers, deputies, journalists, and even Central Committee members maintain close ties to secret organisations of our enemies.

It is of particular concern that none of the currents in the Party raised this question after the Tours Convention, despite its obvious importance for the entire International. Only the factional struggle within the Party brought this fact to the attention of the International in all its full and threatening significance.

The International considers it necessary to make an end, once and for all, to these compromising and demoralising ties between the Communist Party leadership and the political organisations of the bourgeoisie. It must be a point of honour for the French revolutionary proletariat to cleanse its entire class organisation of all forces that want to belong simultaneously to both warring camps.

The Congress instructs the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France to cut all ties, in the person of individual members or groups, between the Party and freemasonry. Every Communist who is now still a member of the freemasons, and has not publicly declared in the party press by 1 January 1923, that he has fully broken with masonry, automatically leaves the Communist Party, without the right ever to be readmitted. If anyone conceals their membership in the masonic order, this must be viewed as the penetration of the party ranks by an enemy agent, and the person concerned must be branded as such before the proletariat as a whole.

The mere fact of membership in the masons – regardless of whether this was purely in pursuit of material gain, careerist goals, or some other dishonourable purpose – testifies to an extremely inadequate development of Communist consciousness and class feeling. The Fourth Congress therefore considers it absolutely necessary that the comrades that have until now belonged to the masons and only now break with them lose the right to hold any important

to the Twenty-One Conditions. The motion was adopted, but was not incorporated into the published text of the Conditions. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 167, 320–1, 417, 523–4.

position in the Party for two years. Only through intense work as rank-and-file fighters for the revolutionary cause can these comrades regain the Party's full trust and the right to hold important posts in the Party.

The *League for Defence of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* is essentially an organisation of bourgeois radicalism. Each of its campaigns against this or that 'injustice' serves to sow the illusions and prejudices of bourgeois democracy. Above all, in the most important and decisive matters, such as during the War, it lent its full support to capitalism, organised through the state. Given these facts, the Fourth Congress of the Communist International regards membership in the League for Defence of the Rights of Man and the Citizen as absolutely incompatible with the calling of a Communist and contrary to the basic foundations of a Communist world outlook. It instructs all party members who belong to the League to leave its ranks by 1 January 1923, informing their organisation and announcing their departure in the press.

The Fourth Congress calls on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France to:

- 1.) Immediately issue an appeal to the entire party, explaining the meaning and significance of this resolution.
- 2.) Take all the measures flowing from this resolution, so that the Party will be cleansed of freemasonry and that all ties to the League for Defence of the Rights of Man and the Citizen will be broken, without leniency or omission, by 1 January 1923. The Congress expresses its conviction that in this work of cleansing and rehabilitation, the Central Committee will receive the support of the overwhelming majority of party members, whatever their factional allegiance.

The Central Committee must draw up lists of all comrades in Paris or the regions who, although occupying responsible posts, simultaneously collaborate in the bourgeois press. It must call on these forces to make a full and final choice, by 1 January, between the bourgeois vehicle for corruption of the popular masses and the revolutionary party of proletarian dictatorship.

Party functionaries who have violated this rule, which has been repeatedly affirmed and confirmed, will lose for a year the right to hold responsible posts in the Party.¹¹

11. This paragraph is not found in the Russian text.

Party candidates

In order to give the Party a truly proletarian character and to remove from its ranks forces that see it as merely a way to enter parliament, the municipal councils, the general councils, and so on, it is essential to establish a binding rule that at least nine-tenths of the list of party candidates in elections consist of Communist workers who still labour in the workplace, factory, or field, and peasants. Representatives of the liberal professions can be permitted only to a strictly limited degree, not to exceed one-tenth of the total number of seats that the Party holds or hopes to occupy. Special care must be taken in the choice of candidates belonging to the liberal professions, including a minute checking of their political record, their social ties, and their loyalty and commitment to the cause of the working class, by special commissions made up of proletarians.

Only under such circumstances will the Communist members of parliament, municipal and general councils, and mayors cease to be, in its majority, a professional caste, linked only weakly to the working class, and become instead one of the tools of revolutionary struggle by the masses.

Communist work in the colonies

The Fourth Congress once again calls attention to the exceptional importance of correct and systematic work by the Communist party in the colonies. The congress sharply condemns the position of the Communist section in Sidi-Bel-Abbès,¹² which employs pseudo-Marxist phraseology to cover up a purely slaveholder's point of view, fundamentally supporting the imperial rule of French capitalism over its colonial slaves. The Congress considers that our work in the colonies should be based not on forces that are so imbued with capitalist and nationalist prejudices, but, rather, on the best forces among the indigenous people themselves, and above all, among the indigenous proletarian youth.

Only an irreconcilable struggle against colonial slavery by the Communist Party in the motherland and a systematic struggle in the colonies themselves can weaken the influence of ultra-nationalist forces among the oppressed colonial peoples among the working masses, win these masses' sympathy for the cause of the French proletariat, and thus make it impossible for French capitalism to utilise the indigenous proletariat in the colonies as a final reserve of counter-revolution. The Fourth World Congress calls on the French Party and

12. See comments by Boudengha (pp. 700–4), Safarov (p. 719), and Trotsky (pp. 1000–1) on the Communist section of Sidi-Bel-Abbès, Algeria.

its Central Committee to devote incomparably more attention, resources, and means than before to the colonial question and to propaganda in the colonies. It calls especially for the Central Committee itself to establish a permanent bureau for work in the colonies, drawing into this representatives of indigenous Communist organisations.

*Appendix 4***Decisions on the Reorganisation of the Executive Committee and Its Future Activity***World congress*

The world congress will take place, as before, on a yearly basis. The date will be decided by the Expanded Executive. All affiliated sections are required to send delegates, whose number will be determined by the Executive. The costs will be borne by the parties. The number of votes for each section will be determined by the Congress based on its membership and the political conditions of the country. Imperative mandates are not allowed and will be annulled in advance, for such mandates contradict the spirit of an international, centralised, and proletarian party.

Executive

The Executive is elected by the Congress. It consists of a president, twenty-four members, and ten alternates. At least fifteen members of the Executive must be permanently resident in Moscow.

Expanded Executive

As a rule, meetings of the Expanded Executive will take place every four months. The meeting will be constituted as follows:

- 1.) All twenty-five members of the Executive.
- 2.) Three additional representatives each from the following parties: Germany, France, Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Italy, as well as the Youth International and the Profintern.
- 3.) Two representatives each from Britain, Poland, the United States, Bulgaria and Norway.
- 4.) One representative of all the other sections entitled to vote.

The Presidium is required to submit all major and fundamental questions that permit delay to a meeting of the Expanded Executive. The first Expanded Executive meeting takes place immediately following the world congress.

Presidium

At its first meeting, the Expanded Executive elects a Presidium, which includes a representative of the youth and of the Profintern with consultative vote. It establishes the following departments:

- 1.) A department for the East, whose work during the next year will receive special attention from the Executive. The head of this department must belong to the Presidium. The political work of this department is subordinate to the Presidium, which also controls its relationship to the Organisational Department.
- 2.) An Organisational Department [Orgburo], including at least two members of the Presidium. The Orgburo reports to the Presidium.
- 3.) A department for agitation and propaganda, which is headed by a member of the Executive. This department reports directly to the Presidium.
- 4.) A department for statistics and information, which reports to the Orgburo.

The Executive has the right to establish additional departments.

Division of labour among members of the Executive

A precise division of labour is to be introduced among members of the Executive and of the Presidium. The Presidium will name a responsible reporter for each of the most important countries in order to prepare the work of each section. As a rule, the reporter will be a member of the Executive or, when possible, of the Presidium. Reporters who are not members of the Executive or the Presidium work under supervision of a Presidium member.

The Presidium organises a General Secretariat, led by the General Secretary, with two deputies. The secretariat is not an independent political body; it is only an executive body of the Presidium.

The Executive is instructed to encourage all parties to implement a similar division of labour, taking into account the conditions and the situation in each individual country.

Authorised representatives

In special cases, the Executive sends authorised representatives to individual countries, chosen from the most qualified comrades of the national sections. These representatives will be endowed by the Executive with sweeping powers. The functions of these representatives, their rights and duties, and their relationship to the party in question must be precisely set out in special instructions.

The Executive is empowered to supervise with special emphasis the effective implementation of the Twenty-One Conditions and the decisions of the world congress. Its envoys are emphatically directed to supervise this. The envoys must submit reports at least once a month on the results of their work.

International Control Commission

The International Control Commission will continue as before. Its tasks remain the same as those formulated by the Third Congress.¹³ Every year, the world congress will designate two neighbouring sections, whose central committees will elect from their own ranks three members each, whose names must be ratified by the Executive. For the coming year, the world congress assigns this function to the German and French sections.

Technical information bureau

The technical information bureaus will continue. Their goal is to provide technical information; their work is under the control of the Executive.

'Communist International'

Communist International is a publication of the Executive; its editors are elected by the Executive and report to it.

Publications of the Executive

The Congress confirms that all Communist publications are obligated, as before, to immediately publish all documents of the Executive (appeals, letters, resolutions, etc.), when the Executive so requests.

Minutes of the national parties

The central committees of all sections are obligated to send minutes of all their conferences regularly to the Executive.

13. The Third Congress adopted a motion 'to establish a provisional Control Commission, by common agreement between the new Executive Committee and the first voting category, that is, the leadership of the largest delegations. If such an agreement is reached, then the provisional Control Commission should function for this year.' Its concerns were specified as: 'the Executive Committee's activities...and especially for its activity outside Soviet territory in relationship to the parties and their activity'. Comintern 1921a, p. 1044.

Reciprocal representation

It is desirable that when major sections are in neighbouring countries, they should maintain reciprocal representation in order to exchange information and coordinate their work. The reports of these representatives are also to be forwarded simultaneously to the Executive.

In addition, it is desirable that the choice of these representatives be carried out in accord with the Executive.

Party conventions of the sections

As a rule, parties will hold conferences or expanded national-committee meetings before the world congress, in order to prepare the world gathering and elect delegates to it. The party conventions of each section take place after the world congress. Exceptions can be made only with the consent of the Executive.

This procedure will ensure that the interests of each section are safeguarded in the best way and that it is possible to evaluate the entire experience of the international movement from 'from bottom up'.

At the same time, this procedure gives the Communist International, as a centralised world party, the opportunity to give directives flowing from the entirety of its international experience, 'from top down', by means of democratic centralism, to the individual parties.

Resignations

The Congress emphatically condemns cases of resignations by individual members of various central committees or entire groups of such members. The congress considers that such resignations severely disorganise the Communist movement. Every leadership post in a Communist party is the property not of those holding the office but of the Communist International as a whole.

The Congress resolves that elected members of a section's central leading bodies can lay down their mandates only with the consent of the Executive. Resignations accepted by a party central leadership without the Executive's agreement are invalid.

Underground work

A decision of the Congress noted that a number of the largest parties are to all appearances heading for a period of illegality. Flowing from that, the Presidium is instructed to devote greater attention to preparing the parties

in question for underground work. The Presidium is to initiate discussions with all the affected parties immediately following the Congress.

International Women's Secretariat

The International Women's Secretariat continues as before. The Executive chooses its secretary and takes all further organisational measures in agreement with her.

Representation of the youth executive

The Congress instructs the Executive to arrange for regular representation of the Comintern in the Youth International. The Congress considers the promotion of the youth movement's work to be one of the Executive's most important tasks.

Representation in the Profintern

The Congress instructs the Executive to work out, together with the Profintern central committee, the forms of mutual relations between the Comintern and the Profintern. The Congress points out that economic struggles are closely bound together with political struggles, particularly at this time. This demands a particularly intimate coordination of the forces of all revolutionary organisations of the working class.

Revision of the Statutes

The Congress confirms the Statutes adopted by the Second Congress,¹⁴ and instructs the Executive to edit and amplify these statutes on the basis of the new congress decisions. This work must be carried out promptly, submitted to all parties for preliminary discussion, and given final approval by the Fifth Congress.

14. See Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2, pp. 694–9.

Appendix 5

Resolution on the Italian Question

The Second and Third World Congresses of the Communist International have already had to take up the Italian question in detail. The Fourth Congress is in a position to review some of the results.

At the end of the imperialist world war, the situation in Italy was objectively revolutionary. The bourgeoisie had lost hold of the reins. The bourgeois state apparatus had broken down. The ruling class was unsure of itself. All the working masses were enraged by the War and, in various parts of the country, were in open insurrection. Important sectors of the peasantry began to rise up against the landowners and the state, and they were inclined to support the working class in revolutionary struggle. The soldiers were against the War and ready to join with the workers.

The *objective* preconditions for a victorious revolution were in place. What was lacking was the most important *subjective* factor: a determined, battle-ready, self-confident, revolutionary workers' party, that is, a genuine Communist party, which would have decisively taken leadership of the masses.

Broadly speaking, the situation was similar at the end of the War in almost all the belligerent countries. The failure of the working class to achieve victory in the decisive countries in 1919–20 is attributable to the lack of a revolutionary workers' party. This was most strikingly the case in Italy, the country where revolution was knocking at the door, and which has now plunged into the deepest abyss of counter-revolution.

The occupation of the factories by the Italian workers in the autumn of 1920 was a decisive moment in the course of the class struggle in Italy. The Italian workers were pressing instinctively toward resolving the crisis in a revolutionary fashion. The absence of a revolutionary workers' party, however, determined the fate of the working class, sealed its defeat in this moment, and prepared the ground for Fascism's present victory. Because such revolutionary leadership was absent, the working class did not display sufficient determination to take power into its hands when its strength was at its peak. As a result, after a certain period of time, the bourgeoisie, deadly enemy of the working class, acting through its most energetic wing, Fascism, was able to put a pistol to the head of the working class and erect its dictatorship.

The Italian example has enormous importance. Nowhere has the historical role of the Communist party for world-revolution been more graphically portrayed than in Italy, where the lack of such a party changed the course of history to the benefit of the bourgeoisie.

That is not to say that there was no workers' party at all in Italy during these decisive years. The old Socialist Party had a large membership and, to all appearances, had strong influence. Nonetheless, it sheltered in its bosom the reformist forces that crippled its every revolutionary step. Despite the initial split that took place in 1912 (expulsion of the extreme Right) and the second split-off in 1914,¹⁵ there were still a large number of reformists and centrists in the Socialist Party of Italy in 1919–20. In every decisive situation, the reformists and centrists were a dead weight on the Party.

Nowhere was it as obvious as in Italy that the reformists are truly the most dangerous tools of the bourgeoisie in the camp of the working class.¹⁶ They used every means possible to betray the working class to the bourgeoisie. Betrayals like those of the reformists during the factory occupations of 1920 have often been recorded in the history of reformism, which is an unbroken chain of betrayal.

The reformists are the real precursors of Fascism; they prepared the way. The reformist betrayals are the primary cause of the dreadful suffering of the Italian working class. This class stands once again, so to speak, at the very beginning of its march to revolution, and must travel an immeasurably difficult path. And this is because the reformists were tolerated too long in the Italian Party.

At the beginning of 1921, the majority of the Socialist Party broke with the Communist International. In Livorno, the Centre preferred to break from the Communist International and from 58,000 Italian Communists in order not to have to break with 16,000 reformists.¹⁷ Two parties were formed. The newly formed Communist Party decisively and resolutely took up the struggle against the bourgeoisie and all its reformist accomplices, but despite all its courage and devotion, it was too weak to lead the working class to victory. And there was the old Socialist Party, in which now, after Livorno, the pernicious influence of the reformists was even more decisive. The working class stood divided and powerless. With the aid of the reformists, the bourgeoisie gained control of the battlefield. This is when the capitalist offensive built up steam in both the economic and political arenas. Only after almost two full years of retreat and of uninterrupted and base betrayal by the reformists did the leaders of the Party's centre current, under the pressure of the masses, see

15. In 1912 the Italian SP expelled the rightist current that supported the Italian government in its war of colonial conquest in Libya. In 1914, the Party expelled free-masons from its ranks.

16. The Russian text reads 'essentially no more than bourgeois agents in the camp of the working class'. Kun 1933, p. 357.

17. Regarding the January 1921 SP congress in Livorno, see p. 1039, n. 8.

the disastrous error of their ways and declare themselves ready to draw the necessary conclusions.

Only in October 1922, at its Rome Convention, did the Socialist Party expel the reformists. Matters had reached the point where the most prominent leaders of the reformists were now openly boasting that they had succeeded in sabotaging the revolution by staying in the Socialist Party and preventing it from taking action at all the crucial moments. The reformists left the ranks of the Socialist Party and passed over openly into the camp of the counter-revolution. They left behind them, among the masses, a feeling of powerlessness, dejection, and disappointment, and they greatly weakened the Socialist Party, both numerically and politically.

Three sad but instructive lessons of the Italian developments must be taken to heart by all class conscious workers around the world: (1) Reformism is *the* enemy. (2) The vacillation and hesitation of the centrists is a mortal danger to the workers' party. (3) The presence of a united and self-confident Communist party is the first precondition for victory in proletarian struggle. These are the lessons of the Italian struggle.

Given that the Socialist Party in Rome [October 1922] expelled the reformists from the Party and declared its readiness to affiliate unconditionally to the Communist International, the Fourth Congress of the Communist International resolves:

- 1.) The overall situation in Italy, especially following the victory of Fascist reaction, urgently demands the rapid unification of all revolutionary proletarian forces. Italian workers will breathe more easily when, after the defeats and splits they have suffered, a new gathering of revolutionary forces gets under way.
- 2.) The Communist International sends its fraternal greetings to the working class of Italy, which has been sorely tested. It is fully convinced of the honest revolutionary convictions of the Socialist Party of Italy, now freed of reformism, and resolves to admit the Socialist Party to the International.
- 3.) The Fourth World Congress takes it for granted that the Twenty-One Conditions will be applied and instructs the Communist International Executive, in view of the developments in Italy, to watch with special care that these conditions are observed – with all that this implies.
- 4.) After having learned of the speech of the parliamentary deputy Vella at the Rome Convention, the Fourth World Congress decides that Vella and all those who agree with his viewpoint stand outside the future Communist Party of Italy.¹⁸ The Fourth World Congress instructs the Central

18. The case of Arturo Vella is discussed in Zinoviev's report on the Italian question, p. 1049.

Committee of the Socialist Party of Italy to expel from the Party all those who raise any objections against the Twenty-One Conditions.

- 5.) Given that the Communist International Statutes allow only one section in a country, the Fourth World Congress resolves on the immediate unification of the Communist Party with the Socialist Party of Italy. The unified party will be named: 'United Communist Party of Italy (Section of the Communist International)'.
- 6.) To carry through this process of unification, the Fourth Congress names a special organisational committee composed of three members of each party, chaired by a member of the Executive. The elected members of this organisational committee are, from the Communist Party, Comrades *Tasca*, *Gramsci*, and *Scoccimarro*; from the Socialist Party, Comrades *Serrati*, *Maffi*, and *Tonetti*; from the Executive, Comrade *Zinoviev*; the Executive reserves the right to replace him, if necessary, by another of its members. The committee has to work out in Moscow all the conditions for unification and lead their implementation in Italy. In all disputed questions, the Executive will have the final decision.
- 7.) Such organisational committees will also be formed in individual factories and large cities, with two comrades each from the Communist Party and Socialist Party and a chairman named by a representative of the Executive.
- 8.) These organisational committees have the duty not only to prepare the fusion both centrally and locally but also, from this point forward, to lead the common political campaigns of both organisations.
- 9.) In addition, a common trade-union committee will be formed immediately, with the task of exposing in the Confederation of Labour [CGT] the betrayal of the Amsterdam forces and winning its majority for the Profintern. This committee will also consist of two representatives of each party plus a chairperson chosen by the Communist International Executive or by the organisational committee. The trade-union committee will work under the direction and supervision of the organisational committee.
- 10.) In the cities in which both a Communist and a Socialist newspaper exist, they must merge by 1 January 1923, at the latest. An editorial board of the official publication for the next year will be chosen by the Communist International Executive.
- 11.) The fusion convention must be held, at latest, by the first half of March 1923. The Executive will decide whether, when, and under what conditions conventions of the two parties, with an informational and preparatory character, will take place before the fusion convention.¹⁹

19. The German edition of Fourth Congress resolutions contains an additional paragraph here, numbered as Point 12 (the final two paragraphs are numbered #13 and #14): 'In present-day Italy, it has become absolutely necessary to carry out underground

- 12.) The Congress resolves to publish a manifesto on the question of unity, signed by the Presidium of the Fourth World Congress and the delegates of both parties to this congress, for immediate distribution.
- 13.) The Congress reminds all Italian comrades of the need for strict discipline. All comrades without exception are obligated to do their best to carry out the fusion with maximum speed and without difficulties. In the present situation, any breach of discipline is a crime against the Italian proletariat and the Communist International.

work. In this regard, the comrades of the Socialist Party of Italy must make up for what they have failed to do until now. It would be extremely dangerous to cherish any illusions regarding the character of Fascism and its possible development. We must reckon with the possibility that the revolutionary workers' movement in Italy will lose for a time the possibility of functioning legally. Times may be approaching that will bring a trial by fire for every revolutionary workers' organisation and every individual revolutionary.

'The Congress assigns to the central commission of five the special task of developing a comprehensive plan for illegal work and doing everything possible to implement it.' See Comintern 1923g, pp. 90–1.

Appendix 6

Resolution on the Versailles Treaty

The World War ended with the overthrow of three imperialist powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. Four great bandit states were left as victors on the battlefield: the United States, Britain, France, and Japan.

The peace treaties, with the Versailles Treaty at their heart, represent an attempt to consolidate, politically and economically, the world domination of these four victorious powers, by subjecting the rest of the world to their colonial exploitation. In social terms, they aim to secure bourgeois rule over the proletariat of their own country and also with regard to the victorious Russian proletariat through an alliance of the bourgeoisies of every country. To this end, they have set up a wall of small subject states around Russia and armed them, with a view to strangling Soviet Russia at the first convenient opportunity. In addition, the defeated states are expected to repay fully all the material costs suffered by the victorious states in the War.

Today, it is clear to everyone that the peace treaties were based on false assumptions. The attempt to establish a new equilibrium on a capitalist basis has failed. The history of the last four years reveals continual oscillation, constant insecurity, economic crisis, unemployment combined with overtime, governmental crises, party crises, and crises of international politics. Through a long series of conferences, the imperialist powers have tried to halt the disintegration of the world system constructed by the peace treaties and conceal the fact that the Versailles Treaty is bankrupt.

The attempts to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat in *Russia* fell through. In all the capitalist countries, the proletariat is strengthening its support for Soviet Russia. Even the leaders of the Amsterdam International had to concede that the overthrow of proletarian rule in Russia would mean the victory of world reaction over the proletariat as a whole.

Turkey, as the vanguard of the growing revolution in the East, has successfully blocked implementation of the peace treaties by force of arms. At the Lausanne Conference, an important component of the treaty structure will receive solemn burial.

The extended *economic crisis* has provided proof that the Versailles Treaty's economic concepts are untenable. The leading imperialist power in Europe, *Britain*, which is highly dependent on world trade, cannot restore its economy without the re-establishment of Germany and Russia.

The *United States*, the strongest imperialist power, has turned its back on the treaty structure and is seeking to establish its world-wide imperialist power

on its own. This undertaking has won support from important parts of the British world empire – Canada and Australia.

Britain's oppressed colonies, the foundation of its world power, are rebelling, and the entire Muslim world is in either open or clandestine revolt.

All the assumptions of the treaty structure have proven to be invalid except for one: that the proletariat of all bourgeois countries must pay the costs of the War and the Versailles Treaty.

France

Among the victorious powers, it would seem that France had scored the greatest increase in power. In addition to the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine, occupation of the west bank of the Rhine, and claims for the unpaid billions of German war reparations, France is at present actually the strongest military power of the European continent. With the help of its vassal states, whose armies are trained and led by French generals (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania), with its own large army, its submarines, and its air force, it dominates the continent of Europe. It plays the role of watchman of the Versailles Treaty.

However, the economic basis of France, its small and declining population, its enormous internal and external debt, and its resulting economic dependence on Britain and the United States, provide an inadequate foundation for its appetite for boundless imperialist expansion. In terms of power politics, it is extremely restricted by Britain's control of all important naval strongholds and the petroleum monopoly of Britain and the United States. In economic terms, the increased supply of iron ore that it gained through the Versailles Treaty is diminished in value by the fact that the coal needed to exploit it remained in Germany, in the Ruhr region. The hope that France's ruined finances could be restored by German reparations payments has been revealed to be a delusion. All the world's financial experts agree that Germany cannot possibly pay the amounts needed by France to repair its finances.

The only solution for the French bourgeoisie is to lower the living standards of the French proletariat to the German level. The hunger of German workers is a preview of the poverty that French workers will face very soon. Some sectors of French heavy industry are now deliberately promoting the devaluation of the franc. Now that the Versailles treaty structure has been shown to be unusable, this devaluation will be the means to shift the costs of war onto the shoulders of the French proletariat.

Britain

The World War brought Britain the unification of its world colonial empire from the Cape of Good Hope through Egypt and Arabia to India. It has retained control of all the most important outlets to the world's oceans. By making concessions to its settler colonies, it seeks to construct a world Anglo-Saxon empire.

But, despite all the British bourgeoisie's adaptability, despite its dogged attempts to reconquer the world market, it has become clear that Britain cannot flourish in the world situation created by the Versailles Treaty. As an industrial state, Britain cannot survive unless Germany and Russia are economically restored. Here the conflict between Britain and France is growing more acute. Britain wants to sell goods to Germany, which under the Versailles Treaty is impossible. France wants to collect enormous sums from Germany to pay for the costs of the War, which ruins Germany's capacity to purchase. That is why Britain favours dismantling reparations, while France is conducting a veiled war against Britain in the Near East, in order to compel Britain to give way on the question of reparations.²⁰ The British and French bourgeoisies make new deals at the expense of Germany, while the British proletariat carries the costs of war in the form of millions of jobless workers.

Central Europe and Germany

The most important element in the Versailles treaty structure is Central Europe, the new colonial territory of the imperialist robbers. Fragmented into countless small states, an array of economically unviable territories, these regions are incapable of following an independent policy. They have sunk to the status of colonies of British and French capitalism, incited against each other by the Great Powers, in line with their changing interests. Czechoslovakia, carved out of an economic territory of sixty million people, is locked in a permanent economic crisis. Austria has shrunk to an unviable remnant, which can only maintain the appearance of political independence thanks to the mutual jealousy of neighbouring states. Poland, which received vast territories with non-Polish population, has become a French outpost, a caricature of French imperialism. In all these countries, the proletariat must pay the costs of the War through reduction in its living standards or high unemployment.

20. After the victory of Turkish independence forces over the Greek army in 1922, France concluded an agreement with the nationalist government in Angora (Ankara) and withdrew its occupation forces from Turkey, while Britain attempted to hold its positions on the Straits against the Turkish advance. See p. 651, n. 2.

The Versailles Treaty focuses above all on *Germany*. Disarmed, robbed of any means of defending itself, it has been delivered over to the imperialist powers for good or ill. The German bourgeoisie tries to make common cause – now with the British and now with the French bourgeoisie. Through heightened exploitation of the German proletariat, it strives to satisfy some of the French claims, while simultaneously using foreign help to secure its rule over the German proletariat. But even the most intensive exploitation of the German proletariat, reducing Germany's workers to the status of Europe's coolies, and the dreadful poverty to which Germany's proletariat has been reduced by the Versailles Treaty, has not made it possible to make the reparations payments. Germany has thus become the plaything of Britain and France. The French bourgeoisie aims to resolve this issue through armed force, by occupying the Ruhr region. Britain is absolutely opposed to this. Only the assistance of the greatest economic power, the United States, has made it possible to go some way toward conciliating the contradictory interests of Britain, France, and Germany.

The United States of America

The United States pulled back from the Versailles treaty structure some time ago, by refusing to ratify the treaty. Emerging from the World War as the strongest power economically and politically, and as a major creditor of the European imperialist powers, the United States displayed no desire to grant Germany the further massive loans that would make it possible to overcome the financial crisis of France. The capital of the United States is more and more turning away from the chaos of Europe, seeking with growing success to build a new colonial empire in Central and South America and in the Far East, while utilising protective tariffs to secure for its own ruling class the right to exploit its internal market. Abandoning Europe to its own devices, it encounters the opposed interests of Britain and Japan. By exerting its economic superiority through construction of ships of war, the United States has compelled the other imperialist powers to sign the Washington Agreement.²¹ In so doing, they swept away one of the most important underpinnings of the Versailles treaty structure, Britain's naval supremacy, and thus removed any incentive for Britain to hold to the alignment of powers foreseen in the Treaty.

21. Regarding the Washington Agreement, see p. 249, n. 18.

Japan and the colonies

Japan, the newest of the imperialist world powers, keeps out of the chaos created in Europe by the Versailles Treaty. But its interests were strongly affected by the growth of the United States to world power status. In Washington, Japan was forced to renounce its alliance with Britain, removing yet another of the basic underpinnings of the division of the world that took place at Versailles. Meanwhile, it is not only the oppressed peoples who rebel against British and Japanese domination, but also the British settler colonies, who seek to protect their interests in the approaching conflict between the United States and Japan by establishing closer links with the United States. The structure of British world imperialism is, in consequence, cracking up more and more.

Towards a new world war

The attempt of the imperialist great powers to create a stable foundation for their world domination has shattered miserably against the obstacle of their conflicting interests. The mighty edifice of the peace treaty lies in ruins. The great powers, along with the vassal states, are arming for a new war. Militarism is stronger than ever. And, although the bourgeoisie is deathly afraid of the new proletarian revolutions that would result from a world war, the inherent laws of the bourgeois social order are inexorably leading to a new world conflict.

Tasks of the Communist parties

The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are exerting themselves to support the radical wing of the bourgeoisie, which chiefly represents the interests of commercial and financial capital, in its ineffectual struggle for the dismantling of reparations. Here, as everywhere, they walk hand in hand with the bourgeoisie. The task of the Communist parties, above all in the victor states, is to explain to the masses that the Versailles treaty structure shifts all the burdens, in both victorious and defeated countries, onto the shoulders of the proletariat. The proletarians of every country are the real victims of the bourgeoisie's treaty structure.

On this basis, the Communist parties – above all of Germany and France – must carry out a *common struggle* against the Versailles Treaty. The German Communist Party must stress the readiness of the German proletariat to assist the proletarians and peasants of the devastated north of France in rebuilding their homes. It must simultaneously conduct a forceful struggle against its own bourgeoisie, which is ready to carry out a policy of meeting treaty

obligations together with the French bourgeoisie (the Stinnes agreement), at the cost of the German proletariat.²² The German bourgeoisie is willing to deliver Germany over to be a colony of their French counterparts, provided that their class interests are protected.

The French Communist Party must exert all its strength against the imperialist efforts of its own bourgeoisie, against the attempt to enrich the French bourgeoisie through heightened exploitation of the German proletariat. It must fight for an immediate end to the French occupation of the Rhineland, against the occupation of the Ruhr district, against the break-up of Germany, and against French imperialism. It is not enough in France today to fight against defence of the fatherland. The task today is to struggle everywhere against the Versailles Treaty. The Communist parties of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France's other vassal states must link the struggle against their own bourgeoisie with that against French imperialism. Mass actions, carried out jointly, are needed to explain to the proletariat that the attempt to implement the Versailles Treaty can only plunge the proletariat of all Europe into the deepest poverty, and that the struggle against it is in the common interests of the proletariat of every country.

22. For the Stinnes agreement, see p. 889, n. 12.

*Appendix 7***On the Tactics of the Comintern²³***1.) Confirmation of the Third Congress resolutions*

The Fourth World Congress affirms, first of all, that the resolutions of the Third World Congress:

- 1.) The World Economic Crisis and the Tasks of the Comintern;
- 2.) On the Tactics of the Comintern;

have been fully confirmed by the course of events and the development of workers' movement during the period between the Third and Fourth Congresses.²⁴

2.) The period of capitalist decline

Based on its estimation of the world economic situation, the Third Congress was able to determine with complete certainty that capitalism, having completed its mission of developing the productive forces, had fallen into irreconcilable contradiction to the demands not only of current historical development but also of the most elementary conditions of human existence. This fundamental contradiction found expression in the last imperialist war and was itself deepened by the war, subjecting relations of production and circulation to the most severe disruption. Obsolete capitalism has reached the stage where the destructive effects of its unbridled power are crippling and demolishing the economic achievements that the proletariat has created, even within the chains of capitalist subjugation.

The overall picture of capitalist economic decline is not contradicted by the inevitable conjunctural fluctuations characteristic of the capitalist system in

23. The Russian text of this resolution, found in Kun 1933, pp. 293–303, does not encompass the amendments to these theses (see pp. 1096–1100), most of which aimed to strengthen the description of workers' governments. (The Russian abridged edition of the proceedings, Comintern 1923b, does not include the Theses on Tactics). This Kun 1933 text also served as the basis for English translations in Comintern 1923f; Degras 1956, 1, pp. 425–7; Adler (ed.) 1980; and at: <www.marxists.org>. The proceedings, however, leave no doubt that these amendments were adopted (p. 1101). Major discrepancies between the adopted text and the Béla-Kun Russian version are noted below. There are also discrepancies between the adopted text and the version found in the German collection of congress resolutions (Comintern 1923g); see pp. 1161–2, nn. 40 and 43.

24. For the text of these Third Congress resolutions, see Adler (ed.) 1980, pp. 184–203, 274–99.

periods both of its rise and its decline. An improvement in economic conditions began in the second half of 1921 in the United States and, to a much lesser degree, in Japan and Britain, and, to some extent, also in other countries. The attempts of bourgeois and Social-Democratic economists to interpret this as a sign of renewed capitalist stability are based in part on wilful falsification of the facts and in part on a lack of insight by these servants of capitalism.

Even before the beginning of the present industrial revival, the Third Congress predicted that such an upturn was inevitable sooner or later, and characterised it precisely, even then, as a superficial fluctuation in the basic trend of capitalist economy's progressive decline. We can already foresee with certainty that the present revival of industry is completely incapable of restoring the capitalist stability or even of healing the gaping wounds left from the War. Moreover, the next cyclical crisis, whose impact will coincide with the general line of capitalist decline, will reinforce every expression of this decline and thus render the revolutionary situation much more acute.

Capitalism will be subject to cyclical fluctuations until its last hour. Only the seizure of power by the proletariat and the socialist world-revolution can rescue humanity from the catastrophe caused by the existence of present-day capitalism.

What capitalism is experiencing today is nothing other than its downfall. The collapse of capitalism is inevitable.

3.) *The international political situation*

The international political situation also reflects the continuing decline of capitalism.

The problem of reparations has not yet been solved. While the Entente states hold one conference after another, Germany's economic disintegration continues inexorably, threatening capitalism's existence across all Central Europe. The catastrophic worsening of Germany's economic situation will either force the Entente to give up on reparations, hastening the economic and political crisis of France, or it will lead to the creation of a German-French industrial alliance on the continent, worsening Britain's economic situation and its position on the world market and placing Britain in political opposition to the continent.

In the *Near East*, the policies of the Entente have landed in complete bankruptcy. The Treaty of Sèvres was torn up by Turkish bayonets.²⁵ The Greek-Turkish war and related events have graphically demonstrated how unstable the present political balance is. The spectre of a new imperialist world war was

25. See p. 673, n. 31.

clear for all to see. After imperialist France, motivated by its competition with Britain, helped to demolish the common achievement of the Entente in the Near East, its capitalist interests are now driving it back into a common front of capitalism against the peoples of the East. In this way, capitalist France is demonstrating once again to the peoples of the Near East that only in alliance with Soviet Russia and with the support of the revolutionary proletariat of the entire world can they carry out their defensive struggle against oppression.

In the *Far East*, the victorious Entente powers tried in Washington to revise the Versailles Treaty.²⁶ Nonetheless, they succeeded only in achieving a breathing spell by reducing *just one* type of armaments, namely the number of large battleships, in the coming years. They reached no solution to their problem. The struggle between the United States and Japan continues, inflaming the civil war in China. The Pacific coast remains now as before a breeding-ground of major conflicts.

The example of *national liberation movements* in India, Egypt, Ireland, and Turkey shows that the colonial and semi-colonial countries are hotbeds of a growing revolutionary movement against the imperialist powers. They are inexhaustible reservoirs of revolutionary forces that in the present situation are objectively working against the very existence of the bourgeois world order.

The *Versailles Treaty* is being liquidated by events. However, it is being replaced not by a general reconciliation of capitalist states and the dismantling of imperialism, but by the creation of new contradictions, new imperialist alignments, and new armaments. The reconstruction of Europe is impossible under these circumstances. The capitalist United States does not want to sacrifice for the economic reconstruction of capitalist Europe. Vulture-like, the capitalist United States eyes the decline of capitalist Europe, of which it will be the heir. The United States will enslave capitalist Europe, unless the European working class seizes political power and sets about clearing the rubble of world war and constructing a federated soviet republic of Europe.

Recent events in even such a small country as contemporary *Austria* are important as a symptom of the political situation in present-day Europe. By a stroke of the pen in Geneva, an edict of Entente imperialism – gladly welcomed by the Austrian bourgeoisie – has destroyed Austria's celebrated democracy and replaced it by the undisguised dictatorship of an Entente agent.²⁷ This democracy was the pride of the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International. Protecting it provided them with a pretext for abandoning workers' interests. They confided its protection to the right-wing Monarchists, the

26. See p. 249, n. 18.

27. See p. 385, n. 9.

Christian-Social Party, and the Greater-Germany advocates,²⁸ who utilised it only to re-establish their power. Even the bourgeois parliament has, in fact, been eliminated; its place has been taken by a bailiff appointed by the Entente bankers. After a brief and demagogic pretence at resistance, the Social Democrats have capitulated and are voluntarily helping to bring the shameful treaty to reality. They have even declared themselves ready to re-enter the coalition, in a scarcely disguised form, in order to block any resistance by the proletariat.²⁹

These events in little Austria, like the recent Fascist coup in Italy, have suddenly highlighted the instability of the whole situation. They provide the best demonstration that democracy is only an illusion, representing, in reality, the veiled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. And, wherever it seems expedient, the bourgeoisie substitutes for this democracy the brutal face of white-guard, terrorist reaction.³⁰

At the same time the international political situation of Soviet Russia, the only country where the proletariat has defeated the bourgeoisie and held power for five years, despite enemy attacks, has become enormously stronger. In Genoa and The Hague,³¹ the capitalists of the Entente tried to force the Russian Soviet Republic to abandon the nationalisation of industry, to unload on its shoulders a burden of debt, and to convert Soviet Russia into a de facto colony of the Entente. However, the proletarian state of Soviet Russia was strong enough to resist these arrogant demands.

In the chaos of capitalist's collapsing state system, Soviet Russia stands – from the Beresina to Vladivostok, from Murmansk to the mountains of Armenia – as a growing force in Europe, the Near East, and the Far East. Despite the attempts of the capitalist world to strangle Soviet Russia with a financial blockade, it will be capable of undertaking its own economic reconstruction. It will utilise to this purpose both its own economic resources and the competition of capitalist powers with each other that will compel them to conduct separate talks with Soviet Russia. One-sixth of the world's surface is under Soviet power. The very existence of the Soviet Republic of Russia constantly weakens bourgeois society, acting as the strongest force for world-revolution. The more that Soviet Russia is restored economically, the stronger grows the influence of this outstanding revolutionary factor on international politics.

28. Monarchists in Austria favoured restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty; the Christian-Social Party was the main right-wing bourgeois party; Greater-Germany advocates called for Austria's absorption into Germany.

29. The preceding two sentences are not found in the Russian text.

30. The preceding sentence is not found in the Russian text.

31. Regarding the Genoa and The Hague Conferences, see p. 120, n. 4.

4.) *The capitalist offensive*

Except in Russia, the world proletariat was not able to take advantage of the weakened condition of capitalism, resulting from the War, to deliver a decisive blow. It was thus possible for the bourgeoisie, with the help of the Social Democrats, to strike down the militant revolutionary workers, consolidate their political and economic power, and begin a new offensive against the proletariat. Every effort of the bourgeoisie to get international production and distribution going again, after the upheavals of war, was carried out at the expense of the working class. A capitalist offensive against the gains of the working class, organised systematically on a world scale, has swept all countries like a whirlwind. Everywhere, without mercy, a reorganised capitalism is beating down the real wages of workers, lengthening the working day, curtailing the modest rights of workers in the factory, and, in countries with a devalued currency, forcing the destitute workers to pay for all the disasters caused in economic life by the depreciation of money.

The capitalist offensive, which has grown to enormous dimensions during the last year, is driving the working class everywhere to defensive struggles. Thousands and thousands of workers in the most important spheres of production have taken up the struggle. The struggle is being reinforced by new layers of workers who play a crucial role in economic life, such as railway workers, miners, metalworkers, state and municipal employees. So far, most of these strikes have not led to any immediate victories. But this struggle is generating among powerful layers of previously backward workers a boundless hatred for the capitalists and the state power that protects them. These struggles, forced on the proletariat, explode the policy of partnership with the employers pursued by the social reformists and trade-union bureaucrats. The struggles show even the most backward layers of the proletariat that there is an obvious connection between economics and politics. Every great strike today becomes a major political event. In the process, it has become evident that the parties of the Second International and the leaders of the Amsterdam trade unions, far from providing help to the working masses in their arduous defensive struggles, are simply leaving them in the lurch and betraying them to the employers and the bourgeois governments.

One of the tasks of Communist parties is to pillory this outrageous and ongoing betrayal and to portray it through examples from the daily struggles of the working masses. It is the duty of Communist parties of every country to broaden the many economic strikes that are breaking out, to deepen them, and, when possible, to lead them toward becoming political strikes and struggles. The Communist parties have the obvious duty of strengthening these defensive struggles and the revolutionary understanding and will to struggle

of the proletarian masses so that they, when sufficiently powerful, can shift from defence to attack.

As the struggle spreads, the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie will inevitably become more acute. Objective conditions remain revolutionary, and even the slightest impulse can now set up major revolutionary struggles.

5.) *International fascism*³²

Closely linked with the capitalist offensive in the economic sphere is the bourgeoisie's political offensive against the working class, expressed most blatantly by international fascism. Since increasing poverty is revolutionising the masses more and more, including the middle layers and civil servants, the bourgeoisie is now shaken in its confidence that its bureaucracy represents an absolutely compliant and sufficient tool. The bourgeoisie no longer finds the legal methods of gaining support to be sufficient.³³ It is therefore resorting everywhere to the creation of special white guards, which are directed against all revolutionary movements of the proletariat and more and more serve to brutally strike down every attempt of the working class to improve its conditions.

The characteristic feature of Italian Fascism – the 'classical' fascism that, for now, has got the entire country in its grip – is that the Fascists do not merely form narrow counter-revolutionary fighting organisations, armed to the teeth, but also attempt through social demagoguery to achieve a base among the masses – in the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and even certain sectors of the working class. To achieve this, they cleverly utilise the masses' inevitable disappointment with so-called democracy for their reactionary purposes. The danger of fascism now exists in many countries: Czechoslovakia, Hungary, almost all the Balkan countries, Poland, Germany (Bavaria), Austria, the United States, and even in countries like Norway. It is also not excluded that fascism may arise in one or another form even in countries like France or Britain.

One of the most important tasks of the Communist parties is to organise resistance against international fascism. They must go at the head of the entire working class in struggle against the fascist gangs and energetically utilise, in this arena as well, the tactic of united front, *in which it is indispensable to employ underground methods of organisation.*

32. Fascism is also discussed in reports by Radek (pp. 385–90) and Bordiga (403–23), as well as at the end of Zinoviev's summary report on Italy (pp. 1053–4), which endorses the concept of united front against fascism.

33. This sentence is not found in the Russian text.

But lunatic fascist organisations are the last card in the bourgeoisie's hand. Open rule by the white guards works against the very foundations of bourgeois democracy. This fact convinces the broadest masses of working people that bourgeois rule is only possible through undisguised dictatorship over the proletariat.

6.) *The possibility of new pacifist illusions*

The international political situation at this time is characterised by fascism, state of siege, and the growing wave of white terror against the working class. This does not rule out, however, the possibility that open bourgeois reaction will be replaced in very important countries by a 'democratic-pacifist' period. In Britain (where the Labour Party gained strength in the recent elections) and in France (the unavoidably approaching period of the so-called Left Bloc),³⁴ such a 'democratic-pacifist' transitional period is likely and can set loose a revival of pacifist hopes in bourgeois and Social-Democratic Germany. Between the present period of rule by open bourgeois reaction and the complete victory of the revolutionary proletariat, various stages and transitional episodes are possible. The Communist International and its sections must keep these possibilities in mind. It must be able to defend revolutionary positions in *every* situation.

7.) *The situation within the workers' movement*

Even as the capitalist offensive has driven the working class onto the defensive, a rapprochement and finally a fusion is taking place between the parties of the Centre (Independents) and the open social traitors (Social Democrats). During the period of revolutionary upsurge, even the centrists, bending to the pressure of the masses, declared for the dictatorship of the proletariat and sought to find a way to the Communist International. As the revolutionary wave ebbs, temporarily, these centrists have retreated back into the camp of Social Democracy, which, inwardly, they had never left. In the period of revolutionary mass struggles, they always hesitated and vacillated. Now, they renounce the defensive struggle and return to the camp of the Second International, which was always consciously anti-revolutionary.

The centrist parties and the entire centrist Two-and-a-Half International are in a state of disintegration. The best of the revolutionary workers who, for the moment, stand in the camp of centrism will, with time, come over to the Communist International. In some cases, this transition has already begun

34. Regarding the Left Bloc, see p. 1002, n. 41.

(Italy). On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the centrist leaders who now ally with Noske and Mussolini will become hardened counter-revolutionaries.³⁵

Objectively, the fusion of the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals can only be helpful for the revolutionary workers' movement. The illusion that there is a second revolutionary party standing outside the Communist camp will disappear. Only two groupings now remain, contending for the majority of workers: the Second International, which represents the influence of the bourgeoisie within the working class, and the Communist International, which has raised the banner of socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

8.) *The split in the trade unions and preparations for white terror against the Communists*

Without any doubt, the fusion of the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals is designed to create a 'favourable atmosphere' for a campaign against Communists. Part of this campaign is a systematic split in the trade unions carried out by the leaders of the Amsterdam International. The Amsterdamers recoil from any struggle against the capitalist offensive, while continuing their policy of collaboration with the employers. To ensure that the Communists do not hinder this alliance with the employers, they are seeking to eliminate systematically the influence of the Communists in the trade unions. Given that the Communists, in many countries, have nonetheless already won the majority in the trade unions or are in the process of winning it, the Amsterdamers do not shrink from expulsions from or formal splits in the unions. Nothing so weakens proletarian resistance against the capitalist offensive as a split in the unions. The reformist union leaders know this well. But with the ground slipping away from under their feet, they see that their bankruptcy is imminent and unavoidable. Thus they make haste to split the unions, which are an indispensable tool of proletarian class struggle, so that the Communists will be able to inherit only fragments and splinters

35. As a minister in a Social-Democratic-led government, Noske organised the military assault on the German revolutionary workers' movement in the first months of 1919. However, unlike Mussolini, Noske did not direct his attacks against the socialist trade unions and political party, which formed his base of support. This difference came to the fore the following year, at the time of the extreme rightist 'Kapp Putsch', when Social-Democratic labour leaders initiated a general strike that overturned the military coup.

of the old trade-union organisation. The working class has seen no such dreadful betrayal since August 1914.³⁶

9.) *The task of winning the majority*

Under these circumstances, the fundamental directive of the Third World Congress, 'to establish Communist influence among the majority of the working class and to lead the decisive sectors of this class into struggle',³⁷ is still completely valid.

Even more than at the time of the Third Congress, it remains true today that, given the present unstable equilibrium of bourgeois society, an acute crisis may break out at any time as a result of a major strike, a colonial uprising, a new war, or even a parliamentary crisis. But, precisely for that reason, the 'subjective' factor – that is, the degree of self-confidence, will to struggle, and organisation of the working class and its vanguard – acquires enormous importance.

Winning the majority of the American and European working class remains, now as before, the Comintern's central task.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the Comintern has two tasks:

- 1.) To build nuclei of Communist parties that represent the interests of the proletariat as a whole.
- 2.) To bend every effort to support the national-revolutionary movement against imperialism, to become the vanguard of this movement, and, within the national movement, heighten and bring to the fore the social movement.

10.) *The united-front tactic*

The need for the united-front tactic flows from all these considerations. The Third Congress slogan, 'To the masses', is now more valid than ever. In a considerable number of countries, the struggle to build the proletarian united front is only now beginning. Only now are we beginning to overcome the difficulties associated with this tactic. France serves here as the best example: the course of events has convinced even those who were recently opposed on principle to this tactic that it absolutely must be applied. The Comintern instructs all Communist parties and groups to adhere strictly to the

36. In August 1914, the Social-Democratic and labour parties of Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Belgium, and Britain broke their pledge to oppose imperialist war and supported the war efforts of their respective ruling classes.

37. See Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 277.

united-front tactic, because, in present circumstances, it offers Communists the only sure road to winning the majority of working people.

The reformists now need a split. The Communists have a stake in uniting all working-class forces against capitalism.

Using the united-front tactic enables the Communist vanguard to lead the immediate struggles of the working masses for their most vital interests. In this struggle, the Communists are ready to negotiate even with the traitorous leaders of Social Democracy and the Amsterdam leaders. The attempts of the Second International to present the united front as an organisational fusion of all 'workers' parties' must of course be decisively rejected. The attempts of the Second International to utilise the concept of united front to absorb the workers' organisations to its left (fusion of the Social-Democratic Party and the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany) signify, in reality, merely an opportunity for the Social-Democratic leaders to deliver new layers of the working masses over to the bourgeoisie.

The existence of independent Communist parties and their complete freedom of action with respect to the bourgeoisie and counter-revolutionary Social Democracy is a crucially important historical achievement of the proletariat, one that Communists will not under any circumstances abandon. Only the Communist parties defend the interests of the proletariat as a whole.

By no means does the united-front tactic mean so-called electoral alliances at the leadership level, in pursuit of one or another parliamentary goal. The united-front tactic is an initiative for united struggle of the Communists with all workers who belong to other parties and groups, with all unaligned workers, to defend the most basic vital interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie. Every struggle for the most limited immediate demand is a source of revolutionary education, for it is the experiences of struggle that will convince working people of the inevitability of revolution and the significance of communism.

A particularly important task in implementing the united front is to achieve results not just in agitation but in *organisation*. Not a single opportunity should be missed to create organisational footholds among the working masses themselves: factory councils, workers' control commissions including workers of all parties and the unaligned, action committees, and so forth.

The key element in the united-front tactic is and remains to bring the working masses together through agitation and organisation. The real success of the united-front tactic arises from 'below', from the depths of the working masses themselves. However, in this process, the Communists cannot abstain from negotiating, under certain circumstances, with the leaders of opponent

workers' parties. The masses must be given ongoing and complete information on the course of these negotiations. During negotiations on a leadership level, the Communist party's freedom of agitation must not be compromised in any way.

Obviously, the united-front tactic should be applied in different ways, depending on the specific circumstances in different countries. But, in the most important capitalist countries, where the objective conditions for socialist revolution are ripe and where the Social-Democratic parties, with their counter-revolutionary leadership, are consciously working to split the working class, the united-front tactic will be decisive in importance for a whole period.

11.) *The workers' government*

As a general propagandistic slogan, the workers' government (or workers' and peasants' government) can be used almost everywhere. *As an immediate political slogan*, however, the workers' government is most important in countries where bourgeois society is particularly unstable, where the relationship of forces between the workers' parties and the bourgeoisie places the question of government on the agenda as a practical problem requiring immediate solution. In *these* countries, the slogan of the workers' government flows unavoidably from the entire united-front tactic.

The parties of the Second International attempt to 'rescue' the situation in these countries by advocating and achieving a coalition of the Social Democrats with bourgeois forces. Recently, some parties of the Second International (for example, in Germany) have attempted to reject open participation in such a coalition government while carrying it out in disguised form. This is simply an attempt to appease the indignant masses, a subtle betrayal of the working masses. Instead of a bourgeois-Social-Democratic coalition, whether open or disguised, Communists propose the united front of all workers and a coalition of all workers' parties, in both the economic and political arena, to struggle against the power of the bourgeoisie and ultimately to overthrow it. Through united struggle of all workers against the bourgeoisie, the entire state apparatus can pass over into the hands of the workers' government, thus strengthening the power of the working class.

The most basic tasks of a workers' government must consist of arming the proletariat, disarming the bourgeois counter-revolutionary organisations, introducing [workers'] control of production, shifting the main burden of taxation to the shoulders of the rich, and breaking the resistance of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Such a workers' government is possible only if it is born from the struggles of the masses themselves and is supported by militant workers' organisations created by the most oppressed layers of the working masses. Even a workers' government that arises from a purely parliamentary combination, that is, one that is purely parliamentary in origin, *can* provide the occasion for a revival of the revolutionary workers' movement. Obviously, the birth and continued existence of a genuine workers' government, one that pursues revolutionary policies, must result in a bitter struggle with the bourgeoisie, and possibly a civil war. Even an attempt by the proletariat to form such a workers' government will encounter from the outset most determined resistance from the bourgeoisie. The slogan of the workers' government thus has the potential of uniting the proletariat and unleashing revolutionary struggle.

Under certain circumstances, Communists must state their readiness to form a workers' government with non-Communist workers' parties and workers' organisations. However, they should do so only if there are guarantees that the workers' government will carry out a genuine struggle against the bourgeoisie along the lines described above. There are obvious conditions for the participation by Communists in such a government, including:

- 1.) Participation in a workers' government can take place only with the agreement of the Communist International.³⁸
- 2.) Communist participants in such a government must be subject to the strictest supervision of their party.
- 3.) The Communists participating in this workers' government must be in very close contact with the revolutionary organisations of the masses.
- 4.) The Communist party must unconditionally maintain its own public identity and complete independence in agitation.

For all its great advantages, the slogan of a workers' government also has its dangers, as does the whole united-front tactic. To head off these dangers,³⁹ the Communist parties must keep in mind that although every bourgeois government is also a capitalist government, not every workers' government is truly proletarian, that is, a revolutionary instrument of proletarian power.

The Communist International must consider the following possibilities.

38. This paragraph is not found in the Russian version.

39. The Russian version includes, at this point, the words, 'and to combat illusions that the stage of "democratic coalition" is inevitable'.

I. *Illusory workers' governments*⁴⁰

- 1.) A *liberal workers' government*, such as existed in Australia and may exist in Britain in the foreseeable future.⁴¹
- 2.) A *Social-Democratic workers' government* (Germany).⁴²

II. *Genuine workers' governments*

- 3.) *Government of workers and the poorer peasants*. Such a possibility exists in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, and so on.
- 4.) A workers' government with Communist participation.
- 5.) A genuinely proletarian workers' government, which, in its pure form, can be embodied only in the Communist party.

Communists stand ready to march with the workers who have not yet recognised the necessity of a dictatorship of the proletariat. Communists are also ready, under certain conditions and with certain guarantees, to support a workers' government that is not purely Communist, indeed, even a merely illusory workers' government – of course, only to the degree that it defends the workers' interests. However, the Communists state just as plainly to the working class that, without a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, a true workers' government can neither be achieved nor maintained. The only type of government that can be considered a genuine workers' government is one that is determined to take up a resolute struggle at least to achieve the workers' most important immediate demands against the bourgeoisie. That is the only type of workers' government in which Communists can participate.

The first two types, the illusory workers' governments (liberal and Social-Democratic), are not revolutionary governments but can, under certain circumstances, speed up the decomposition of bourgeois power. The next two types of workers' government (workers' and peasants' government;

40. In the version published in the German collection of congress resolutions (Comintern 1923g), the two subheads on 'illusory' and 'genuine' workers' governments are absent. They are also missing from the Russian version, which offers a different text for the five points that follow.

41. Beginning in 1904, the Australian Labor Party formed several national governments, which introduced some reforms but made no attempt to initiate a transition to socialism, while also defending the country's racist 'white Australia' policy.

42. In Germany, the November 1918 revolution brought to power a provisional government of the SPD and USPD, which introduced some reforms, while organising a transition to bourgeois-parliamentary rule. Between February 1919 and November 1922, the SPD remained in government but was now in coalition not with workers' but with bourgeois parties. In some states, however, the SPD formed governments together with the USPD.

Social-Democratic-Communist government) do not yet signify the dictatorship of the proletariat and are not even a historically inevitable transitional stage to this dictatorship. Rather, wherever they come into being, they are an important starting point for a struggle for this dictatorship. Only the genuine workers' government consisting of Communists (#5), represents the fully achieved dictatorship of the proletariat.⁴³

12.) *The factory-council movement*

No Communist party can be regarded as a serious and solidly organised mass party unless it has firm Communist cells in the factories, mills, mines, railways, and so on. In present conditions, a systematically organised, proletarian mass movement is conceivable only if the working class and its organisations succeed in creating factory councils as the backbone of this movement. In particular, the struggle against the capitalist offensive and for control of production has no prospects unless Communists have a firm foothold in all

43. The preceding two paragraphs exist in three published versions, which differ significantly. The Russian text (Kun 1933) is much shorter and represents an earlier draft. It is translated as follows in Adler (ed.) 1980, p. 399:

Communists are also prepared to work alongside those workers who have not yet recognised the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Accordingly Communists are also ready, in certain conditions and with certain guarantees, to support a non-Communist workers' government. However, the Communists will still openly declare to the masses that the workers' government can be neither won nor maintained without a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The first two types of workers' governments (the workers' and peasants' and the social-democratic/Communist governments) fall short of representing the dictatorship of the proletariat, but are still an important starting point for the winning of this dictatorship. The complete dictatorship of the proletariat can only be a genuine workers' government (type 5) consisting of Communists.

The version published in the collection of congress resolutions (Comintern 1923g) is close to that in the congress proceedings and substantially the same as the text of the amendment found on p. 1099. The Comintern 1923g version reorders the material and also includes the following passage, not found in either of the two other published texts:

The first two types are not revolutionary workers' governments but, in reality, disguised coalition régimes of the bourgeoisie and anti-revolutionary workers' leaders. Such 'workers' governments' are tolerated by the bourgeoisie at critical moments, in order to deceive the proletariat regarding the true class character of the state or even, utilising the help of corrupt worker leaders, to repulse the proletariat's revolutionary assault and to win time. Communists cannot participate in such a government. On the contrary, they must stubbornly expose to the masses the real character of such a false workers' government. However, objectively, in the present period of capitalist decline, in which the most important task is to win the majority of the proletariat for proletarian revolution, these governments can help speed the process of decomposition of bourgeois power. (Comintern 1923g, p. 17).

factories, and the working class has created its own proletarian organisations of struggle there (factory councils, workers' councils).

The Congress therefore considers it one of the main tasks of all Communist parties to strengthen their roots in the factories and to support the factory-council movement or take the initiative in getting it under way.

13.) *The Comintern as a world party*⁴⁴

The Communist International must strive increasingly not only to structure itself organisationally as a Communist world party but, at the same time, to act as one politically. In particular, it should direct its attention to leading the necessary campaigns in entire groups of countries.

14.) *International discipline*

In order to carry out the united-front tactic internationally and in each individual country, strict international discipline is needed, now more than ever, in the Comintern and in each of its individual sections.

The Fourth Congress categorically demands strict discipline of all its sections and members in carrying out this tactic, which can bear fruit only if carried out unanimously and systematically in every country, not only in words but also in deeds.

Agreement with the Twenty-One Conditions includes the carrying out of all the policy decisions of world congresses and the Executive, which acts on behalf of the Comintern in the periods between world congresses. The Congress directs the Executive to promote and supervise the strict application of all policy decisions by all parties. Only the Comintern's clearly defined revolutionary policies will ensure the quickest possible victory for the international proletarian revolution.

* * *

The Congress decides to attach as an appendix to this resolution the December 1921 theses of the Executive on the united front, which fully and correctly explain the united-front tactic.

44. This point is not found in the Russian text.

Appendix 7a: December 1921 Theses on the Workers' United Front

Guidelines on the workers' united front and relations with workers that belong to the Second, Two-and-a-Half, or Amsterdam Internationals, as well as to those who support anarcho-syndicalist organisations, unanimously adopted by the Executive of the Communist International on 18 December 1921.

1.) The international workers' movement is at present going through an unusual transitional period, which poses important tactical problems for the Communist International as a whole as well as each of its sections.

Basically, this stage can be characterised as follows: the world economic crisis is worsening. Unemployment is growing. International capitalism has launched a systematic offensive against the workers in almost every country, expressed above all in the capitalists' rather open efforts to reduce workers' wages and living conditions. The bankruptcy of the Versailles Treaty is ever more obvious to the broadest layers of working people. If the international proletariat does not overthrow the bourgeois government, a new imperialist war, or even several such wars, is inevitable. The Washington Conference confirmed that eloquently.⁴⁵

The revival of reformist illusions among broad layers of workers, which arose for a whole number of reasons, is now, under the blows of reality, beginning to give way to a different mood. After the end of the imperialist slaughter, the revived 'democratic' and reformist illusions of the workers (both privileged workers and also those who were backward and politically inexperienced) are withering even before they have fully bloomed. The course and outcome of the Washington Conference deliberations will shake these illusions even more. Six months ago, there was some justification in speaking of a general shift of the working masses in Europe and the United States to the right. Today, by contrast, the beginning of a shift to the left is undoubtedly perceptible.⁴⁶

2.) On the other hand, under the impact of the mounting capitalist attack, a spontaneous *striving for unity* has awakened among the workers, which literally cannot be restrained. It is accompanied by the gradual growth of confidence among the broad working masses in the Communists.

A steadily growing number of workers are only now beginning to appreciate rightly the courage of the Communist vanguard, which threw itself into the fight for the interests of the working class at a time when the vast majority

45. Regarding the Washington Conference, see p. 249, n. 18.

46. This paragraph is numbered as thesis #2 in the Russian text, and all other points are correspondingly renumbered.

of the working masses remained indifferent or even hostile to communism. A steadily growing number of workers are now becoming convinced that only the Communists have defended the economic and political interests of the working class, under the most difficult conditions and sometimes with the greatest sacrifices. Working-class respect for and trust in its uncompromising Communist vanguard is now beginning to grow again, since even backward layers of the workers have perceived the futility of reformist hopes and understood that without struggle there is no salvation from capitalist banditry.

3.) The Communist parties can and must now reap the profits of the struggle that they previously conducted in an unfavourable environment of indifference among the masses. But as the working masses gain confidence in the Communists as uncompromising and militant working-class forces, they display, as a whole, an unprecedented longing for unity. New layers of politically less-tested workers, awakened to activity, long to achieve the unification of all workers' parties and even of the workers' organisations as a whole, hoping in this way to increase their capacity of resistance against capitalism. New layers of workers, who previously often did not take an active part in political struggle, are now undertaking to test the practical plans of reformism through their own experience. Like these new layers, significant sectors of the working class that belong to the old Social-Democratic parties are no longer happy with the Social-Democratic and centrist campaign against the Communist vanguard. They are now beginning to demand an understanding with the Communists.

But, at the same time, they have *not yet* given up their belief in the reformists. Significant layers still support the parties of the Second and Amsterdam internationals. These working masses do not formulate their plans and strivings all that precisely, but by and large their new mood can be traced to a desire to establish a united front, and to attempt to bring the parties and organisations of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals into struggle together with the Communists against the capitalist attacks. *To that extent*, this mood is progressive. Essentially, their faith in reformism has been undermined. Given the general conditions affecting the workers' movement today, every serious mass action, even if it starts only with immediate demands, will inevitably place more general and fundamental questions of the revolution on the agenda. The Communist vanguard can only win if new layers of workers become convinced through their own experience that reformism is an illusion and that compromise on policy is fatal.

4.) When conscious and organised protest against the betrayal of the Second-International leadership first began to germinate, these leaders had control of the entire apparatus of the workers' organisations. They utilised the principles

of unity and proletarian discipline in order to ruthlessly stifle revolutionary proletarian protest and, without encountering protest, place the entire power of the workers' organisations in the service of national imperialism.

Under these conditions, the revolutionary wing had to achieve, whatever the cost, freedom of agitation and propaganda. That is, it had to be able to explain to the working masses this historically unprecedented betrayal, one that the parties created by these masses themselves have committed and are still committing.

5.) The Communist parties of the world, having achieved organisational freedom for their *intellectual influence* on the working masses, must now strive everywhere to achieve unity of these masses, as broad and complete as possible, in practical action. The Amsterdam leaders and the heroes of the Second International preach this unity in words, but do the contrary in practice. After the reformist compromisers of Amsterdam failed to suppress organisationally the voice of protest and revolutionary uprising, they are now looking for a way out of the dead end that they blundered into, and they are *bringing the split*, disorganisation, and organisational sabotage into the struggle of the working masses. One of the most important present tasks of the Communist party is to catch in the act and expose these new blatant forms of the old treachery.

6.) However, profound internal processes are now forcing the diplomats and leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals to themselves to push the question of unity into the foreground. For new layers of workers, inexperienced and just awakening to conscious life, the slogan of the united front represents a genuine and honest desire to unite the forces of the oppressed class against the capitalist offensive. However, for the leaders and diplomats of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, raising the slogan of unity is a new attempt to deceive the workers and lure them, in a new way, onto the old path of class collaboration. The approaching danger of a new imperialist war (Washington Conference), the growth of armaments, the new secret treaties concluded behind the scenes – all this has not induced the leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals to sound the alarm, in order to achieve international unity of the working class not only in words but in deeds. On the contrary, these developments will only arouse inevitable frictions and divisions inside the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, along the same fault lines that exist in the camp of the international bourgeoisie. This is inevitable, because solidarity of reformist 'socialists' with the bourgeoisie of their own particular country is the foundation-stone of reformism.

Those are the general conditions in which the Communist International as a whole, and each of its sections, must determine their attitude to the slogan of the socialist united front.

7.) Given this situation, the Executive of the Communist International considers that the slogan of the International's Third World Congress, 'To the masses', and the general interests of the Communist movement as a whole demand that the Communist parties and the Communist International as a whole *support the slogan of the workers' united front* and take the initiative in this question. In this, the tactics of each Communist party must be worked out specifically in relationship with the conditions of that country.

8.) In *Germany* the Communist Party adopted the slogan of the united front at its last national conference and declared its readiness to support a unified workers' government that is willing to mount a reasonably serious challenge to capitalist power. The Executive of the Communist International considers that this decision is absolutely correct. It is confident that the Communist Party of Germany, while fully protecting its independent political positions, is capable of penetrating broader layers of workers and increasing communism's influence among the masses. In Germany, more than in any other country, the broad masses will daily become more convinced how right the Communist vanguard was when, in the most difficult time, it did not lay down its weapons and stubbornly stressed the uselessness of the reformist remedies that were being proposed to end a crisis that only proletarian revolution can resolve. By pursuing this tactic, the Party will over time draw around it all the revolutionary forces of anarchism and syndicalism that at present are abstaining from the mass struggle.

9.) In *France*, the Communist Party holds a majority among politically organised workers. The question of the united front is therefore posed in France in a somewhat different way than in other countries. But, here too, it is essential to place on our opponents the entire responsibility for the split in the unified workers' camp. The revolutionary segment of French syndicalism is quite rightly combating the split in the trade unions, in other words, defending working-class unity in the economic struggle against the bourgeoisie. But the workers' struggle is not limited to the factory. Unity is also necessary against the growing wave of reaction, imperialist policies, and so on. The reformists' and centrists' policies, by contrast, have resulted in the split in the Party and now threaten to split the union movement, showing that *Jouhaux*, just like *Longuet*, is objectively serving the cause of the bourgeoisie. The slogan of a proletarian united front in both the economic

and the political struggle against the bourgeoisie remains the best means to thwart these plans for a split.

The reformist CGT led by *Jouhaux, Merrheim*, and company betrays the interests of the French working class. Nonetheless, the French Communists and the revolutionary forces in the French working class as a whole must, before every mass strike, revolutionary demonstration, or any other revolutionary mass action, propose to the reformists that they support this action. If they refuse to rally to the workers' revolutionary struggle, they should be systematically exposed. This is the easiest way to win workers who are outside the Party. Of course that does not mean that the Communist Party of France should in any way restrict its independence, for example by giving any support during an election campaign to the 'Left Bloc' or by showing any tolerance toward vacillating Communists who are still bewailing the separation from the social patriots.

10.) In *Britain*, the reformist Labour Party has refused to allow the Communist Party to affiliate on the same basis as other workers' organisations. Influenced by the growing mood for unity among the workers, the London workers' organisations recently passed a resolution supporting the acceptance of the Communist Party of Britain into the Labour Party.

It goes without saying that Britain is an exception in this regard, because the British Labour Party, as a result of the unusual conditions there, is a kind of general workers' association for the whole country. The British Communists must launch a vigorous campaign for their admission into the Labour Party. The union leaders' recent betrayal during the coal-miners' strike,⁴⁷ the systematic campaign by the capitalists to reduce workers' wages, and so on – all this has led to strong ferment among the revolutionary forces of the British proletariat. The British Communists should make every effort to extend their influence into the depths of the working masses utilising the slogan of the revolutionary united front against the capitalists.

11.) In *Italy*, the newly formed Communist Party has been bitterly and irreconcilably hostile to the reformist Socialist Party of Italy and the social traitors of the Confederation of Labour, who recently carried out open betrayal against proletarian revolution. Nonetheless, the Communist Party is beginning to conduct its agitation using the slogan of proletarian united front against the capitalist offensive. The Executive of the Communist International considers such agitation by the Italian Communists to be completely correct and asks only that it go further in this direction. The Executive of the Communist International is convinced that the Communist Party of Italy,

47. See p. 396, n. 22.

with sufficient far-sightedness, can provide the entire International with an example of militant Marxism, which pitilessly exposes at every step the treacherous half-measures of reformists and of centrists (who have adopted the guise of communism) and *at the same time* carries out a tireless *campaign for the united front of the workers against the bourgeoisie*, which should expand continually and involve larger and larger sectors of the masses.

In this process, the Party must do all possible to involve all revolutionary forces of anarchism and syndicalism in the common struggle.

12.) In *Czechoslovakia*, where the Communist Party enjoys the support of a significant sector of politically organised workers, the tasks of Communists are in some respects similar to those of Communists in France. While strengthening its independence and eliminating the last traces of centrism, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia will also succeed in popularising the slogan of a workers' united front against the bourgeoisie. In this way it will conclusively expose the leaders of Social Democracy and the centrists to backward workers as agents of capitalism. At the same time the Communists of Czechoslovakia must redouble their efforts to win the trade unions, which are still to a significant extent in the hands of scab leaders.

13.) In *Sweden* the recent parliamentary elections led to a situation in which the small Communist fraction can play an important role. One of the most prominent leaders of the Second International, Branting, who is also the Swedish bourgeoisie's prime minister, now finds himself in a situation in which, in seeking a parliamentary majority, he cannot be indifferent to the attitude of the Communist deputies. The Executive of the Communist International believes that the Communist fraction in the Swedish parliament, under certain circumstances, should not refuse support to a Menshevik ministry led by Branting – following on the example of the German Communists in some of that country's provincial governments (Thuringia).⁴⁸ That does not in any imply that Sweden's Communists should in any way limit their independence or cease to expose the character of the Menshevik government. On the contrary, when the Mensheviks increase in power, they betray the working class even more, and the Communists must increase the vigour of their efforts to expose the Mensheviks before broad layers of workers. The Communist Party must also continue efforts to draw the syndicalist workers into united struggle against the bourgeoisie.

48. In some German states, such as Thuringia, the Social-Democratic parties formed governments excluding bourgeois parties; Communists gave such governments critical support. See also p. 139, n. 20.

14.) In the *United States*, the unification of all left forces in the trade union and political movement is under way. This gives Communists the possibility of winning influence among the broad masses of the American proletariat and of playing a central role in this unification of the Left. American Communists should form Communist groups wherever a few Communists are present. Aided by such groups, they should take the lead in the movement to unify all revolutionary forces and emphatically raise the slogan for a workers' united front, for example in defence of the unemployed. Their main accusation against the unions led by Gompers should from now on be their refusal to take part in building a workers' united front against the capitalists in order to defend the jobless, and so on. The Communist Party has a special task in attracting the best forces of the IWW [Industrial Workers of the World].

15.) In *Switzerland*, our party has achieved some success along these lines. Thanks to Communist agitation for a revolutionary united front, they succeeded in forcing the trade-union bureaucracy to convene a special congress. At the Congress, which is to take place soon, our comrades will be able to expose the lies of reformism and drive forward the work of achieving revolutionary unity of the proletariat.

16.) In a number of other countries, the question is posed differently because of local conditions. Having explained the general line, the Executive of the Communist International is confident that each Communist Party will be able to apply it in conformity with the conditions existing in its country.

17.) The Executive of the Communist International considers that the main condition for this work is for the Communist Party to maintain absolute autonomy and complete independence. This applies equally, unconditionally, and categorically to every Communist Party, in every country, that arrives at any kind of agreement with the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. It includes complete freedom in presenting their point of view and in criticising the opponents of communism.

Communists should accept the discipline required for *action*, they must not under any conditions relinquish the right and the capacity to express, not only, before and after the action, but when necessary *while it is under way*, their opinion regarding the policies of all working class organisations without exception. This capacity must not be surrendered under any circumstances. While supporting the slogan of the greatest possible unity of all workers' organisations in every *practical action against the united capitalists*, the Communists must not abstain from putting forward their views, which are the only consistent expression of defence of the interests of working class as a whole.

18.) The Executive of the Communist International considers it useful to remind all sister parties of the experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks, which is the only party so far to have succeeded in achieving victory over the bourgeoisie and in taking power into their own hands. During the fifteen years that elapsed from the appearance of Bolshevism to its victory over the bourgeoisie (1903–17), Bolshevism never ceased in its unremitting struggle against reformism, or Menshevism, which is the same thing. But during these fifteen years, the Bolsheviks frequently arrived at agreements with the Mensheviks.

The formal separation took place in the spring of 1905. But under the influence of tumultuous workers' movement, the Bolsheviks formed a common front with the Mensheviks at the end of 1905. The second formal separation from the Mensheviks took place in January 1912, and it was definitive. However, between 1905 and 1912 there were both splits and unifications and semi-unifications in the 1906–7 period and again in 1910. These unifications and semi-unifications took place not just in the course of the factional struggle but also under the immediate pressure of the broad working masses, who had awakened to active political life and demanded that they be given the opportunity to test through their own experience whether the Menshevik path was really fundamentally different from that of the revolution.

Before the new revolutionary movement that followed on the Lena strike (1912),⁴⁹ shortly before the outbreak of the imperialist war, a strong desire for unity was evident among the working masses of Russia. The leaders and diplomats of Russian Menshevism sought to utilise this striving for unity for their purposes, in much the same way as is done by the present-day leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals.

The Russian Bolsheviks did not respond to the workers' eagerness for unity by repudiating any united front. On the contrary. As a counterweight to the Menshevik leaders' diplomatic game, the Bolsheviks advanced the slogan of 'unity from below', that is, unity of the working masses in the practical struggle for the workers' demands against the capitalists. Experience has shown that this was the only correct response. And, as a result of this tactic, which varied according to the circumstances, the time, and the location, was that a large proportion of the best Menshevik workers were won over to Communism.

19.) Given that the Communist International is advancing the slogan of the workers' united front and of agreements of individual sections with the parties

49. Regarding the Lena strike, see p. 887, n. 6.

and associations of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, it cannot repudiate similar agreements on an international level. The Executive of the Communist International made a proposal to the Amsterdam International regarding the campaign for famine relief for Russia. It repeatedly made such proposals in regard to the white terror and the persecution of workers in Spain and Yugoslavia. The Communist International Executive is now making a new proposal to the Amsterdam leaders and the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals with regard to the initial work of the Washington Conference, which has shown that the international working class is threatened with a new imperialist slaughter.

So far, the leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals have shown through their conduct that, *in practice*, they drop the slogan of unity whenever it involves *practical activity*. In all such cases, the Communist International as a whole and all its sections will have the task of explaining the hypocrisy of the leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, who prefer unity with the bourgeoisie to unity with the revolutionary workers. For example, they remain in the International Labour Office of the League of Nations; they are taking part in the Washington imperialist conference rather than organising the struggle against it.

However, the fact that the leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals reject this or that practical proposal of the Communist International will not induce us to abandon the united-front tactic, which has deep roots among the masses. We will develop it systematically and unwaveringly. In cases where a proposal for a united struggle is rejected by our opponents, it is necessary that the masses hear this, and thus learn who are the genuine destroyers of the workers' united front. In cases where our opponents accept such a proposal, we must seek gradually to broaden the struggle and raise its intensity. In both variants, the attention of the broad working masses must be drawn to the Communists' negotiations with other organisations, for it is necessary to interest the working masses in every stage of the struggle for revolutionary workers' united front.

20.) In proposing this plan, the Communist International Executive draws the sister parties' attention to the dangers which it may entail under certain circumstances. Not every Communist party is sufficiently developed and consolidated. They have not all broken completely with centrist and semi-centrist ideology. There are instances where it may be possible to go too far, or tendencies that would genuinely mean the dissolution of Communist parties and groups into a formless united bloc. In order to apply this new tactic successfully and in the interests of communism, it is necessary that the Communist parties carrying out the policy be strongly and firmly united and that their leadership be distinguished by its ideological clarity.

21.) In the groupings within the Communist International that are with greater or lesser justification termed rightist or even semi-centrist, there are without doubt tendencies of two kinds. Some forces have really not broken with the ideology and methods of the Second International, have not freed themselves from reverence to its earlier organisational strength, and are seeking semi-consciously or unconsciously a path to ideological agreement with the Second International and thus also with bourgeois society. Other forces, which struggle against formal radicalism and against the errors of the so-called 'leftists', seek to endow the policies of new Communist parties with more flexibility and capacity for manoeuvre, in order to enable them to win influence more quickly among the rank and file of the working masses.

Given the rapid pace of development of the Communist parties, these two tendencies appear from time to time to be in the same camp, indeed to some degree in the same grouping. The best way to reveal genuinely reformist tendencies inside the Communist parties is to implement the methods proposed here, which aim to win for Communist agitation a base in the unified mass action of the proletariat. When properly applied, this tactic contributes extraordinarily to the revolutionary consolidation of the Communist parties, both by educating through experience forces that are impatient or inclined to sectarianism and by freeing the parties of reformist ballast.

22.) The workers' united front should be understood as unity of all workers who want to fight against capitalism, including workers who still follow the *anarchists or syndicalists*. In many countries, such workers can assist the revolutionary struggle. Since the first days of its existence, the Communist International has followed a course of friendship to such working-class forces, who are gradually overcoming their prejudices and moving towards to communism. It is all the more necessary to be attentive to them now that the united front of workers against communism is becoming reality.

23.) In order to finally determine the course of future work along the indicated lines, the Communist International Executive resolves to hold in the near future a meeting of the Executive expanded to include twice the usual number of delegates from each party.⁵⁰

24.) The Communist International Executive will closely follow every practical step taken in this difficult area of work and asks that all parties inform it of every attempt and every success in this area, giving full factual details.

50. The Expanded Executive was held 24 February–4 March 1922. For the proceedings, see Comintern 1922b. For an English version of the resolutions, see *Inprecorr*, 2, 29 (25 April 1922), pp. 217–28.

*Appendix 8***Open Letter**

*To the Second International and the Vienna Association.*⁵¹ *To trade unions of all countries and the international union and cooperative conference in The Hague.*⁵²

The slogan of the Fourth Congress: united front!

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International, which includes sixty-two parties of Europe, America, Asia, and Australia, has decisively confirmed what has been twice decided by the International's Expanded Executive, namely, that all Communist parties are obligated to work with all their energy in a solid united front to resist the capitalist offensive against all the positions of the working class. The highest body of the Communist parties has thus confirmed what has been the content and goal of our work over the last year. It has adopted, as the slogan for future work, the struggle for a united front of the world proletariat, for unification of all proletarians in the cause of united defence, without regard for political orientation or point of view.

Early this year, the Communist International turned to the Second International and the Vienna Association with a call to organise a world workers' congress for this common struggle to maintain the eight-hour day, against wage reduction, against elimination of all conquests of the trade unions, against rearmament, and against the danger of a new war. The representatives of the Communist International motivated this proposal at the Berlin Conference of representatives of the three executives.⁵³

This was rejected by the parties of the Second International. They insisted, as an initial condition for convening such a world workers' congress, that the Soviet government should halt its struggle against parties that call on Russian proletarians to abandon the most important gains of the Revolution, give up the factories, and return power to the bourgeoisie. They also insisted, as a second condition, that the Communists cease struggling for their views in the trade unions, cease opposing the trade-union leaders who – contrary to the obvious need to heighten working-class struggle against the bourgeoisie – favour moderating this struggle. The Communist International had

51. 'Vienna Association' refers to the International Working Union of Socialist Parties, which Communists commonly called the Two-and-a-Half International.

52. For the conference in The Hague, see p. 1114, n. 28.

53. The reference is to the Conference of the Three Internationals held in Berlin, 2–5 April 1921. See p. 137, n. 17.

to reject these proposals, because accepting them would shatter the very purpose and meaning of the united front.

We favour a proletarian united front in order to heighten the strength and defensive power of the proletariat, not to reduce it.

Six months of capitalist offensive

Six months have passed since the rejection of our proposal to establish a united front of the proletariat to organise its defence struggle. These six months have been marked by an unbroken advance of bourgeois attacks in every country.

In Britain the bourgeois rabble-rousers have won the upper hand. They have put an end to the attempts of Lloyd George to veil British capitalism's aggressive policies with talk of concern and peace. The Conservative Party, which now sits alone in government, has proclaimed 'law and order' as its slogan, along with 'no government interference in the economy'. In other words, it is giving the capitalists a completely free hand to strangle the proletarians. Their first step was an attempt to eliminate the minimum wage. Bonar Law even refused to listen to the unemployed.

In France, only four years after the end of the slaughter, the government ordered that striking workers in Le Havre be fired upon. It is openly attacking the eight-hour day.

In Germany, the coalition government of Social Democracy and the bourgeoisie has openly proclaimed that the only way to stabilise the mark is to impose longer hours on the undernourished proletarian masses. It has openly proclaimed the elimination of the last remains of economic regulation, which gives a free hand to ruthless speculation. The new Cuno government, representing the captains of industry, is the forerunner of open dictatorship of the iron and coal barons. It is an open representative of large-scale capitalism, so clearly directed against the basic interests of the working class that the Social Democrats felt it necessary to stay out of this government. Counter-revolutionary extremists based in Bavaria are preparing an armed assault on the last remnants of the November Revolution [1918] and the Republic. It is spurred on by the victory of Italian Fascism, which proclaimed the dictatorship of the sword without the slightest resistance by the democratic bourgeoisie, reduced parliament to a nullity, and set the goal of strengthening bourgeois rule by compelling the working class to place itself fully and entirely, with all its sweat and blood, at the service of capitalism.

In Czechoslovakia, every day the capitalists throw thousands of workers on the streets. Unemployment is growing. Through one lockout after another, they seek to drive down the workers' wages.

Austria has been driven into the status of a colony of Entente capitalism. Austrian public finances are to be rehabilitated at the cost of the Austrian working class, through starvation wages for workers and lower-level public servants. Representatives of Entente capitalism are to have power of life and death over the popular masses.

In the United States of America, the employers are attempting to reduce the trade unions to rubble, by taking away from workers the right to ensure that all workers in a factory belong to the union. Capitalism will have its mighty trusts, and no one will have the right to drink a glass of milk without paying a tribute to the trust. But the working class is to be like sand, scattered by every gust of wind.

In South Africa, the butcher General Smuts, the pride of world liberalism, is at work. A pacifist advocate of the League of Nations, General Smuts does not merely shoot down striking workers. Eight months after the struggle of South African miners provoked by his government, he has its leading fighters hanged.⁵⁴

Toward new wars

These facts show how the immediate and basic needs of the working class are trampled again and again. But the attack of capitalism is aimed not only at heightening the exploitation of the proletariat. In addition, the danger of a new imperialist world war has appeared again in the bright light of day. Until now, not a single capitalist state has begun efforts to carry out the reduction of naval armaments decided by the Washington Conference. Not a single warship has been converted to scrap metal. The construction of new warships continues without interruption.

The Soviet government of Russia has proposed disarmament, or at least reduction of armaments, on land. This was rejected by all the capitalist powers at Genoa.⁵⁵ The League of Nations is powerless to take even the slightest action in this arena, even if it wished to. Its decisions would have to be unanimous and would have to be ratified by governments that are against disarmament.

Europe is in the grip of weaponry, even more than was the case before the War. And in September [1922], during the Eastern crisis, the world saw what this means. Only the Turkish government's renunciation of its right to occupy its capital and to go beyond the communication route leading to it, the Dardanelles – only this renunciation of Turkish self-determination saved Europe

54. See resolution on South Africa, p. 736, and n. 29 on that page.

55. Regarding the Genoa Conference, see p. 120, n. 4.

from a new war.⁵⁶ The British trade unions and Labour Party accused Lloyd George of causing a new war, a war that would not be limited to the Balkans. And who will say that the Conservative government of Britain will defend the piratical interests of British capitalism less decisively than the government of Lloyd George?

With immense effort, the Soviet government convinced Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland to gather for a disarmament conference in Moscow.⁵⁷ Romania did not take part in the Conference because the Romanian *boyars* [lords] demanded, as the price of their attendance, that a piece of Russian soil, Bessarabia, together with the peasants who live there, be handed over to them.⁵⁸ As the Fourth Congress closes, the Moscow Conference is not yet over. But the conduct of representatives of the vassal states makes it clear that they do not want any reduction in armaments.

And that means that the great war that cost the lives of twelve million people was not the last war. The bourgeoisie is preparing new wars!

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International turns to the workers of the Second International and the Vienna International, to the millions of workers organised in trade unions around the world, and to their leadership assembled in conference in The Hague, and asks them: do you wish to stand idly by while the eight-hour day, the most important condition for the rise of the working class, is destroyed? While the living standard of workers of the oldest industrialised countries is driven down to those of Chinese coolies? While the basic rights of the workers, which you hoped to use to achieve peacefully your liberation from the capitalist yoke, are destroyed? While capitalism establishes its dictatorship? Do you wish to stand idly by as spectators, while victorious capitalism, having shaken off all inhibitions, dictates the onset of a new war, in which you will once again bleed in the interests of capitalism?

56. See pp. 651–2, nn. 2 and 3. In fact, Turkey did reoccupy Constantinople and surrounding territory, including the European shore of the Dardanelles.

57. Following Soviet delegates' failure to achieve a discussion of disarmament at the April–May 1922 Genoa Conference, they issued an invitation to neighbouring countries for a regional discussion of the problem. Poland, Finland, and the three Baltic states accepted, and the Moscow Conference on the Limitation of Armament took place 2–12 December 1922. No agreement was reached on Soviet proposals for a three-quarters' reduction in the size of armies, and the Conference concluded with a call for a nonaggression Treaty.

58. Bessarabia (Moldova), a portion of the Russian tsarist state with a predominantly Romanian-speaking population, was occupied by the Romanian army and annexed to Romania during the Russian Civil War. France and Britain recognised this action, but Soviet Russia did not. The Soviet government called for the territory's status to be decided by a regional plebiscite, which Romania refused.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International instructs all its affiliated parties, and all sympathising trade unions in every country, to put this question to all the workers' parties – city by city, country by country. Call on them to join in a common struggle against the de facto or legislative abolition of the eight-hour day, against wage reductions, against abolition of freedom of movement of the working class, against new armaments, against the renewed threat of war, for the eight-hour day, for a minimum wage, for full freedom of working-class organisation, for disarmament, and for freedom among the world's peoples.

The appeal of the Communist International's Fourth Congress

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International turns to the Second International and the Vienna Association and asks if they were willing, now that their policies have only worsened the conditions of the working class, to lend a hand in establishing a common front of the international proletariat in struggle for the basic rights and interests of the working class.

It turns to the Amsterdam International and asks if it is willing to cease splitting the trade unions, to cease expelling Communists from the unions, and to help lead proletarians into struggle in unified array.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International poses this question to the conference of trade unions and cooperatives now convening in The Hague – at the very moment that the Entente capitalists in Lausanne, responding to the collapse of the Versailles Treaty, are imposing a new Versailles Treaty on the Turkish people, thus laying the basis for new wars. Is the Hague Conference willing to act together with us to show the bourgeoisie, through the mobilisation of the working class, that the international proletariat is no longer willing to be shipped without resistance to new fields of slaughter.

As we said at the Berlin Conference, the Communist International does not ask the parties of the Second International, the Vienna Association, and the Amsterdam trade-union leaders to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has been and remains our goal. Rather, we ask if they are willing to fight against the dictatorship of capitalism, if they are willing at least to utilise what is left of democracy to organise resistance to the victory of capitalism, which has turned the world into a mass grave and is now already preparing new mass graves for our proletarian youth.

The Communist International has spoken. It has given its parties the slogans for the struggle:

- For the proletarian united front.
- For [workers'] control of production.

- For the eight-hour day.
- For a minimum wage for the proletariat.
- For arming the workers and disarming the bourgeoisie.
- For governments of the allied workers' parties as an instrument of struggle for the immediate interests of the working class.

We await the answer of the Second International, the Vienna Association, the Amsterdam trade-union International, and its Hague Conference.

Moscow, 4 December 1922

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International

*Appendix 9***Theses on the Eastern Question**1.) *The rise of the revolutionary movement in the East*

Based on the experience of Soviet construction in the East and the growth of national-revolutionary movements in the colonies, the Second Congress of the Communist International drew up a general statement of principles on the national and colonial question in the period of extended struggle between imperialism and proletarian dictatorship.⁵⁹

Since then the struggle against imperialist oppression in the colonial and semi-colonial countries has intensified significantly, resulting from the deepened political and economic crisis of postwar imperialism. Evidence of this can be seen in:

- 1.) The collapse of the Sèvres Treaty for the partition of Turkey and the possibility of the full restoration of its national and political independence.
- 2.) The impetuous rise of the national-revolutionary movement in India, Mesopotamia [Iraq], Egypt, Morocco, China, and Korea.
- 3.) The hopeless internal crisis of Japanese imperialism, which is causing a rapid development of forces for a bourgeois-democratic revolution and the present transition of the Japanese proletariat to independent class struggle.
- 4.) The growth of the workers' movement in all countries of the East and the formation of Communist parties in almost all these countries.

The facts enumerated here signify a shift in the social basis of the revolutionary movement in the colonies. This shift tends to intensify the anti-imperialist struggle. And its leadership is thus no longer automatically held by feudal forces and the national bourgeoisie, who stand ready to compromise with imperialism.

The imperialist war of 1914–18 and the subsequent protracted crisis of imperialism – above all European imperialism – have weakened the economic tutelage of the great powers over the colonies.

In addition, the same forces that have narrowed the economic basis and political sphere of influence of European capitalism have aggravated the imperialist competitive struggle for colonies, thus disrupting the equilibrium

59. See 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions' in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, pp. 283–90.

of the entire world imperialist system. This is reflected in the struggle for oil wells, the British-French conflict in Asia Minor, Japanese-American rivalry in the Pacific, and so on.

It is this weakening of imperialist pressure on the colonies, together with the steadily growing rivalry between the different imperialist groupings, that has facilitated the development of indigenous capitalism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, which has expanded and continues to expand beyond the narrow and restrictive limits of imperialist rule by the great powers. Previously, great-power capitalism sought to isolate the backward countries from world economic trade, in order in this way to secure its monopoly status and achieve super-profits from the commercial, industrial, and fiscal exploitation of these countries. The rise of indigenous productive forces in the colonies stands in irreconcilable contradiction to the interests of world imperialism, whose very essence is to take advantage of the variation in the level of development of productive forces in different arenas of the world economy to achieve monopoly super-profits.

2.) *The conditions of struggle*

The backwardness of the colonies finds expression in the diversity of the national-revolutionary movements against imperialism, reflecting the different stages of transition from feudal and feudal-patriarchal conditions to capitalism. This diversity puts its stamp on the ideology of this movement. To the degree that capitalism arises in the colonial countries on a feudal basis, in stunted and incomplete transitional forms that serve above all to assure the domination of commercial capital, the differentiation of bourgeois democracy from feudal-bureaucratic and feudal-agrarian forces often takes place in a lengthy and roundabout manner. This is the main obstacle to a successful mass struggle against imperialist oppression. For in all backward countries, foreign imperialism utilises the feudal (and in part also semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois) élite of indigenous society as an instrument to achieve its domination (native military governors – *tuchuns* – in China; native aristocrats and land-tax farmers – *zamindars* and *talukdars* – in India; the feudal bureaucrats and aristocrats in Iran; the capitalist landowners and plantation owners in Egypt; and so on).

In this way, the ruling classes of the colonial and semi-colonial countries are shown to be unable and unwilling to lead the struggle against imperialism, to the degree that this struggle takes the form of a revolutionary mass movement. Only where the feudal-patriarchal relationships have not yet disintegrated to the point where the native aristocracy has fully separated out from the popular masses, as for example among nomadic and semi-nomadic

peoples, can the representatives of these élites come forward as active leaders in struggle against imperialist violence (Mesopotamia, Mongolia).

In Muslim countries, the national movement is initially guided by the religious and political slogans of pan-Islamism. This provides an opportunity for great-power officials and diplomats to utilise the prejudices and ignorance of the broad masses in struggle against this movement (thus British imperialism dabbles in pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism; the British plans to move the Caliphate to India; French imperialism's pretence at 'Muslim sympathies'). Nonetheless, to the degree that the national-liberation movements extend in scope, the religious-political slogans of pan-Islamism will be more and more replaced by specific political demands. This is shown by the recent struggle in Turkey to separate secular power from the Caliphate.

The main task that is common to all national-revolutionary movements is to achieve national unity and political independence. How this task is carried out depends on the degree to which a given national movement is capable of breaking all its ties with the reactionary-feudal forces, and thus win over the broad working masses and give expression in its programme to their social demands.

Well aware that the desire of the nation for political independence can be expressed, under different historical conditions, by the most diverse social forces, the Communist International supports every national-revolutionary movement against imperialism. However, it does not ignore the fact that the oppressed masses can be led to victory only by a consistent revolutionary line aimed at drawing the broadest masses into active struggle and an unconditional break with all those who seek conciliation with imperialism in order to maintain their own class-rule. The native bourgeoisie's ties to reactionary-feudal forces permit imperialism to exploit extensively feudal anarchy; the rivalry between individual leaders, lineages, and tribes; the antagonism of town and country; and struggles between occupational layers and national religious sects, in order to disorganise the people's movement (see China, Iran, Kurdistan, and Mesopotamia).

3.) *The agrarian question*

In most countries of the East (India, Iran, Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia [Iraq]), the agrarian question is of paramount importance in the struggle for liberation from the yoke of great-power despotism. By exploiting and ruining the peasant majority of the backward nations, imperialism robs them of their basic means of survival. Meanwhile, the resulting rural surplus population cannot be absorbed either by local industry, which is developed only in a few centres, or by emigration, for which possibilities are completely lacking.

The impoverished peasants remaining on the land are reduced to the status of serfs.

In the advanced countries, before the War, industrial crises acted as the regulators of social production. In the colonies, this role is played by famine. Given that imperialism has an intense interest in achieving huge profits with a minimum investment of capital in the backward countries, it sustains as long as possible the feudal and usurious forms of exploiting labour power. In some countries, such as India, it takes over the existing feudal state's monopoly ownership of the land and transforms the land tax into a tribute to great-power capital and its local servants, the *zamindars* and *talukdars*. In other countries it secures the land rent by acting through existing organisations of large landowners, as in Iran, Morocco, Egypt, and so on. The struggle to free the land from feudal dues and limitations thus takes on the character of a battle for national liberation against imperialism and feudal land tenure. Examples can be found in the uprising of the Moplah against the landowners and the British in India in the autumn of 1921 and the Sikh uprising of 1922.⁶⁰

Only the agrarian revolution, which adopts the aim of expropriating large landholdings, can set the mighty peasant masses in motion. It is destined to have a decisive influence in the struggle against imperialism. Bourgeois nationalists (in India, Iran, and Egypt) fear agrarian slogans and seek every possibility to water them down. This reveals the close links of the native bourgeoisie with the feudal and feudal-bourgeois great landowners, on whom they are ideologically and politically dependent. All revolutionary forces must utilise this vacillation to reveal the irresolution of bourgeois leaders of the nationalist movements. It is this irresolution that obstructs organising and unifying the working masses, as has been shown by the failure of the policy of passive resistance ('non-cooperation') in India.⁶¹

The revolutionary movement in backward countries of the East cannot be victorious unless it bases itself on the activity of the broad peasant masses. The revolutionary parties of all Eastern countries must therefore formulate a clear agrarian programme, which demands the complete elimination of feudalism and its surviving institutions: large-scale land ownership and the leasing out of the land tax. In order to draw the peasant masses into the struggle

60. The Moplah or Mapilla are Muslim inhabitants of Kerala and neighbouring states. Their August 1921 uprising against British rule was repressed, and 3,000–10,000 Moplah were killed. The Akalis, a militant community of Sikhs in Punjab, carried out actions to regain control of Sikh holy places, notably at Guru-ka-Bagh in September 1922. See Roy 1922.

61. Mohandas Gandhi, main leader of the Indian National Congress, suspended the massive non-cooperation movement in India in February 1922, in response to an incident in February in which protesters had violently retaliated against police killings. The following month, Gandhi was jailed by British authorities.

for national liberation, this programme must demand a radical change in the basis of land-ownership rights. It is equally necessary to compel the bourgeois-national parties, as far as possible, to adopt this revolutionary-agrarian programme as their own.

4.) *The workers' movement in the East*

The new workers' movement in the East is the result of recent development of indigenous capitalism. Previously the working class there – even considering only its more advanced elements – was still in a state of transition, on the road from the small craft workshop to the large capitalist factory. To the degree that the bourgeois-nationalist intelligentsia draws the revolutionary working-class movement into the anti-imperialist struggle, its representatives will also initially lead the burgeoning trade-union organisations and their activity. Initially, in this activity, the proletariat does not go beyond the framework of 'common national' interests of bourgeois democracy (thus the strike against the imperialist bureaucracy and administration in China and India). It often happens – as the Communist International's Second Congress noted – that representatives of bourgeois nationalism, drawing on the moral and political authority of Soviet Russia, seek to adapt their bourgeois-democratic aspirations to the class instincts of workers by presenting them in a 'socialist' or 'communist' guise. In this way, they seek, sometimes without being conscious of the fact, to divert the initial proletarian associations from the immediate tasks of class organisation. (Thus the Yeşil Ordu Party in Turkey, which has given a communist colouration to its pan-Turkism,⁶² and also the 'state socialism' advocated by some representatives of the Kuomintang Party in China.)

Nonetheless, both the trade-union and also the political movement of the working class have made great progress in recent years in the backward countries. It is very significant that independent proletarian class parties have been formed in almost all the countries of the East, even if the vast majority of these parties still have a great deal of internal work to do in order to rid themselves of diletantism, sectarianism, and other shortcomings. The fact that the Communist International has from the outset duly acknowledged that the potential of the workers' movement in the East is of tremendous importance, for it provides eloquent proof of the genuine international unification of proletarians of the entire world under the banner of communism. By contrast, the

62. Yeşil Ordu (Green Army) was a left-nationalist political association, formed in Angora in the spring of 1920 with the support of Mustafa Kemal's government. Its policies combined radical-socialist, nationalist, and Islamic themes. See comments by Orhan, p. 615.

Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals have so far failed to find supporters in a single one of the backward countries, precisely because they are playing merely the role of 'servants' of European-American imperialism.

5.) *The general tasks of Communist parties in the East*

Bourgeois nationalists view the workers' movement in terms of whether it will contribute to the victory of the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the international proletariat views the new workers' movement of the East in terms of its revolutionary future. Under capitalist rule, the backward countries will not be able to share in the achievements of modern technology and culture, without paying an enormous tribute to great-power capitalism in the form of savage exploitation and oppression.

The workers of the East need to ally with the proletariat of the advanced countries not only for the sake of their joint struggle against imperialism but also so that they may obtain from the victorious proletariat of these countries unselfish aid in the development of their backward productive forces. The alliance with the western proletariat opens the road to an international federation of soviet republics. For backward peoples, the soviet-order represents the least painful transition from primitive conditions of existence to the advanced culture of communism, which is destined to replace capitalist production and distribution in the entire world economy.

This is shown by the experience of soviet construction in the liberated colonies of the Russian Empire. Only the soviet form of government is capable of securing the consistent implementation of a peasant-based agrarian reform. The particular conditions of agriculture in certain parts of the East (irrigation) were previously maintained by a special form of collective labour organised on a feudal and patriarchal basis. Later, this was undermined by systematic capitalist overcropping. They need a type of state organisation that can meet social needs in a systematic and organised manner. As a result of particular climatic and historical circumstances, cooperatives of small-scale producers will play an important role in the transitional period across the East as a whole.

The objective tasks of the colonial revolution are extending beyond the framework of bourgeois democracy, simply because a decisive victory of this revolution is incompatible with the rule of world imperialism. Initially, the native bourgeois intelligentsia forms the vanguard of the colonial-revolutionary movements. But, as the proletarian and semi-proletarian peasant masses are drawn into these movements, and to the degree that the social interests of these lower layers come to the fore, the big-bourgeois and agrarian-bourgeois forces begin to turn away from the movement. The young proletariat in the

colonies faces a lengthy struggle during an entire historical epoch – a struggle against imperialist exploitation and against its own ruling classes, who hold exclusive possession of all the advantages of industrial and cultural development and seek to keep the broad working masses in their earlier ‘prehistoric’ condition.

This struggle for influence over the peasant masses must prepare the indigenous proletariat for the role of political leadership. Only when the proletariat has accomplished this task in its own ranks and with respect to the social layers closest to it will it be capable of challenging bourgeois democracy, which in the backward conditions of the East is even more hypocritical than in the West.

Any refusal of Communists in the colonies to take part in the struggle against imperialist tyranny, on the excuse of supposed ‘defence’ of independent class interests, is opportunism of the worst sort that can only discredit the proletarian revolution in the East. No less damaging is the attempt to remain aloof from the struggle for the immediate interests of the working class in order to pursue ‘national unity’ or ‘civil peace’ with the bourgeois democrats.

The Communist workers’ parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries have a double task: both to fight for the most radical possible resolution of the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, aimed at winning political independence, and also to organise the worker and peasant masses in struggle for their particular class interests, profiting from all the contradictions in the nationalist bourgeois-democratic camp.

By putting forward social demands, Communists provide an outlet for revolutionary energy that cannot be expressed in bourgeois-liberal demands, and spur on its development. The working class in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must be aware that only the broadening and deepening of the struggle against the yoke of the imperialist great powers can serve to secure for them a revolutionary leadership role. On the other hand, it is only the economic and political organisation and political education of the working class and the semi-proletarian layers that can expand the revolutionary impetus of the struggle against imperialism.

The Communist parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East, which are still at an embryonic stage, must take part in every movement that provides them with access to the masses. Nonetheless, they must wage an energetic struggle against patriarchal and craft prejudices and against bourgeois ideology, which is predominant in the workers’ associations, in order to protect these undeveloped forms of trade unions from reformist tendencies and to transform them into organs of mass struggle. They must make every effort to organise the numerous agricultural day workers and apprentices, both men and women, on the basis of defence of their immediate interests.

6.) *The anti-imperialist united front*

The slogan of the proletarian united front was advanced in the West during a transitional period of gathering forces together organisationally. So too in the colonial East at present, the slogan of the anti-imperialist united front must be emphasised. The *suitability* of this slogan flows from the perspective of an extended, lengthy struggle against world imperialism, demanding the mobilisation of all revolutionary forces. This mobilisation is all the more necessary, since the native ruling classes tend to make compromises with foreign capitalism that are directed against the interests of the popular masses. And just as the slogan of proletarian united front in the West contributes to exposing Social-Democratic betrayal of proletarian interests, so too the slogan of anti-imperialist united front serves to expose the vacillation of different bourgeois-nationalist currents. This slogan will also promote the development of a revolutionary will and of class consciousness among the working masses, placing them in the front ranks of fighters not only against imperialism but also against survivals of feudalism.

The workers' movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must strive above all to achieve the role of an independent revolutionary force in the overall anti-imperialist front. Only when its autonomous weight is acknowledged and its political independence is thus safeguarded is it permissible and necessary to conclude temporary agreements with bourgeois democracy. The proletariat supports immediate demands, and advances them itself – such as, for example, the demand for an independent democratic republic, for assuring that women obtain rights, and so on, to the degree that the current relationship of forces does not permit it to implement its soviet programme as an immediate task. At the same time, the proletariat seeks to advance demands that promote a political alliance of the peasant and semi-proletarian masses with the workers' movement. One of the most important tasks of the anti-imperialist united-front tactic is to explain to the broad working masses why they need an alliance with the international proletariat and the soviet republic. The colonial revolution can only win – and defend its victory – together with the proletarian revolution in the highly developed countries.

As a result of inter-imperialist rivalry, the danger of a deal between bourgeois nationalism and one or several of the contending imperialist powers is much greater in the semi-colonial countries (China, Iran) or in countries struggling for their political independence (Turkey), than it is in the colonies. Any such agreement involves a quite unequal balance of power between the native ruling classes and imperialism. Under cover of formal independence, it leaves the country in its previous status of a semi-colonial buffer state in the service of world imperialism.

The working class recognises that temporary and partial compromises are permissible and necessary in order to achieve a breathing spell in the revolutionary struggle for liberation against imperialism. But it must conduct an irreconcilable struggle against every attempt to establish an open or concealed power-sharing agreement between imperialism and the native ruling classes aimed at preserving the latter's class privileges. The demand for a close alliance with the proletarian Soviet Republic is characteristic feature of the anti-imperialist united front. While advancing this demand, a determined struggle must be carried out for comprehensive democratisation of the political order, in order to rob politically and socially reactionary forces of their points of support in the country and provide working people with organisational freedom in the struggle for their class interests (for a democratic republic, agrarian reform, tax reform, administrative reorganisation on the basis of extensive self-government, protective labour legislation, restriction of child labour, protection of mothers and children, and so on). Even in independent Turkey, the working class enjoys no freedom of association, a telling indication of the bourgeois nationalists' attitude to the proletariat.

7.) *The tasks of the proletariat in countries of the Pacific*

The steady, uninterrupted growth of imperialist rivalry is a further reason for organising an anti-imperialist united front. This rivalry has now become so acute that unless international revolution intervenes, a new world war focused in the Pacific is inevitable.

The Washington Conference, an attempt to ward off this threat, served in reality only to deepen and intensify the imperialist rivalries.⁶³ The recent struggle in China between Wu Peifu and Zhang Zuolin was a direct result of the failure of attempts by Japanese and Anglo-American capitalism to reconcile their respective interests in Washington.⁶⁴ The new war threatening the world will involve not only Japan, the United States, and Britain, but also other capitalist powers (France, the Netherlands, etc.). It could well cause even more destruction than the war of 1914–18.

The task of Communist parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries on the Pacific is to carry out energetic propaganda to explain this danger to the masses. They should summon them to militant struggle for national liberation, and orient to Soviet Russia as the bastion of all the oppressed and exploited masses.

63. Regarding the Washington Conference, see p. 249, n. 18.

64. For a discussion of the conflict between Wu Peifu and Zhang Zuolin, see pp. 712–13.

In view of the threatening danger, the Communist parties of the imperialist countries – the United States, Japan, Britain, Australia, and Canada – are obliged not to limit themselves to propaganda against the war but also to make every effort to eliminate the factors that disorganise the workers' movement in these countries and make it easier for the capitalists to utilise national and race antagonisms. These factors are the questions of immigration and of cheap coloured labour.

The chief method of recruiting coloured workers today on the sugar plantations in the southern Pacific is the contract system, which brings in workers from China and India. This fact has led workers of the imperialist countries to demand the passing of laws against immigration and against coloured labour, both in the United States and in Australia. These laws deepen the antagonism between coloured and white workers, fragmenting and weakening unity of the workers' movement.

The Communist parties of the United States, Canada, and Australia must wage a vigorous campaign against laws that restrict immigration, and explain to the proletarian masses of these countries that they too will suffer harm because of the race hatred stirred up by these laws.

The capitalists oppose such anti-immigration laws because they favour free importation of cheap coloured labour as a means of driving down the wages of white workers. There is only one way to successfully counter the capitalists' intention to go over to the offensive: the immigrant workers must be admitted into the existing trade unions of white workers. At the same time, the demand must be raised that the wages of coloured workers be brought up to same level as white workers' pay. Such a step by the Communist parties will expose the capitalists' intentions and also demonstrate clearly to the coloured workers that the international proletariat does not harbour any racial prejudice.

To carry out these steps, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat in the countries of the Pacific must convene a Pacific conference to work out correct policies and determine the appropriate organisational steps for an effective unification of the proletariat of all races in the Pacific.

8.) *The tasks of the metropolitan parties toward the colonies*

Given the exceptional importance of the colonial-revolutionary movements for international proletarian revolution, work in the colonies must be heightened, above all by Communist parties in the imperialist powers.

French imperialism is basing all its calculations for the suppression of proletarian-revolutionary struggle in France and Europe on the utilisation of its colonial workers as a reserve army of counterrevolution. British and American imperialism still continue to divide the workers' movement by winning

the workers' aristocracy to its side with the promise of a certain share in the superprofits drawn from colonial exploitation.

Every Communist party in countries that possess colonies must take on the task of organising systematic ideological and material assistance for the proletarian and revolutionary movement in the colonies. They must strenuously and stubbornly oppose the quasi-socialist colonialist tendencies of some categories of well-paid European workers in the colonies. The European Communist workers in the colonies must seek to organise the indigenous proletarians and win their trust through specific economic demands (raising the level of native workers' pay to that of European workers, laws to protect labour, insurance, and so on). The creation of separate European Communist organisations in the colonies (Egypt, Algeria) is a hidden form of colonialism and furthers only the interests of imperialism. Any attempt to build Communist organisations on the basis of national characteristics contradicts the principles of proletarian internationalism.

All parties of the Communist International are obligated to explain to the broad working masses the vital importance of the struggle against imperialist rule in the backward countries. The Communist parties active in great-power countries must form standing commissions on the colonial question from among the members of their central committees, in order to pursue these goals. The support of the Communist International for Communist parties of the East must be expressed above all through assistance in organising their press and in bringing out publications and newspapers in the local languages. Special attention must be paid to work among the European workers' organisations and the occupation troops in the colonies. The Communist parties of the great-power countries must not miss a single opportunity to expose the predatory colonial policies of their imperialist governments and of the bourgeois and reformist parties.

*Appendix 10***The Educational Work of the Communist Parties**

Developing Marxist educational work is an essential task of all Communist parties. The goal of this work is to raise the capacity of all party members and functionaries for education, organisation, and struggle. Functionaries must receive not only a general Marxist schooling but also the knowledge and abilities necessary for their specialised fields of work.

Communist educational work should be an integral component of the party's work as a whole. It must absolutely be placed under the control of the central party leadership. In countries where revolutionary workers' education is carried out predominantly by special organisations outside the Communist party, this goal should be pursued through the systematic work of Communists in these organisations.

It is desirable to establish an educational secretariat, linked to the party central committee, to take the leadership of the entire educational activity of the party. All the Communist party members active in general workers' educational institutions that are not led by the party (worker educational associations, proletarian universities, proletkult,⁶⁵ labour colleges, and so on) are subject to the supervision and directives of party organisations.

Communist educational work is carried out by the parties, as circumstances and given conditions permit, by establishing central and local party schools, daytime and evening courses, and the like, by making available travelling teachers and lecturers, by organising libraries, and so on.

The parties are obligated to give material and ideological support to the independent educational work of the Communist youth. Communist youth should be invited to all party educational activities. The revolutionary upbringing of proletarian children should be carried out jointly with the Communist youth. Guidelines for this will be made available by an educational section attached to the ECCI.

An international educational division is being established as part of the ECCI. Its task is above all to further clarify the challenges of Communist

65. Proletkult (Proletarian Culture) was a movement in Soviet Russia, supported by the Commissariat of Education, that aimed to develop a new culture appropriate for socialist society. An international Proletkult bureau was established at the Second Comintern Congress (see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, p. 484). The Proletkult project was controversial among Bolshevik leaders; see Lenin 1960–71, 31, pp. 316–17; and Trotsky 1957, pp. 157–76; also Trotsky, 'What Is Proletarian Culture, and Is It Possible', available at: <www.marxists.org>.

educational work, the leadership of party educational work as a whole, and unification of work in the proletarian educational institutions that are outside the party. This task includes collecting and exchanging international experiences; enriching the forms and methods of work in each country; working up and publishing handbooks, manuals, and other material; and settling any special problems that arise in the sphere of educational work in specific countries. The international educational secretariat will also investigate and develop policies on education for the Communist parties and the Communist International.

The Socialist Academy and similar institutions in Soviet Russia will establish international courses in order to provide intensified Marxist schooling and practical Communist education for qualified comrades from the Communist International's national sections.

The duty of conducting agitation

- 1.) Every member of the Communist International is obliged to carry out agitation among workers outside the party. This can be done whenever and wherever workers can most readily be encountered, at their own or other workplaces, in the trade unions, in people's assemblies, in workers' associations, in sports clubs, choirs, tenants' and consumer groups, in people's centres, in workers' restaurants, on the railway, in the villages, and often by visiting workers' homes (house agitation).
- 2.) The starting point of such agitation should always be the specific conditions and needs of the workers in question, with the goal of leading them along the path of organised, revolutionary class struggle. There should be no imposition of communist principles or demands that the listeners cannot yet understand. However, they should always be encouraged to support and struggle for the common demands of the proletariat against the capitalists and every form of bourgeois class-rule.
- 3.) In every struggle of workers against the capitalists and bourgeois class-rule, Communists should take part vigorously and fight in the front lines for the interests of all, setting aside personal gain and winning others through their example.
- 4.) The leading party bodies should issue practical instructions to the local branches regarding regular agitational work by all party members, as well as regarding agitational work in campaigns (in elections, regarding inflation and taxes, in the factory councils, in the unemployed movement) and other efforts led by the party. (A copy of all such instructions is to be sent to the ECCI.)

- 5.) All party members have the right to ask responsible leaders of their organisation for more specific direction on how agitation should be carried out. It is the responsibility of leaders of Communist cells, work groups, and fractions to give such instructions and to supervise their execution. Where such group leaders are not available, special leaders of agitation should be assigned for this purpose.
- 6.) During the coming winter, all party organisations, even the smallest, should determine, with regard to each of their members:
 - a.) Does the member conduct agitation among workers outside the party
 - i.) Regularly?
 - ii.) Only occasionally?
 - iii.) Not at all?
 - b.) Does the member carry out other party work
 - i.) Regularly?
 - ii.) Only occasionally?
 - iii.) Not at all?

After consulting with the ECCI, the party central committee will send a circular to all its branches explaining how to present these questions in unambiguous fashion.

Responsibility to carry out this survey lies with the district and local organisations. The party central committee is to send the results to the ECCI.

Information regarding the most important decisions of the party and the International

- 1.) All members of the Communist International must be informed of the important decisions not only of their own party but of the Communist International.
- 2.) All branches of affiliated national sections must see to it that every member of the party is acquainted at least with *the programme of their own party and the Twenty-One Conditions* of the Comintern, as well as with decisions of the Communist International that relate specifically to their party. Party members should be tested regarding their level of understanding.
- 3.) Responsible officers should have a thorough knowledge of all the most important tactical and organisational decisions of the world congress, and their knowledge should be tested. This is also desirable, although not compulsory, for as many other party members as possible.
- 4.) The central committee of every section is obligated to send appropriate instructions to its organisation for putting these decisions into practice and to send a report of the results to the ECCI early next year.

*Appendix 11***Programme of Work and Struggle for the French Communist Party⁶⁶**

1.) The Party's most urgent task is to organise the resistance of the proletariat against the capitalist offensive, which is unfolding in France and in other large industrial countries. Defence of the eight-hour day, maintenance and increase of prevailing wages, the struggle for all immediate economic demands – this is the best platform with which to unite the dispersed proletariat and give it confidence in its own strength and future. The Party must immediately take initiatives for common actions that are capable of halting the capitalist offensive and reuniting the working class.

2.) The Party must initiate a campaign to show workers the mutual relationship between maintaining the eight-hour day and defending wages, and how the one of these demands inevitably affects the other. Its agitation must take up not only the employers' attacks but also those of the state against the workers' immediate interests, as, for example, through taxes levied on wages and all other economic questions of concern to the working class: increases in rents, consumption taxes, social insurance, and so on. The Party will carry on an active propaganda campaign in the working class to promote the formation of factory councils that include all the workers of every individual enterprise, without regard for whether they are already economically or politically organised.⁶⁷ The aim of these councils is to exercise workers' control over conditions of labour and production.

3.) The slogans for struggle around the urgent material demands of the proletariat must serve as a means to achieve a united front against economic and political reaction. The workers' united-front tactic must be the governing principle of mass actions. The Party must create conditions that promote the success of this tactic by taking measures to provide its own organisation and all sympathising forces with all the means of propaganda and organisation that it has available. Its press, its pamphlets, its rallies of every type, must all assist in the preparatory work carried out by the Party in all the proletarian

66. In Session 28, Trotsky stated that this programme was submitted by the left faction of the French Communist Party (see p. 1002). However, it was subsequently included in a collection of his writings on the Comintern; see Trotsky 1972b, 2, pp. 285–90.

67. In France and many other European countries, union membership was voluntary; it did not come automatically with employment under a collective agreement. Many workers who benefited from union activity were not 'organised' as members of a union.

groups to which Communists belong. The Party must appeal emphatically to the more significant of the rival workers' political and economic organisations and must never cease commenting publicly on its proposals and those of the reformists, and on the acceptance of some and the rejection of others. Under no conditions must the Party give up its full independence and its right to criticise participants in an action. It must always strive to take and maintain the initiative, and also to influence the initiatives of other forces in the direction of its own programme.

4.) In order to be in a position to take part in worker actions of every sort, in order to contribute to orienting the working class or, under certain circumstances, to play a decisive role, the Party must, without losing a single day, build its organisation for trade-union work. The Party must establish its network among the working masses by forming trade-union commissions in the federations and sections (as was decided by the Paris Congress) and Communist groups in the factories and the large capitalist or state enterprises. This will place the Party in a position to disseminate its slogans and heighten Communist influence in the workers' movement. The trade-union commissions must maintain a link at every level of the party and union structures with the Communists who, with the permission of the Party, remained in the reformist CGT, and lead them in opposition to the policies of their official leaders. They must register all the trade-union members of the Party, supervise their activity, and transmit to them the Party's directives.

5.) Communist work in all trade unions, without exception, consists first of all in struggling to re-establish trade-union unity, which is essential to the victory of the proletariat. Communists must utilise every opportunity to indicate the harmful effects of the present split and to advocate unity. The Party must combat any tendency toward fragmentation of the organisation, craft or local particularism, or anarchist ideology. It must proclaim the need to centralise the movement, to form large organisations based on the branch of industry, and to unify strikes. In this way, it will replace localised actions, which are condemned in advance to failure, with common actions, which are effective in heightening the workers' confidence in their own strength.

In the CGTU, the Communists must combat the current that objects to affiliation of French trade unions to the Red International of Labour Unions. In the reformist CGT, they must expose the Amsterdam International and the leaders' activity in favour of class collaboration. In both the union confederations, they must call for common demonstrations and actions, common strikes, the united front, organic unity, and the complete programme of the Red International of Labour Unions.

6.) The Party must utilise every spontaneous or organised mass movement of a certain scope to highlight the political character of every class struggle. It must utilise every favourable opportunity to communicate its political slogans, regarding, for example, amnesty, annulling the Versailles Treaty, and evacuation of the occupation army from the Rhineland.

7.) The struggle against the Versailles Treaty and its consequences must take first place among the Party's concerns. The challenge is to achieve effective solidarity of the French and German proletariats against the bourgeoisie of both countries, both of which draw advantage from the Treaty. The French Party thus has the urgent duty of acquainting workers and soldiers with the tragic conditions of their German brothers, who are groaning under intolerable living conditions caused in the main by the peace treaty. The German government can satisfy the demands of the Allies only if it heaps even greater burdens on the working class. The French bourgeoisie spares its German counterpart, negotiating with it at the expense of the workers, assisting each of its efforts to take possession of publicly owned enterprises, and proffering aid and defence against the revolutionary movement.

The bourgeoisie of both countries are preparing to unite French iron with German coal and to come to agreement regarding the occupation of the Ruhr region, which will signify the subjugation of the Ruhr coal miners. This threatens not only the exploited of the Ruhr region but also the French workers, who are unable to compete with a German working class now placed at the disposal of French capitalists at a very low cost, thanks to the depreciation of the mark.

The Party must explain this situation to the French working class and warn it to be on guard against the danger immediately threatening it. The party press must constantly portray the suffering of the German proletariat, the real victim of the Versailles Treaty, and must show the impossibility of carrying out the Treaty. Special propaganda must be undertaken in the militarily occupied territories and in the devastated regions in order to hold both bourgeoisies responsible for all the sufferings imposed on these regions, and to develop feelings of solidarity between the workers of these two countries. The Communists must call for fraternisation of the French and German soldiers and workers on the left [west] bank of the Rhine. The Party must maintain intimate ties with its German sister party in order to ensure a favourable outcome of the struggle against the Versailles Treaty and its consequences. The Party must combat French imperialism not only in its policy toward Germany but in its policies around the world. In particular, it must attack the peace treaties of St. Germain, Neuilly, Trianon, and Sèvres.⁶⁸

68. Regarding the postwar 'peace' treaties, see p. 887, n. 7.

8.) The Party must carry out systematic work so that communism may penetrate the army. Anti-militarist propaganda must differ radically from hypocritical bourgeois pacifism, basing itself on the principle of arming the proletariat and disarming the bourgeoisie. The Communists must support the demands of the soldiers and the recognition of their political rights in party publications, in parliament, and whenever a favourable opportunity appears. Whenever a new levy is made for the draft, whenever there is a new danger of war, revolutionary anti-militarist agitation must be intensified. It must be led by a special party body in which Communist youth must participate.

9.) The Party must take up the cause of the colonial populations that are exploited and oppressed by French imperialism. It must support the national demands that bring them closer to liberation from the yoke of foreign capitalism, and fight for their right to unrestricted autonomy or independence. The Party's immediate task is to fight for unrestricted political and trade-union freedom for these peoples, against the drafting of natives to military service, and for the demands of the native soldiers. It must combat unrelentingly the reactionary tendencies found even among some workers, who wish to restrict the rights of the natives. It must establish a special body attached to the central committee devoted to Communist work in the colonies.

10.) Our propaganda among the peasantry aims to win over the majority of the agricultural workers, tenant farmers, and sharecroppers to the cause of revolution and gain the sympathy of the smallholders. It must be accompanied by a campaign for better living and working conditions for peasants who carry out wage labour or are dependent on the large landowners. Such a campaign demands that regional party organisations draw up and publicise programmes containing immediate demands adapted to the specific conditions of each individual district. The Party must promote agricultural associations, cooperatives, and trade unions that counter the peasants' individualism. It must devote special attention to creating and developing trade unions among the rural workers.

11.) Communist work among women is of outstanding importance and demands a special organisation. A central commission is needed, attached to the central committee, with a permanent secretariat, along with a constantly growing number of local commissions, and a publication devoted to propaganda among women. The Party must unify the economic demands of female and male workers. It must support equal pay for equal work, without distinction of gender, and the participation of exploited women in the campaigns and struggles of workers.

12.) The Party must devote far more methodical and emphatic activity to the development of Communist youth than has been the case in the past. Mutual relations must be established between the Party and the Communist

youth at all levels of organisation. In principle, the youth must be represented in all commissions functioning under the Central Committee. The regional and local party committees and party propagandists are obligated to help the existing youth organisations and to form new ones. The Central Committee must supervise the development of the youth publications and also make available a column for youth in the Party's official publication. The Party must take up the demands of worker youth in the trade unions that accord with its programme.

13.) In the cooperatives, the Communists must defend the principle of a unified national organisation. They must form Communist groups linked with the cooperative department of the Communist International through a commission reporting to the Central Committee. In every party federation,⁶⁹ a special commission must devote its attention to Communist work in the cooperatives. Communists must strive to utilise the cooperative movement as an auxiliary force of the workers' movement.

14.) Representatives of the Party elected to parliament and to municipal councils must conduct an energetic struggle closely linked to the struggles of the working class and with the campaigns being conducted outside parliament under the leadership of the Party and trade unions. In accordance with the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International,⁷⁰ Communist parliamentary deputies must be utilised to carry out agitation and propaganda under the supervision and leadership of the Party's Central Committee. The same is true of municipal and district councillors, under the supervision and leadership of the party sections and federations.

15.) In order to rise to the level of the tasks laid out in its programme and determined by national and international congresses and to carry out these tasks, the Party must follow the example of the large Communist parties of other countries and the rules of the Communist International in perfecting and strengthening its organisation. It must achieve strict centralisation, unshakable discipline, and unconditional subordination of each individual member to the responsible party unit and of each unit to higher bodies of the Party. It must urgently strengthen the Marxist education of party militants by systematically increasing the number of theoretical courses in the sections and by opening party schools, which will be supervised by a commission reporting to the Central Committee.

69. 'Federation' refers to a regional unit of the French CP; local units are termed 'sections'.

70. See 'Theses on Communist Parties and Parliamentarism', Riddell (ed.) 1991, 1, 470–9.

*Appendix 12***Theses on Communist Activity in the Trade Unions***I. The state of the trade-union movement*

1.) During the last two years, which have seen a general capitalist offensive, the trade-union movement lost considerable strength in all countries. With a few exceptions (Germany, Austria), the trade unions lost a large portion of their members. This decline was caused by the vigorous bourgeois offensive and, simultaneously, by the inability of the reformist unions to mount serious opposition to the capitalist attack and defend the most elementary interests of the workers.

2.) This capitalist offensive, combined with continued class collaboration, have more and more disillusioned the working masses. This explains both their attempts to create new organisations and also the dispersal of a large number of workers who are less class conscious and have left the unions. For many, the trade union is no longer attractive because it has not succeeded – and in many cases did not even try – to halt the capitalist attack and to defend positions already won. Events have graphically demonstrated the barrenness of reformism.

3.) The trade-union movement internationally is marked by internal instability. Significant groups of workers continue to leave it, while the reformists eagerly pursue their policy of collaboration, claiming to be ‘utilising capitalism to benefit the workers’. In reality, however, capitalism has constantly used the reformist organisations in its own interests, making them its accomplices in reducing the living standards of the masses. In the recent period, the bond between the governments and the reformist leaders has grown stronger, in pace with the growing subordination of the interests of the working class to those of the ruling layers.

II. The Amsterdam International's attack on revolutionary trade unions

4.) At the same moment that reformist leaders were yielding to bourgeois pressure all down the line, they began their attack on the revolutionary workers. They recognised that their unwillingness to organise resistance against capitalism had aroused deep anger among the working masses. Determined to cleanse their organisations of the seeds of revolution, they launched an organised attack on the revolutionary trade-union movement. Its goal was to undermine and demoralise the revolutionary minorities by every means at their disposal, thus strengthening the shaken rule of the bourgeoisie.

5.) In order to maintain their authority, the leaders of the Amsterdam International did not hesitate to expel not only individuals or groups but entire organisations. Under no conditions would the Amsterdamers consent to be placed in a minority. When threatened by revolutionary forces who support the RILU (Red International of Labour Unions) and the Communist International, they are determined to drive through a split, provided that they are able in the process to keep control of the administrative apparatus and material resources. That is what was done by leaders of the French CGT. The reformists in Czechoslovakia and the leaders of the German ADGB (General Federation of Trade Unions of Germany) are headed down the same road. The interests of the bourgeoisie demand splitting the trade-union movement.

6.) Simultaneously with the reformist attack on revolutionary workers in individual countries, the same offensive began on an international level. The international federations that support Amsterdam systematically expelled revolutionary federations on a national level or refused to admit them. This was done by international congresses of miners, textile workers, clerks, leather workers, wood workers, construction workers, and postal and telegraph workers, all of which refused to admit the revolutionary trade unions of Russia and other countries because they belonged to the RILU.

7.) This campaign by the Amsterdamers against the revolutionary trade unions is an expression of the campaign of international capitalism against the working class. It pursues the same goals: reinforcing the capitalist system at the expense of the working masses. Reformism is nearing its end. Through these expulsions and by driving out the militant working-class forces, it wants to weaken the working class as much as possible and render it incapable of winning power and taking over the means of production.

III. *The anarchists and communism*

8.) At the same time an 'offensive' quite similar to that of the Amsterdamers was launched by the anarchist wing of the workers' movement against the Communist International, the Communist parties, and Communist cells in the trade unions. A number of anarcho-syndicalist organisations proclaimed themselves openly to be enemies of the Communist International and the Russian Revolution, despite their solemn adherence to the Communist International in 1920 and their declarations of support for the Russian proletariat and the October Revolution. This was the case with the Italian syndicalists, the German 'localists',⁷¹ the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists, and various anarcho-syndicalist groups in France, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

71. Localists were members of locally organised craft unions, who rejected national federations and the accumulation of strike funds. After the November 1918 revolution,

9.) Certain syndicalist organisations (the National Workers' Secretariat of the Netherlands, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Italian Syndicalist Federation, and so on) expelled supporters of the RILU in general and Communists in particular. So the slogan of trade-union independence, which was once super-revolutionary, has become anti-Communist, that is, counter-revolutionary. It now matches that of the Amsterdam leaders, who carry out the same policy under the banner of independence, although, in their case, it is no longer a secret to anyone that they are completely dependent on the national and international bourgeoisie.

10.) The anarchist campaign against the Communist International, the RILU, and the Russian Revolution has resulted in division and confusion in their own ranks. The best working-class forces have protested against such ideas. Anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism have split into many groups and currents, which are conducting a bitter fight for or against the RILU, for or against proletarian dictatorship, for or against the Russian Revolution.

IV. *Neutrality and independence*

11.) The bourgeoisie's influence on the proletariat finds expression in the theory of neutrality: the trade unions must stick exclusively to purely craft and narrowly economic goals and not concern themselves with class objectives. Neutrality has always been a purely bourgeois teaching, against which revolutionary Marxism has waged a resolute struggle. Trade unions that do not adopt class objectives, that is, objectives aiming at the overthrow of the capitalist system, are – despite their proletarian composition – the best defenders of the bourgeois social order.

12.) This theory of neutrality has always relied on the argument that the unions should concern themselves only with economic issues without getting involved in politics. The bourgeoisie always tends to divide politics from economics because it fully understands that if it can succeed in walling up the working class in the limits of its craft interests, no serious danger will threaten its rule.

13.) The same separation of economics from politics is also upheld by anarchist forces in the trade-union movement, who wish to divert the workers' movement away from a political course on the pretext that politics of any kind will be directed against the workers. Fundamentally, this theory is purely bourgeois. It is offered to the workers as representing trade-union independence, which is understood to mean the opposition of trade unions to the

they favoured a workers' council republic and formed the FAUD (Free Workers' Union of Germany), anarchist in orientation, which claimed 150,000 members. A wing of the FAUD joined the UHK, in which Communists held influence, in 1921.

Communist parties and a declaration of war against the Communist workers' movement – all in the name of the infamous independence and autonomy.

14.) This struggle against 'politics' and the political parties of the working class leads to a weakening of the workers' movement and workers' organisations, along with a campaign against communism, the concentrated expression of proletarian class consciousness. Independence in all its forms, whether anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist, is an anti-Communist teaching that must be resolutely opposed. For even in the best of cases, it leads to independence from Communism and antagonism between the trade unions and the Communist parties, if not to a bitter struggle of the unions against the Communist parties, communism, and social revolution.

15.) The theory of autonomy, as presented by the French, Italian, and Spanish anarcho-syndicalists, is essentially a slogan of anarchist struggle against Communism. Communists must carry out a determined campaign within the unions against this attempt to smuggle in anarchist theory under the banner of autonomy and to split the workers' movement into mutually hostile segments. This will delay and prevent the triumph of the working class.

V. *Syndicalism and Communism*

16.) The anarcho-syndicalists confuse trade unions ['syndicats'] with syndicalism by presenting their anarcho-syndicalist party as the only organisation that is truly revolutionary and capable of leading the actions of the proletariat through to their culmination. Although syndicalism represents an enormous advance over 'trade-unionism',⁷² it nonetheless includes numerous errors and negative sides that must be vigorously resisted.

17.) Communists cannot and should not give up, in the name of abstract anarcho-syndicalist principles, their right to organise cells in the trade unions, regardless of their orientation. No one can take this right away from them. Obviously, Communists active in the unions must link their activity with that of syndicalists who have learned from the lessons of war and revolution.

18.) Communists must take the initiative to form an alliance inside the unions with revolutionary workers of other currents. The current closest to communism is that of the syndicalist communists, who recognise the need for a proletarian dictatorship and defend the principle of a workers' state against the anarcho-syndicalists. But, in order to make unity in action possible, the

72. 'Trade-Unionismus' in the German original. The English expression was used in German and Russian to refer to the ideology that urged workers to limit themselves to a struggle for economic gains.

communists must be organised. Unorganised communists, acting as individuals, will not be capable of working together with anyone, whoever it may be, simply because they do not represent a serious force.

19.) Communists must vigorously and consistently defend their principles in combating the anti-Communist theories of independence and the separation of politics and economics, conceptions so harmful to the revolutionary advance of the working class. At the same time, Communists inside the unions, whatever their orientation, must endeavour to coordinate their activity, in the day-to-day struggle against reformism and anarcho-syndicalist shadow-boxing, with all revolutionary forces that are working for the overthrow of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

20.) In countries where there is a major syndicalist-revolutionary trade-union organisation (France), as a result of a number of historical factors, mistrust against the political parties still exists among some layers of revolutionary workers. Here, the Communists must reach agreement with the syndicalists, corresponding to the particular features of the country and the workers' movement in question, on forms and methods of common struggle and collaboration in all offensive and defensive campaigns against capitalism.

VI. *The struggle for trade-union unity*

21.) Despite the fierce persecution waged against the Communists by reformists of every country, the Communist International must continue with undiminished energy its struggle against a split in the trade unions. The reformists seek to bring about a split through expulsions. By systematically driving the best forces out of the unions, they hope that Communists will lose their heads, quit the unions, give up their carefully considered project of winning the unions from within, and come out for a split. But the reformists will not achieve this goal.

22.) A split of the trade-union movement, especially under current circumstances, poses a severe threat to the entire workers' movement. A split in the unions would throw the working class back many years, by enabling the bourgeois to readily eliminate even the most basic gains of the working class. Communists must urgently oppose a split in the unions by every means and with all the strength of their organisations. They must put an end to the criminal foolishness with which the reformists are fragmenting trade-union unity.

23.) In countries where two trade-union confederations exist side by side (Spain, France, Czechoslovakia, and so on), Communists must fight for the fusion of the two parallel organisations. Given that the goal is fusion of the divided unions, it makes no sense to pull individual Communists and

revolutionary workers out of the reformist unions in order to bring them into revolutionary unions. None of the reformist unions should be robbed of their Communist yeast. Effective work by Communists in both organisations is a precondition for restoration of the unity that has been lost.

24.) The preservation of trade-union unity and the restoration of unity where it has been destroyed is only possible if the Communists have an action programme for each country and each branch of industry. Day-to-day work and struggle provides a basis on which to gather the dispersed forces of the workers' movement. Where there has been a split in the unions, it creates the preconditions for organisational reunification. Every Communist must keep in mind that the split of the unions threatens not only the current gains of the working class but the social revolution itself. The attempts of reformists to split the unions must be nipped in the bud. But this can be achieved only through vigorous organisational and political work among the working masses.

VII. *The struggle against the expulsion of Communists*

25.) The expulsion of Communists has the goal of confusing the revolutionary movement by separating the leaders from the working masses. Communists therefore cannot limit themselves any more to the forms and methods of struggle they have employed in the past. The world's trade-union movement has reached a critical moment. The reformists' desire for a split has grown; our desire for unity of the unions has been confirmed by many events. In the future, Communists must show in practice the value they place on unity of the trade-union movement.

26.) As our enemies' drive toward split becomes more evident, we must emphasise more energetically the problem of unity of the trade-union movement. Not a single factory, mill, or workers' meeting should be overlooked: protest must be raised everywhere against the Amsterdam policies. The problem of splits in the unions must be placed before every unionist, not only when the split is imminent but when it is being prepared. The question of expelling Communists from the trade-union movement must be placed on the agenda of the entire union movement of all countries. The Communists are strong enough not to allow themselves to be strangled without a murmur. The working class must know who is for the split and who is for unity.

27.) The expulsion of Communists elected to posts by their union locals should not only arouse protests against the violation of the voters' desires, it must also lead to a determined and well-organised resistance. The expelled must not become dispersed. The most important task of the Communist party is to prevent the expelled forces from becoming dispersed. It must organise

unions of the expelled and make the main thrust of their political work their readmission into the unions.

28.) The struggle against expulsion is, in fact, a struggle for unity in the trade-union movement, and it must be waged with all measures that promote re-establishment of unity. The expelled should not remain isolated and cut off from the opposition as a whole and from the existing independent revolutionary organisations. The expelled groups should immediately join with the union opposition and the revolutionary organisations that exist in their country in order to carry out a common struggle against the expulsion and for united action in struggle against capitalism.

29.) Practical measures for the struggle can and should be elaborated and modified in accord with local conditions and circumstances. It is important that the Communist parties take a clear position against the split and do everything possible to halt the surge of expulsions, which has tangibly intensified as a result of the incipient fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. There is no universal and definitive method for combating expulsions. In this framework, all Communist parties can struggle with the means that seem to them the most appropriate in order to advance towards the goal: winning the trade unions and restoring trade-union unity.

30.) Communists should wage an energetic struggle against the expulsion of revolutionary trade unions from the international industrial federations. The Communist parties cannot and do not want to be idle spectators to the systematic expulsion of revolutionary trade unions simply because they are revolutionary. The international committees for factory propaganda, created by the RILU, must receive vigorous support from the Communist parties, such that all available revolutionary forces are committed for the goal of struggling to create unified international industrial federations.

This entire struggle must be conducted around the slogan of admitting all trade unions, whatever their orientation and political association, to one single industrial organisation.

Conclusion

31.) In pursuing its course toward winning the trade unions and in struggling against the reformists' policy of split, the Fourth Congress of the Communist International solemnly declares that, whenever the Amsterdamers do not take refuge in expulsions, whenever the Communists are given the opportunity to wage an ideological struggle for their beliefs inside the unions, they will work as disciplined members in the ranks of their union, standing in its front ranks in all clashes and conflicts with the bourgeoisie.

The Fourth Congress makes it the duty of every Communist party to do all in its power to prevent a split in the unions, and, where unity has been disrupted, to restore it, and to achieve the affiliation of the union movement in its country to the Red International of Labour Unions.

Chronology

1919

- 2–6 *March* – Founding Congress of Communist International in Moscow.

1920

- 13 *March* – Right-wing coup in Germany led by Wolfgang Kapp.
- 17 *March* – Workers' uprising and general strike topples Kapp régime.
- 19 *July*–7 *August* – Second Congress of Communist International.
- 1–7 *September* – Comintern holds First Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- 1–30 *September* – Metalworking factories across Italy are occupied by four hundred thousand workers.
- 12–17 *October* – USPD splits at Halle Congress; majority votes to join Comintern.
- 25–30 *December* – Tours Congress of French SP ends in formation by majority of French CP; minority ('Dissidents') splits, taking SP name.

1921

- 15–21 *January* – Livorno Congress of Italian SP end in split by minority, forming Italian CP.
- 16–30 *March* – During 'March Action', KPD tries unsuccessfully to mobilize German workers in revolutionary offensive against government.
- 22 *June* – Arditi del Popolo (People's Commandos) formed in Rome.
- 22 *June*–12 *July* – Third Congress of Communist International.
- 1 *July* – Foundation in Shanghai of Communist Party of China.
- 9 *July* – Opening of Second World Congress of Communist Youth International.

- 21 *July* – Moroccan rebels led by Abd El-Krim rout a Spanish army at Annual, Morocco, killing thousands of Spanish soldiers.

- 22–26 *August* – Congress of German CP in Jena accepts decisions of Third Comintern Congress.

- 18–24 *September* – Görlitz convention of the SPD adopts new, openly reformist programme.

- 12 *November*–6 *February* 1922 – Washington conference on Far Eastern issues and naval disarmament; Soviet Russia excluded.

- 6 *December* – British and Irish authorities sign treaty providing for establishment of Irish Free State.

- 18 *December* – ECCI adopts united-front tactic.

- 22–24 *December* – Paris congress of revolutionary unionists founds CGTU.

- 25–30 *December* – Marseilles convention of the French CP ends in recriminations over exclusion of Left representative from executive.

1922

- 4–13 *January* – Conference of Allied powers in Cannes suspends German reparations for six months because of inability to pay.

- 21 *January*–2 *February* – Comintern holds First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East in Moscow.

- 22–26 *January* – Congress of Czechoslovak Trade Union Association votes against affiliation to RILU.

- 1–7 *February* – Strike of eight hundred thousand railway workers in Germany.

- 24 *February*–4 *March* – First conference of Comintern Expanded Executive Committee.

- 28 February – Britain unilaterally ends its protectorate over Egypt, while continuing military occupation and dominant role in political life.
- 2–5 April – Conference of the Three Internationals held in Berlin.
- 10 April–19 May – Genoa Conference fails to find path to normalised relations with Soviet Russia.
- 16 April – Germany and Soviet Russia sign Rapallo Treaty, providing for normalised relations and increased cooperation.
- 23 May – Meeting of ‘Committee of Nine’, representing executives of Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Communist Internationals, ends in failure.
- 7–11 June – Second conference of Comintern Expanded Executive Committee.
- 18–19 June – Conference of Second International rejects further attempts to reach agreement with Comintern.
- 20 June – Beginning of Le Havre metalworkers strike, which lasts until 10 October.
- 24 June – Rightist assassination of German politician Walter Rathenau sparks wave of worker protest.
- 25 June–1 July – Revolutionary syndicalists favourable to Comintern win majority at Saint-Étienne convention of CGTU.
- 28 June – British Labour Party Edinburgh conference votes to bar affiliation by CP.
- 3–17 July – Plenum of Yugoslav CP Central Committee in Vienna.
- 1 August – Alliance of Italian unions calls anti-fascist general strike, which is crushed by fascist and government repression.
- 1–6 August – United front of workers’ forces defeat twenty thousand fascists in battle of Parma and hold fascists at bay in Bari.
- 26 August – Government troops fire on Le Havre strikers, killing three.
- 29 August – General strike called in protest against Le Havre killings fails.
- September – Chen Duxiu and other leading Chinese Communists join Kuomintang.
- 3 September – Bureau of Two-and-a-Half International abandons attempt to reach agreement with Comintern and opens unity discussions with Second International.
- 9 September – Turkish forces occupy İzmir (Smyrna), completing their reconquest of Anatolia except for Straits region.
- 24 September – USPD and SPD complete their fusion at the SPD’s Nuremberg Congress.
- 1–3 October – Majority at Italian SP congress in Rome votes for unity with Comintern.
- 4 October – Allied powers adopt Geneva protocol, stripping away autonomy of bankrupt Austrian régime.
- 15–20 October – Paris Congress of the French CP ends in deadlock.
- 22 October – Japanese troops withdraw from Vladivostok, ending last foreign military challenge to Soviet power in Russia.
- 22 October – Lloyd George forced to resign as British Prime Minister as result of Turkish victory in Chanak crisis; replaced by Bonar Law.
- 24 October – Mussolini launches fascist mobilisation, known as the ‘March on Rome’, aimed at taking power in Italy.
- 31 October – Mussolini assumes power as prime minister of Italy.
- 1 November – Turkish Grand National Assembly abolishes Ottoman Sultanate, inaugurating Republic of Turkey.
- 1–6 November – International Communist conference on cooperatives meets in Moscow.
- 5 November–5 December – Fourth Congress of Communist International in Petrograd and Moscow.
- 15 November – Conservatives win British national elections; CP elects first member of parliament.
- 15 November – Soviet Russia annexes the Far Eastern Republic.
- 20 November – Lausanne Conference convenes, seeking solution to crisis provoked by victory of Turkish independence struggle.

- 21 *November–2 December* – Second Congress of Red International of Labour Unions in Moscow.
- 22 *November* – Right-wing government headed by Wilhelm Cuno takes office in Germany.
- 24 *November* – Italian parliament votes dictatorial powers to Mussolini.
- 4–16 *December* – Third Congress of Communist Youth International in Moscow.
- 6 *December* – Proclamation of Irish Free State as dominion within British Empire.
- 10 *December* – Meeting of executives of Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals decide to fuse their organizations at a joint congress in May 1923.

- 10–15 *December* – Hague Conference convened by Amsterdam International considers measures to avert imperialist war.
- 25 *December* – Lenin, recovering from second stroke, dictates his 'Testament', defending rights of Soviet minority nationalities.
- 28 *December* – Belorussian, Transcaucasian, Russian, and Ukrainian soviet republics unite to form Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

1923

- 11 *January* – French, Belgian troops occupy Ruhr region, launching Germany into a year of social and political crisis.

Glossary

ADGB – General Federation of Trade Unions of Germany [Allgemeine Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund]; affiliate of Amsterdam International.

AFL – American Federation of Labor; affiliates included most US trade unions.

Amsterdam International – refers to the International Federation of Trade unions, founded in 1913, and refounded in 1919 by Social-Democratic trade-union leaders, with headquarters in Amsterdam.

Amsterdammers – leaders of the International Federation of Trade Unions.

Anarchism – doctrine and movement favouring replacement of political and state authority by a self-regulated society of individuals and freely formed groups.

Arditi del Popolo [People's Commandos] – united anti-Fascist workers' defence organisation in Italy; founded June 1921.

Avanti! [*Forward*] – main newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party.

Balkan Communist Federation – coordinating body for Communist parties of the Balkans; originated in 1915 as an alliance of anti-war Socialist parties.

Black Hundreds – rightist groups under Russian tsarism, which carried out attacks, with unofficial government approval, on Jewish communities and revolutionaries.

Bloc des gauches [Left Bloc] – parliamentary alliance of left-republican and reformist-socialist forces, formed in 1899. The Bloc dissolved in 1905, but the term remained in use to designate coalitions of that type.

Bolsheviks – originally the majority current ['Bolsheviki'] of the Russian

Social-Democratic Labour Party at its 1903 Congress; declared itself a separate party, the RSDLP [Bolsheviks], in 1912; took name Russian Communist Party [Bolsheviks] in 1918.

Brest-Litovsk, Peace of – treaty between Soviet Russia, Germany, Turkey, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria, signed 3 March 1918 and effectively annulled by the surrender of Germany and its allies later that year.

Bund – General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland, and Russia, formed 1897; majority in Russia joined Russian CP in 1920.

Cadets – Constitutional-Democratic Party; Russian bourgeois party calling for democratic reforms under tsarism; opposed October Revolution; main leaders in exile from 1918.

Capitulations – agreements granting foreign governments legal jurisdiction over their nationals travelling in the Ottoman Empire and some other Eastern states.

CC – Central Committee.

Centrists – socialists who waver between revolutionary and reformist positions, unwilling to embrace a revolutionary course.

CGL – General Confederation of Labour [Confederazione generale del lavoro]; formed in Italy 1906; allied with Socialist Party until late 1922; suppressed under Fascism.

CGT – General Confederation of Labour [Confédération générale du travail]; founded in France 1895; initially syndicalist in orientation; leadership followed reformist course from 1914; revolutionary wing driven out in 1921.

CGTU – Unitary General Confederation of Labour [Confédération générale du

- travail unitaire]; founded in France 1922 by revolutionary unionists driven out of CGT; affiliated to RILU 1923.
- Chanak** [Çanakkale] – town and military fortress on Asian side of Turkish straits, garrisoned by British army after War until October 1920.
- Clause 9** – clause in Comintern Statutes defining powers of the ECCI and specifying its authority to ‘demand of its member parties the expulsion of groups or individuals that breach international discipline’.
- CNT** – National Confederation of Labour [Confederación nacional del trabajo]; founded in Spain 1910; generally anarchist in orientation.
- Comintern** – Communist International.
- Communist International** – Comintern journal published by the ECCI in English, French, German, and Russian.
- Communist Workers’ Party of Germany** [KAPD] – formed April 1920 by left-wing split-off from German CP; sympathising member of Comintern 1920–1.
- Communist Working Group** [KAG] – formed 1921 by Paul Levi and other expelled members of KPD; most adherents fused into USPD early in 1922.
- Conference of the Three Internationals** – meeting of executive committee representatives from the Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union [Two-and-a-Half International], held in Berlin, 2–5 April 1922.
- CP** – Communist Party.
- CPCz** – Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.
- CWM** – Communist Womens’ Movement.
- CYI** – Communist Youth International.
- Dessiatin** – Russian unit of measure; roughly 1.1 hectare or 2.7 acres.
- Dissidents** – minority in French SP who refused to join Comintern and split away, preserving the formal name of the SP: French Section of the Workers’ International [SFIO].
- ECCI** – Executive Committee of the Communist International.
- Emancipation of Labour Group** – first Russian Marxist group, formed in 1883; leaders went on to found Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.
- Entente** – alliance of Britain, France and Russia before and during World War I; term was used loosely of Allied powers led by Britain and France during and after the War.
- Erfurt Programme** – programme adopted by the SPD of Germany at its 1891 congress in Erfurt.
- Expanded Executive Committee** – meeting of the ECCI expanded to include delegates from the sections; two major conferences took place in 1922.
- February Revolution** – uprising in Petrograd 23–27 February 1917 (according to calendar then used in Russia) that overthrew tsarism and led to creation both of a provisional government and a Russia-wide structure of workers’, soldiers’, and peasants’ soviets.
- Federation of Manual and Intellectual Workers** [Union der Hand- und Kopf-arbeiter, UHK] – formed September 1921; united revolutionary workers outside ADGB; included both Communists and non-Communists; merged into ADGB 1925.
- Freemasonry** – a secret fraternal order associated with the ideology of bourgeois liberalism; originated in masons’ guilds of the Middle Ages; gained influence across Europe in the eighteenth century and after.
- Freiheit** [Freedom] – central daily newspaper of the USPD, published November 1918–September 1922.
- Genoa Conference** – convened 10 April–19 May 1922 with Soviet participation in unsuccessful effort to promote economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe and normalised relations with Soviet Russia.
- Guild socialism** – a proposal for worker self-government of industry through national worker-controlled guilds.
- Halle Congress** – congress of the USPD held 12–17 October 1920, at which a majority of delegates voted to affiliate with the Communist International.
- Independents** – members of the USPD [Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany].
- Imprecorr** – *International Press Correspondence*, the Comintern’s English-language international newsletter,

- published several times a week from October 1921.
- Inprekorr** – *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, the Comintern's German-language international newsletter, published several times a week from September 1921.
- International Labour Office** – founded in 1919 as an agency of the League of Nations concerned with labour conditions; now the International Labour Organisation, a United-Nations agency.
- Internationale, Die** – theoretical magazine of the KPD.
- IWW** – Industrial Workers of the World; a syndicalist trade union operating in several countries.
- KAG** – see Communist Working Group.
- KAP** – Communist term for an ultraleft party similar to the KAPD.
- KAPD** – see Communist Workers' Party of Germany.
- Kapp Putsch** – a right-wing military coup in Germany launched on 13 March 1920; led by Wolfgang Kapp; rapidly defeated by a general strike and armed workers' resistance.
- Kemalism** – movement and ideology of the Turkish struggle for national independence, led by Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk].
- KPD** – Communist Party of Germany.
- Kuomintang** [Guomindang] – Chinese bourgeois-nationalist party formed under leadership of Sun Yat-sen 1912; led a government in Guangdong seeking national unification June 1921–April 1922 and from February 1923; collaborated with Communists 1923–7.
- La Vie ouvrière** [*Workers' Life*] – French revolutionary-syndicalist publication founded by Pierre Monatte in 1909.
- Lausanne Conference** – Convened 20 November 1922 to resolve the crisis provoked by the victory of the Turkish independence movement.
- League for Defence of the Rights of Man and the Citizen** – French association formed in 1898 to defend individual rights against injustice; also an arena for discussion among forces in the French Republican Left.
- Left Bloc** – see Bloc des gauches.
- Liquidators** – a current in the RSDLP after 1906 that favoured 'liquidating' the habits of the underground party and instituting a new party régime that could take advantage of legal openings that its supporters believed to be emerging under tsarism; term was also applied in the US in 1922 to those who proposed that the CP function legally.
- Little Entente** – alliance of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania concluded in 1920–1.
- Livorno** – congress of the Italian Socialist Party, held 15–21 January 1921, at which majority refused to apply the Twenty-One Conditions for Comintern membership; minority then withdrew and founded Italian CP.
- Manchester school** – A school of economic thought in nineteenth-century Britain that upheld free trade, free competition, and laissez-faire policies.
- March Action** – a succession of workers' actions in Germany 16–30 March 1921 protesting police occupation of workers' strongholds in central Germany; the KPD tried unsuccessfully to broaden it into a national anti-government general strike.
- March Revolution** – another term for the revolution that took place in Russia 23–27 February 1917, by the calendar then used in Russia, or 8–12 March, by the calendar used in most other countries.
- Maximalists** – current led by Serrati in the Italian SP that stressed importance of 'maximum' demands in party programme relating to achievement of socialism; in 1921–2 favourable to Comintern but unwilling to apply Twenty-One Conditions.
- Mensheviks** – originally the minority ['Mensheviki'] of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party at its 1903 congress; opposed Russian October 1917 Revolution; subsequently in opposition to Soviet government.
- Mot Dag** [*Toward Dawn*] – publication of Norwegian Labour Party members that raised criticisms of party and Comintern policies.
- Mudanya** – town in Turkey on south shore of Sea of Marmara where British

- and Turkish representatives signed an agreement, on 11 October 1922, permitting Turkey to peacefully reoccupy the Straits region and Constantinople.
- National Pact** – a declaration by a congress of Turkish representatives, meeting in Ezerum July–August 1919, which demanded recovery of all Turkish territories then under Entente occupation.
- National Socialists** – in Fourth Congress, refers to the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, then led by Edvard Beneš, a left bourgeois-nationalist party enjoying significant working-class support.
- NEP** – see New Economic Policy.
- New Economic Policy** – series of measures introduced by Soviet Russian government beginning in March 1921; permitted peasants to sell surplus grain freely, restored private trade and small-scale private enterprise, and reined in expenditures of government departments.
- Norwegian Labour Party** – founded 1887; left wing won majority 1918; affiliated to Comintern 1919; majority left Comintern in 1923.
- November Revolution** – workers' and soldiers' uprising in Germany in early November 1918 that led to fall of monarchy on 9 November and establishment of provisional government composed of SPD and USPD. The same term was also sometimes used to refer to the 7 November 1917 [new style] uprising in Russia; see October Revolution.
- October Revolution** – workers' and soldiers' uprising in Petrograd [St. Petersburg] on 25 October 1917, by calendar then used in Russia, which transferred political power to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets that convened later that day.
- Open Letter** – appeal by the KPD to all other German workers' organisations on 8 January 1921, calling for united action for a list of immediate demands of workers' movement.
- L'Ordine nuovo** – Turin-based revolutionary newspaper launched in May 1919 by Gramsci, Tasca, Terracini, and Togliatti; became voice of movement for workers' councils; also name of left-wing current in Italian SP that joined in founding CP 1921.
- Orgesch** – Organisation Escherich, a right-wing militia founded by Georg Escherich and utilised in crushing of revolutionary workers' uprisings 1919; grew with official Bavarian sponsorship into mass organisation; banned 1921; its components continued to function into 1923.
- Paris Commune** – first revolutionary workers' government; ruled Paris 28 March–28 May 1871; its defeat was followed by massacre of more than 10,000 Paris workers.
- Parliamentarism** – participation by revolutionary socialists in bourgeois elections and parliaments; also, the policies utilised to promote this activity.
- Point 8** – one of the Twenty-One Conditions; demanded that Communists 'support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds'.
- Pood** – Russian measure of weight equivalent to 16.4 kilograms [36.1 pounds].
- Porte** – the Ottoman-Turkish government or its foreign ministry; named for a gate leading to Topkapi Palace in Constantinople.
- Profintern** – Russian short form for the Red International of Labour Unions.
- Radical Socialist Party** – the major left-bourgeois party of France.
- Rapallo Treaty** – signed by Soviet Russia and Germany on 16 April 1922; normalised relations and strengthened cooperation between the two governments.
- Red International of Labour Unions [RILU]** – association of revolutionary trade unions formed in 1921; initially a Comintern affiliate; in November 1922 the formal link was removed and replaced by a collaborative relationship.
- RILU** – see Red International of Labour Unions.
- Rote Fahne, Die** – founded by Luxemburg and Liebknecht November 1918; became main newspaper of the KPD.
- Rouble, Gold** – Russian currency, worth about US\$0.50 in 1922.
- RSDDL** – Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party; founded 1898; divided into Bolshevik and Menshevik wings 1903.
- Rue Lafayette** – site of the CGT headquarters in Paris.

Saint-Germain, Treaty of – signed by the victorious Allies of World War I and the republic of Austria on 10 September 1919. It declared dissolution of Austro-Hungarian Empire, transferred formerly Austrian territory to several countries, and imposed war reparations on Austria.

Scheidemanns – Communist term for reformist leaders of the SPD and their equivalents abroad, as exemplified by Philipp Scheidemann, who headed Germany's government during the decisive period of its war against the revolutionary workers' movement in 1919.

SDKPiL – Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania; founded 1893; best-known leader was Rosa Luxemburg; merged into Polish CP December 1918.

SDP – Social-Democratic Party of Germany; founded 1875; majority leadership backed German imperialist war effort 1914; left-wing oppositionists formed Spartacus League 1916 and USPD 1917; headed restabilisation of German capitalist rule after November 1918.

Second Congress – the Comintern's Second Congress took place in Moscow, July–August 1920; term is also used for Second Congress of Communist Youth International in July 1921.

Second International – founded 1889 as international association of workers' parties; collapsed at outbreak of World War I; procapitalist right wing reconstituted as Berne International 1919 and as Labour and Socialist International 1923.

Sèvres, Treaty of – signed 10 August 1920 between Ottoman Turkey and Allied victors of World War I; partitioned most of Ottoman Empire among the Allied powers; nullified by Turkish victory in war of independence 1922; replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne 1923.

Social patriots – Communist term for Social-Democratic and trade-union leaders who supported their capitalist rulers in the war effort of 1914–18 and their scramble for territory and wealth after the War.

Socialist-Revolutionary Party – frequently termed the 'Social-Revolutionary Party' in the Fourth World Congress proceedings; formed in 1901; supported by most peasant delegates to soviets 1917; left wing took part in Soviet government 1917–18; a minority of its members later joined Bolsheviks; right wing took up arms against soviet power, and twenty-two of its leaders were tried and convicted of terrorist conspiracy 1922.

SP – Socialist Party.

SPD – Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

Spartacus – revolutionary-socialist current in Germany headed by Luxemburg and Liebknecht 1914–18; with other forces, founded German CP December 1918.

Syndicalism – a branch of unionism advocating the overthrow of capitalism by purely industrial organisation and struggle; among leading syndicalist federations were the CGT and IWW; in French, 'syndicalisme' also signifies trade unionism in general.

Third Congress – the Third Congress of the Comintern was held in Moscow, June–July 1921. The Third Congress of the Communist Youth International took place there in December 1922.

Three Executives – refers to conference of executive-committee representatives from the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Communist Internationals held in Berlin 2–5 April 1922.

Three Internationals – see Conference of the Three Internationals.

Tours Congress – congress of French SP held 25–30 December 1920; voted by a 75 per cent majority to accept the Twenty-One Conditions and affiliate to the Comintern, giving birth to the CP of France; a minority ['Dissidents'] split away, preserving the name SP.

TUEL – Trade-Union Educational League, US affiliate of RILU.

Twenty-One Conditions – resolution adopted by the Second Comintern Congress on 6 August 1920, defining conditions for admission of new parties to the International and duties for its affiliates.

Two-and-a-Half International – Communist term for the International Working Group of Socialist Parties, or Vienna Union, an alliance of left-wing Social-Democratic parties formed 1921 that merged into Second International 1923.

UGT – General Union of Workers (Unión General de Trabajadores); Social-Democratic-led union federation in Spain; also termed ‘General Union’ in Fourth Congress proceedings.

UHK [Union der Hand- und Kopfarbeiter] – see Federation of Manual and Intellectual Workers.

Unionists – the Conservative and Unionist Party of Great Britain.

USPD – Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany; formed 1917 by left critics of SPD majority leadership; majority fused with CP December 1920; minority retained name until merger with SPD 1922.

USTICA – Union of Technicians in Industry, Commerce, and Agriculture, a French trade union of managers and highly skilled workers.

Versailles, Treaty of – peace treaty signed 28 June 1919 between Allied powers and Germany; was followed by the treaties of Saint-Germain (with Austria), Neuilly (with Bulgaria), Trianon (with Hungary), and Sèvres (with Ottoman Turkey).

Vienna International – see Two-and-a-Half International.

VKPD – United Communist Party of Germany; name of KPD from December 1920 to August 1921.

Vorwärts – main newspaper of the SPD.

Washington Conference – held by representatives of nine governments 12 November 1921–6 February 1922 to discuss naval disarmament and conflicting great-power interests in the Pacific; Soviet Russia was excluded.

Whites – refers to armies that fought against Soviet government in 1917–21 Russian Civil War, or, more generally, to counterrevolutionary forces.

White terror – the campaign of violence against civilians, especially workers and Jews, conducted by counterrevolutionary forces in the Russian Civil War, and – by extension – similar right-wing violence in other countries.

Workers’ Party of America – legal political party founded December 1921 by US CP, which was then functioning underground.

Yellow – term of abuse for pro-capitalist and pro-employer forces in workers’ movement.

Young Turks – reference to nationalist officers’ movement that led the Turkish constitutional revolution of 1908.

Zimmerwald Conference – first gathering of anti-war socialist currents during World War I, held in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, September 1915; its left wing, the Zimmerwald Left, was a precursor of the Comintern.

Biographical Notes

Abdul Hamid II [1842–1918] – sultan and autocrat of Ottoman Empire 1876–1909; forced from office after ‘Young Turk’ revolution 1908.

Acevedo, Isidoro [1867–1952] – Spanish typesetter, writer; joined Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party 1886; co-founder of Spanish CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; exiled in USSR after Spanish Civil War.

Adler, Friedrich [1879–1960] – physicist; colleague of Einstein in Zurich 1907; active in Austrian SDP; pacifist during War; jailed 1917–18; opposed Comintern; organiser and president of Two-and-a-Half International 1921–3; secretary of Second International 1923–39; in exile during Nazi occupation; settled in Switzerland 1947.

Ali Jauhar, Maulana Muhammad [1878–1931] – a leader of Muslims in struggle against British rule in India; joined Muslim League 1906; its president 1918; at first allied with Indian National Congress but broke with it in late 1920s; brother of Shaukat Ali.

Ali Pasha, Mehmed Emin [1815–71] – Ottoman diplomat and statesman; five times grand vizier 1852–71; a leader of Tanzimat administrative reform process.

Ali, Maulana Shaukat [1873–1938] – a leader of Muslims in struggle against British rule in India; took part in Indian National Congress Non-Cooperation Movement 1919–22; later broke with Congress and joined Muslim League; brother of Muhammad Ali Jauhar.

Andrews, William [1870–1950] – born in England; moved to South Africa 1893; miner and unionist; first chair of Labour Party 1909; left it to form anti-war International Socialist League 1915;

first general secretary of South African CP 1921; withdrew from leadership posts in CP 1925; expelled 1932; readmitted 1938; chair of CP during 1940s.

Antel, Sadrettin Celal [Orhan] [1890–1954] – educator; joined Istanbul Communist Group 1919; editor of their *Aydınlık* [Clarity] 1921; secretary of Turkish delegation at Fourth World Congress; sentenced to seven years of imprisonment 1925; left CP after his release eighteen months later; continued to write for progressive publications.

Armand, Inessa [1874–1920] – born in France; teacher; member RSDLP 1904; Bolshevik; in emigration from 1909; delegate to Zimmerwald Conference 1915; returned to Russia 1917; head of Bolshevik Women’s Department [Zhenotdel] from 1918; organised international Communist Women’s Conference 1920; died of cholera.

Asquith, Herbert [1852–1928] – British prime minister 1908–16; Liberal Party leader until 1926; supported first Labour government 1924.

Auclair, Adrien [1895–1948] – joined French SP youth 1912; a leader of SP youth tendency favouring affiliation to Comintern 1920; represented CP youth in party leadership 1921; supported Renoult tendency in CP; assigned to propaganda work 1922; rejected decisions of Fourth World Congress; expelled January 1923; rejoined SP; as municipal official, favoured acceptance of Vichy rule 1941; briefly arrested after Liberation.

Azzario, Isidoro [1884–1959] – railway worker; Socialist and union activist; a leader of Italian CP’s trade-union work from 1921; elected to Central Committee

- 1922 and 1926; Fourth World Congress delegate; forced in exile from 1926; member RILU Executive 1926; jailed in Panama during Latin American mission 1927 and in Italy 1928–40.
- Baldesi, Gino** [1879–1934] – self-educated worker; SP journalist; assistant secretary of Italian union federation [CGL] 1918; a leader of the reformist wing of Italian SP and trade unions; sought accommodation between CGL unions and Fascists; when this failed, withdrew from political activity 1927.
- Barberet** – French metalworker; member of CP 1921; signed Renoult statement ‘against united front with the [reformist] leaders’ November 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; nominated for CP leadership by Fourth World Congress.
- Bauer, Max** [1869–1929] – German officer, rightist politician, and arms merchant; a leader of Kapp Putsch against German Republic 1920; active in German military dealings with Soviet Union in framework of Rapallo Treaty 1923–4.
- Bauer, Otto** [1881–1938] – leader and theoretician of Austrian Social Democracy; originator of theory on national question criticised by Lenin; prisoner of war in Russia 1914–17; prominent leader of Party from 1918; opponent of Russian October Revolution and Comintern; forced into exile 1934; died in Paris.
- Baum, Else**: See Tennenboom, Edda.
- Beaconsfield**: see Disraeli, Benjamin.
- Bebel, August** [1840–1913] – turner; a founder of German socialist movement; collaborator of Marx and Engels; central leader of SPD from its foundation until his death; author of *Women and Socialism*; opposed revisionism in SPD but eventually moved toward centrist positions.
- Becker, Karl** [1894–1942] – typographer; member SPD 1912; joined International Communists of Germany [IKD] during War; member German CP January 1919; left CP with ultraleft current September 1919; rejoined March 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; member CC 1923; opposed Stalinist current in German CP and removed from leadership posts 1928; in exile from 1934; arrested in France and delivered to Nazis; executed.
- Bedacht, Max** [1883–1972] – born in Germany; barber, journalist; joined Swiss SP 1905; moved to US and joined SP 1908; supported its left wing during War; joined CP 1919; a leader of ‘Liquidator’ wing of CP that favoured functioning openly; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled for ‘leftism’ 1948, but later reinstated.
- Beneš, Edvard** [1884–1948] – member Czechoslovak National-Socialist Party; foreign minister 1918–35; prime minister September 1921–October 1922; president, 1935–8 and 1945–8.
- Bergson, Henri** [1859–1941] – French philosopher; developed a ‘process philosophy’ emphasising motion, change, and evolution.
- Bernstein, Eduard** [1850–1932] – German socialist; collaborator of Engels; leader of revisionist current in SPD from 1898; a leader of USPD during War; opponent of Comintern; returned to SPD December 1918; parliamentary deputy 1920–8.
- Béron, Émile** [1896–1966] – metalworker; union leader and SP member in Lorraine after War; founding member of French CP; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; expelled 1924; readmitted 1926; elected parliamentary deputy 1928; expelled again 1932; re-elected as independent left candidate 1932 and 1936; supported Popular Front 1936; voted powers to Pétain 1940; in underground under Vichy; withdrew from political activity after Liberation.
- Berthelot, Pierre-Eugène-Marcellin** [1827–1907] – French chemist and writer; secretary of French Academy of Sciences from 1889.
- Besnard, Pierre** [1886–1947] – railway worker; a leader of Paris railway unions 1920; general secretary of syndicalist opposition within CGT 1921; a leader of anarcho-syndicalist current within CGTU 1922 and of small syndicalist federation in 1930s; vice-president of pacifist grouping after Liberation.
- Bigot, Marthe** [1878–1962] – teacher; feminist and union activist; internationalist during War; co-founder of French CP;

member of its executive 1921–2; supporter of left current; Fourth World Congress delegate; supporter of Left Opposition led by Trotsky; left CP 1926; active in founding French Trotskyist movement and then as revolutionary syndicalist through 1940s.

Billings, Frank: see Huiswoud, Otto.

Birch, Minnie [b. 1900] – British industrial worker, then stenographer; arrested for speaking in Hyde Park 1917; founding member of British CP 1920; technical assistant to CP Committee on Organisation; wrote 'The Women's Movement', a report for CP, 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; delegate to Communist Youth International Congress in Moscow 1924; still in CP in 1930s.

Birkenhead: see Smith, F.E.

Bismarck, Otto von [1815–98] – German politician and writer; prime minister of Prussia from 1862; collaborated in crushing Paris Commune 1871; first chancellor of German Empire 1871–90; sponsor of anti-Socialist laws 1878–90.

Blacker, L.V. Stewart [1887–1964] – British army officer; served with British forces combating Red Army in Turkey 1918–20.

Blanc, Jules [1881–1960] – union activist; member French SP from about 1905; internationalist during War; favoured affiliation to Comintern; founding member of CP; opposed decisions of Fourth Congress; left CP and withdrew from political activity; re-emerged as leftist writer in 1930s.

Blum, Léon [1872–1950] – joined French Socialist Party 1904; led SP after its break with Communists in December 1920; premier of the Popular Front government 1936–7 and 1938; jailed by Vichy government 1940–5.

Bokanowski, Maurice [1879–1928] – French politician; leader of centre-right Action républicaine et sociale; minister 1924 and 1926–8.

Bolen, Václav [1887–1963] – agricultural worker; secretary general of Czechoslovak agricultural and forest workers' union 1921; member of Czechoslovak CP 1921 and its CC 1921–2; leader of its left-wing opposition 1922; expelled September 1922 but readmitted by

Fourth World Congress; Fourth World Congress consultative delegate; expelled as 'right opportunist' 1929; joined National Socialists under Beneš 1930; People's Socialist deputy 1946–8.

Bombacci, Nicola [1879–1945] – teacher; union activist from about 1900; jailed for stand against War 1918; member Italian SP, then CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled from CP for Fascist sympathies 1927; supported Mussolini from 1930s; became Mussolini's advisor near close of World War II; was captured and executed with Mussolini by partisans.

Bonaparte, Napoleon [1769–1821] – French revolutionary, general, and emperor.

Bonomi, Ivanoe [1873–1951] – Italian politician; expelled from SP for support of Libya War; minister of war 1920; prime minister July 1921–February 1922; left politics after Mussolini's triumph; headed anti-Fascist coalition after Mussolini's fall 1943; prime minister 1944–5.

Bordiga, Amadeo [1889–1970] – joined Italian SP 1910; led Communist-Abstentionist faction after War; head of CP from its formation in 1921 to 1926; opposed Comintern's united-front policy; Fourth World Congress delegate; member ECCI 1922–8; jailed with Gramsci 1926–30; defended Trotsky 1928; expelled 1930; led anti-Stalinist communist current until death.

Böttcher, Paul [1891–1975] – typographer; member SPD 1908; member CP 1920; lead editor of its Berlin daily 1921; alternate member ECCI 1922; minister in Saxony SPD-CP coalition government 1923; removed from leadership posts as 'rightist' 1924; expelled with 'rightist' Brandler current 1929; CC-member of Brandler's CP (Opposition); arrested briefly by Nazis 1933; took refuge in Switzerland; worked with pro-Soviet and anti-Nazi resistance; jailed in Switzerland 1944; returned to East Germany 1945; taken to USSR 1946 and jailed there for nine years; subsequently rejoined German CP.

Bouchez, Arthur [b. 1891] – French metalworker; active in anti-war wing of his

- union during War; member of CP from its formation 1920; supporter of Left current in CP 1922; member of party executive 1923–4; briefly head of metalworkers' union 1927; quit CP 1928, protesting sanctions against Trotsky and other Left Oppositionists and demanding freedom of discussion.
- Boudengha, Tahar** [also Boudemgha] – Tunisian postal worker; organised and led union branch from 1920; joined French CP in Tunisia 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; member of commission on blacks.
- Bradlaugh, Charles** [1833–91] – British radical writer and editor; founded National Secular Society; opponent of slavery; convicted 1877 for advocating birth control; four times excluded from House of Commons for refusing to take a religiously worded oath of office.
- Brailsford, Henry Noel** [1873–1958] – British left-wing journalist; joined Independent Labour Party 1907; wrote extensively on social struggles in Balkans; advocated negotiated peace during War; defended Soviet Russia in 1920s; spoke out against Stalin's show trials in 1930s.
- Brancón, Maurice** [1887–1956] – employed in Paris gas service; freemason; unionist from 1911; joined SP 1918; fired for strike activity 1920; supported affiliation to Comintern; elected to CP executive as representative of Centre October 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; voted against Fourth World Congress organisational resolution on France; after Fourth World Congress resigned from both masons and CP executive; remained CP member until after World War Two; jailed during Nazi occupation.
- Brandler, Heinrich** [1881–1967] – construction worker; joined SPD 1902; central figure in Chemnitz labour movement from 1914; early member of Spartacus League; co-founder of German CP; central leader of CP 1921–3; blamed for defeat of German workers in 1923; expelled as 'rightist' 1929; led Communist Party [Opposition] 1929–33; in exile 1933–49; active in Arbeiterpolitik [Workers' Politics], successor group of CP(O), from 1949.
- Branting, Karl Hjalmar** [1860–1925] – co-founder of Swedish SDP 1889; party leader 1907; headed Party's reformist wing; government minister 1917; opponent of Russian October Revolution; three times prime minister 1920–25.
- Briand, Aristide** [1862–1932] – French politician; member of SP until he accepted a ministerial post 1906; held office frequently as premier, including 1921–2.
- Bright, John** [1811–89] – British radical politician; campaigner for free trade and extension of the right to vote; vocal opponent of slavery; three times cabinet member 1868–82.
- Brizon, Pierre** [1878–1923] – teacher; member French SP from about 1900; parliamentary deputy 1910–19; opponent of colonialism and militarism; internationalist during War; joined CP 1920; spokesperson for its right wing and public critic of Comintern; expelled 19 October 1922; subsequently worked with Frossard and other former CP members in Socialist Communist Union.
- Buche, Philippe** [1796–1865] – born in Belgium; joined socialist movement inspired by Saint-Simon 1825; sought social progress through unity of working people in cooperatives; fought in French Revolution and chair of Constituent Assembly 1848; withdrew from radical activity under Napoleon III.
- Bukharin, Nikolai** [1888–1938] – joined Russian Bolsheviks 1906; in exile 1911–17; member Bolshevik CC 1917–30; one of central Bolshevik leaders within Comintern 1919–28; Fourth World Congress delegate; chairman of Comintern 1926–9; opposed Stalinist forced collectivisation and led Right Opposition in Soviet CP 1928; deprived of leadership posts 1929; executed after Stalin frame-up trial 1938.
- Bulak-Balakhovich, Stanislaw** [1883–1940] – Polish-Belorussian officer; fought first with Reds, and then with Whites and Polish government in Russian Civil War; led unsuccessful rising in Belarus 1920; active in anti-Nazi resistance 1939–40; killed by Nazis.
- Bulgakov, Sergei** [1871–1944] – leader of legal Marxists, who used Marxist

concepts to support development of capitalism in Russia 1897–1901; later an Orthodox church theologian; based in Paris from 1923.

Bullitt, William [1891–1967] – US diplomat; delegate to Paris Peace Conference 1918; sent by Wilson to parley with Bolshevik government Moscow 1919; recommended recognition, which Wilson rejected; film script editor during 1920s; first US ambassador to USSR 1933–6; ambassador to France 1936–40; fought with Free French under De Gaulle 1944–5.

Bunting, Sidney [1873–1936] – born in England; moved to South Africa 1900; lawyer; joined Labour Party 1910; joined anti-war International Socialist League 1915; advocated organising black workers; co-founder of CP 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; fell into disfavour over opposition to ‘native republic’ policy 1928; expelled 1931.

Burger, Václav [1859–1923] – right-wing politician in Czechoslovakia; minister of railways 1920–1.

Cachin, Marcel [1869–1958] – joined Guesde’s French Workers’ Party 1892; member French SP 1905; social patriot during War; with Frossard, leader of centre current in SP and, from 1920, in CP; director of *L’Humanité* 1918–58; Fourth World Congress delegate; supporter of Stalin-wing of Comintern; active in resistance to Nazi occupation.

Caillaux, Joseph [1863–1944] – French politician and government leader; jailed for seeking a negotiated end to the War 1917–20; re-entered government 1925.

Canellas, Antonio [1898–1936] – typographer; syndicalist; leader of textile workers’ strike in Rio de Janeiro 1919; co-founder of Brazilian Communist Party 1919; member CC of Brazilian CP 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; left CP 1923.

Carr, John: see Katterfeld, Ludwig.

Chabert, Charles [1818–90] – engraver; active in revolutionary movement under Napoleon III; participant in Paris Commune 1871; helped build cooperative movement in 1870s; joined

predecessor of French SP 1879; socialist municipal councillor from 1884.

Chambelland, Maurice [1901–66] – office employee; syndicalist and internationalist during War; member of French CP from its formation 1921; editorial secretary of Monatte’s *La Vie ouvrière* January 1922; dismissed for public criticism of CP centre current October 1922; expelled from CP for protesting against ‘Bolshevisation’ 1924; co-founder of the ‘syndicalist-communist’ *Révolution prolétarienne* 1925; continued revolutionary-syndicalist activity into 1960s.

Chamberlain, Austen [1863–1937] – British Conservative politician; frequent Cabinet member 1902–31; party leader 1921–2.

Charbit, Ferdinand [1892–1985] – born in Algeria; typographer; union activist in France from 1910; edited anti-war newspaper in Lyons during War; collaborator of Monatte’s *La Vie ouvrière* 1920; resigned from CP’s *L’Humanité* to become managing director of ‘syndicalist communist’ *La Révolution prolétarienne* 1925, a role he filled for a half century; took part briefly in Left Opposition led by Trotsky late 1920s; active as revolutionary syndicalist into 1970s.

Chen Duxiu [1879–1942] – took part in Chinese Revolution 1911; leader of revolutionary-nationalist May Fourth movement 1919; co-founder of Chinese CP and its first general secretary 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; deposed 1927; won to Trotsky’s views; expelled 1929; leader of Chinese pro-Trotsky Left Opposition 1929–41; jailed 1932–7.

Chesterton, G.K. [1874–1936] – British writer, conservative-minded social critic, and exponent of Christian theology.

Chicherin, Georgy [1872–1936] – joined RSDLP 1904; lived in exile 1905–17; Menshevik before 1914; internationalist during World War I; joined Bolsheviks on return to Russia 1918; Soviet foreign-affairs commissar 1918–30; negotiated Rapallo Treaty with Germany 1922.

Christen, E. – mechanic; supporter of left current in French CP; activist in

- metalworkers' union in Paris 1922; elected to party executive January 1923.
- Churchill, Winston** [1874–1965] – British politician, writer; prime minister 1940–45 and 1951–5; organiser of British intervention against Soviet government 1919–20; colonial secretary 1921–2; favoured armed resistance to Turkish independence struggle 1922; lost seat in November 1922 parliamentary elections.
- Clarke, John S.** [1885–1959] – circus trainer; socialist from about 1900; internationalist during War; editor of *Scottish Worker* 1918–22; represented Scottish Workers' Committee at Comintern congress 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; active in Independent Labour Party during 1920s; Labour Party councillor in Glasgow 1926–9 and 1941–51.
- Clavel, Louis** [1895–1975] – French unionist, teacher; active after War in CGT in Melun (Seine-et-Marne); founding member of CGTU and executive 1922; active in CP and unions through 1930s; took part in resistance to Nazi occupation; anti-war activist in 1950s.
- Clemenceau, Georges** [1841–1929] – French politician; premier 1906–9 and 1917–20; helped shape Versailles Treaty.
- Clynes, John Robert** [1868–1949] – textile worker; union organiser from 1886; member British Labour Party from its inception; member of parliament 1906–31, 1935–45; social chauvinist and minister during War; led Labour Party in 1922 elections; opposed British general strike 1926; as Home Secretary, 1929–31, refused visa to Trotsky; retired 1945.
- Cobden, Richard** [1804–65] – British radical politician; led struggle against Corn Laws 1839–46; opposed slavery and backed Union forces in US Civil War 1861–5.
- Colijn, Hendrikus** [1869–1944] – as Dutch army officer, took part in murderous conquest of Aceh in Dutch East Indies 1898–1904; after return to Netherlands in 1909, parliamentary deputy for Anti-Revolutionary Party 1908; minister of war 1911–13; managing director of Royal Dutch Shell and its predecessor 1914–22; five times prime minister 1925–6 and 1933–9; interned by Nazis 1941.
- Colombino, Emilio** [1884–1933] – metalworker; joined Italian SP before 1905; secretary of Turin metalworkers 1908; favoured union participation in industrial-production committees during War; part of Italian union delegation to Soviet Russia 1920; criticised Soviet government on his return; favoured collaboration with Fascist unions 1927.
- Colomer, André** [1886–1931] – anarchist with strongly individualist views from early age; antimilitarist in France during War; secretary of Paris theatrical union 1919; co-founder of CGTU 1922; broke with anarchism and joined CP 1927; died in Moscow.
- Colrat de Montrozier, Maurice** [1871–1954] – French bourgeois politician and journalist; founded League of the Middle Classes 1909; parliamentary deputy 1919–28; minister in Briand and Poincaré cabinets 1921–4.
- Connolly, James** [1870–1916] – born in Scotland of Irish parentage; moved to Ireland 1896; leader of Socialist Republican Party; in US 1902–10, was active in US IWW and Socialist Labor Party; worked again in Irish socialist and labour movements from 1910; co-founder Irish Citizen Army 1913; internationalist during War; leader of Easter Uprising 1916; executed by British authorities.
- Connolly, Roderic** [1901–80] – Irish revolutionary; took part in Easter Uprising led by his father, James Connolly, 1916; first chairman of Irish CP 1921; fought on Republican side in Irish Civil War 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; after Irish Communist organisation was dissolved 1927, joined Irish Labour Party; chair of Labour Party 1971–8.
- Cordier, Marcel** [b. 1895] – French hairdresser, unionist; initially sympathetic to anarchism; supporter of revolutionary wing of CGT after War; member French CP from 1921; supporter of its left current; member of CP executive 1923–5; leader of French wing of International Red Aid 1925–35; arrested in Moscow during Stalin purges and

- expelled from French CP 1938; released and repatriated to France 1939; opponent of Comintern policy toward War 1940.
- Cox, Percy** [1864–1937] – British officer and colonial administrator; held many posts in Middle East; high commissioner to Iraq 1920–23.
- Crispien, Artur** [1875–1946] – German socialist journalist; member SPD 1894; opponent of War; leader of USPD 1917–22; attended Second World Congress 1920 but opposed affiliation to Comintern; returned to SPD 1922; co-chairman to 1933; in Swiss exile from 1933.
- Cuno, Wilhelm** [1876–1933] – German shipping magnate; chancellor of Germany 22 November 1922–12 August 1923; headed so-called ‘economic government’, the first postwar régime without SPD participation; counselled ‘passive resistance’ to French takeover of Ruhr district 1923.
- Cunow, Heinrich** [1862–1936] – book-keeper; joined SPD c. 1890; an editor of SPD’s *Die Neue Zeit* 1898; social chauvinist during War; replaced Kautsky as director of *Neue Zeit* 1917; opponent of Russian October Revolution; professor at Berlin University 1919; persecuted by Nazis from 1933.
- Curzon, George Nathaniel** [1859–1925] – British politician; viceroy of India 1898–1905; foreign secretary 1919–24.
- Cvijić, Jovan** [1865–1927] – Serbian geographer and educator; professor at University of Belgrade from 1893; wrote widely on geography of Balkans.
- Czernin, Ottokar, Count** [1872–1932] – Czech aristocrat; conservative politician and diplomat; Austro-Hungarian foreign minister 1916–18; represented Austria at Brest-Litovsk negotiations 1918; member Austrian national assembly 1920–3.
- D’Annunzio, Gabriele** [1863–1938] – Italian writer and extreme nationalist; organised rightist seizure of Fiume [Rijeka] to block its annexation to Yugoslavia 1919; ruled Fiume 1919–20; later rallied to Italian Fascism.
- D’Aragona, Ludovico** [1876–1961] – joined Italian SP 1892; headed Italian union federation [CGL] 1918–25; SP parliamentary deputy 1919–24; headed trade-union delegation to Soviet Russia 1920; opposed founding CP 1920; quit SP and helped lead right-wing social-democratic party 1947; held ministerial posts 1946–51.
- Damon, David**: see Ruthenberg, Charles.
- Dan, Fyodor** [1871–1947] – member RSDLP 1903; a leader of Mensheviks; supported Provisional Government and continuation of War 1917; opposed October Revolution; in exile from 1921; died in U.S.
- Dange, Shripat Amrit** [1899–1991] – supporter of Indian independence movement from about 1920; published pamphlet comparing strategy of Lenin favourably with that of Gandhi 1921; recruited by M.N. Roy to communist movement 1922; jailed 1924–7; leader of Indian CP from its formation in India 1925; led pro-Moscow forces in split in CP 1964; steered CP toward alliance with Congress Party 1970s.
- Danton, Georges** [1759–94] – a leader of French Revolution; promoted overthrow of the monarchy and establishment of first French Republic.
- Daudet, Léon** [1868–1942] – French author; extreme nationalist and anti-Semite.
- Daugherty, Harry M.** [1860–1941] – lawyer, politician; campaign manager for Warren Harding in 1920 presidential election; named by Harding as attorney general 1920; obtained sweeping injunction against railroad workers 1922; forced to resign over charges of corruption 1924.
- David**: Probably Raymond David, delegate of French Communist Youth in CP executive from October 1922–3; supporter of left current; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed for antimilitarist activity during French occupation of Ruhr 1923.
- Delbrück, Hans** [1848–1929] – German military historian, who stressed links between warfare, economics, and politics; professor at Berlin University 1885; spokesperson for conservative forces favouring Weimar Republic.
- Delfosse, Henri** [1899–1974] – miner; union and socialist activist in Denain

- (Nord) after War; acting secretary of CGTU miners' union 1922; member of French CP; dissident in CGTU, calling for subordination of CP to trade unions 1923–4; expelled from CP as supporter of Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1927.
- Delory, Gustave** [1857–1925] – worker in diverse trades in France; co-founder of textile workers' union 1879; active in predecessor of French SP in Lille from 1879; founded socialist newspaper in Lille 1886; contributed to popularising the 'Internationale' as world socialist anthem; mayor of Lille 1896–1904, 1909–25; interned by German army during War; stayed with SP after formation of CP 1921.
- Delplanque, Constant** [1859–1935] – miner; member French SP from 1905; mayor of Sallaumines (Pas-de-Calais) 1912–25; joined CP 1921; supporter of Renoult current; Fourth World Congress delegate.
- Denikin, Anton** [1872–1947] – Russian general; led anti-Soviet forces in southern Russia 1918–20; emigrated to France 1920.
- Depoorter, Vital** [b. 1890] – French weaver, unionist; a leader of CGT, then CGTU in Tourcoing (Nord), France; supporter of left current in French CP; proposed at Fourth World Congress for CP executive but not confirmed by national council January 1923; signed letter to Comintern protesting against authoritarian régime in CP 1925.
- Diaz, Armando** [1861–1928] – Italian general; head of army general staff 1917; ennobled as 'Duke of Victory' 1921; minister of war under Mussolini 1922–4.
- Disraeli, Benjamin** [1804–81] – British politician and leader of Conservative Party; twice prime minister [1868, 1874–80]; supported Turkey diplomatically during Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8.
- Dissmann, Robert** [1878–1926] – lathe operator; member SPD 1897; on staff of German Metalworkers' union from 1900; critical of SPD vote for war credits 1914; joined USPD 1917; chair of metalworkers 1919; opposed USPD affiliation to Comintern 1920; rejoined SPD 1922.
- Dittmann, Wilhelm** [1874–1954] – cabinet maker; joined SPD 1894; Reichstag deputy 1912; opposed war credits 1915; co-founder USPD 1917; jailed for anti-war activity 1918; member of provisional government established by November 1918 revolution; Second World Congress delegate 1920; opposed affiliation to Third International 1920; in Swiss emigration 1933–51.
- Dombal, Thomas** [Tomasz Dąbal] [1890–1938] – leader of Polish peasants' movement; led a local revolutionary government in Tarnobrzeg 1918; joined CP 1920; jailed 1921; moved to Soviet Russia 1923; a founder of Peasant International 1923; arrested 1937; died in prison.
- Domski, Henryk** [Stein] [1883–1937] – journalist; member SDKPiL in Poland 1904; took part in Zimmerwald Conference 1915; member Polish CP and its CC 1918; supported Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1923–8; expelled from CP 1928; readmitted 1930; expelled again 1935; arrested in USSR during Stalin purges 1936; executed.
- Dondicol, Eugene** [1874–1933] – printer, bookkeeper; joined predecessor of French SP in Bordeaux 1893; elected to executive of unified SP 1905; member of CP and its CC 1921; a leader of Renoult current and opponent of united-front tactic 1922; rejected Fourth World Congress decisions and helped form independent 'Socialist-Communist' grouping 1923; withdrew from political activity in late 1920s.
- Doriot, Jacques** [1898–1945] – labourer; joined SP youth during War; joined French CP 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; head of CP youth 1923; jailed 1923–4; expelled from CP for advocating anti-fascist alliance with SP 1934; turned to fascism in 1934; active collaborator with Nazi occupation 1940; fought in German army 1943–4; killed in Germany by air attack.
- Dormoy, Pierre** [1876–1970] – municipal worker in Paris; joined socialist movement 1892; co-founder of public-sector union 1904; influenced by revolutionary syndicalism; co-founder of CP and alternate member of its executive 1921;

Fourth World Congress delegate; left CP 1923; returned to SP 1925; active in anti-Nazi resistance in Menton (Alpes-Maritimes), where he was Socialist mayor and councillor 1945–59.

Dubus, Arthur [1880–1965] – miner; unionist from 1893; member French SP from about 1905; co-founder of French CP in Pas-de-Calais department; its general secretary 1922–3; supporter of Renoult current; leader of miners' cell of CP through 1930s; broke with CP in protest against Stalin-Hitler pact 1939; rejoined after Liberation.

Dugoni, Enrico [1874–1945] – socialist from early 1890s; a leader of Italian SP and trade-union confederation; SP delegate to Kienthal anti-war conference 1916; in SP right wing after War; took part in labour/SP delegation to Soviet Russia 1920; opposed formation of CP 1920; victim of several Fascist attacks; left SP with Turati 1922; arrested for anti-Fascist activities 1930 and 1932.

Dunois, Amédée [1878–1945] – French anarchist writer; joined SP 1912; internationalist during War; supporter of Comintern 1920; member of CP and its executive from 1921; supporter of left current in CP; protested against expulsions of Trotsky supporters and 'Bolshevisation' 1925; quit CP 1927; rejoined SP 1930; active in resistance under Nazi occupation; arrested by Gestapo 1943 and 1944; died in concentration camp February 1945.

Dupilet, Jean-Baptiste [1880–1952] – miner at age 11 in Denain (Nord), France; union activist; member of SP 1905; founded Denain unit of CP 1921; treasurer of national miners' union 1922–9; alternate member of CP executive 1923; full member 1924–5; gave up union work but continued local CP activity in Pas-de-Calais and Nord regions; quit CP in protest against Stalin-Hitler pact 1939.

Duret, Jean [François Koral] [1900–71] – born in Poland; joined French CP as student in Paris 1921; supporter of Renoult current in CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; moved to Moscow after expulsion from France 1924; returned to France 1928; expelled from

CP 1932; wrote works on Marxism and socialist planning; retained membership in CGT until death.

Earsman, William [1884–1965] – born in Scotland; lathe operator; moved to Australia 1910; member SP 1911; leader of metalworkers' union 1915; influenced by IWW; co-founder with Garden of CP 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; refused readmission to Australia 1923; moved to England; left CP about 1927; joined British Labour Party 1934.

Eberlein, Hugo [1887–1941] – draftsman; member SPD 1906; internationalist and co-founder of Spartacus League during War; member German CP Central Committee 1918; initially opposed, then abstained on Comintern formation at its founding congress 1919; Fourth World Congress delegate; supported centre current of 'conciliators' 1924–8; stripped of leadership posts for opposing ultraleft turn 1928; fled Germany 1933; arrested in USSR during Stalin purges 1937; tortured and executed.

Edwards, Alfred S. [Sullivan] – Lettish Communist based in Boston; secretary of Socialist Propaganda League, a Boston-based revolutionary group in Socialist Party, during War; district organiser of Boston Communists c. 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate representing a small group committed to maintaining underground CP 1922; subsequently left CP and maintained an independent underground-communist group in Boston and Cleveland through 1920s.

Eiduk, Aleksandr [1886–1938] – Latvian socialist; joined RSDLP 1903; a leader of Soviet security police after 1917; Soviet representative to US agency providing relief during 1921 famine; executed during Stalin frame-up purges.

Einstein, Albert [1879–1955] – German-born physicist; originator of theory of relativity; also known as socialist and pacifist.

Engels, Frederick [1820–95] – lifelong collaborator of Karl Marx; co-author of Communist Manifesto 1848; a leader of revolutionary-democratic forces in 1848 German Revolution; lived in England 1842–4 and from 1849; political

- and theoretical leader of Marxist forces after death of Marx.
- Enver Pasha** [1881–1922] – Turkish general; a leader of ‘Young Turk’ revolution of 1908, government leader 1913–18; went to Moscow and declared solidarity with Soviet government 1920; joined anti-Soviet revolt in Central Asia 1921; killed in action.
- Escherich, Georg** [1870–1941] – forester and German right-wing politician; founder of Orgesch, one of the most powerful proto-fascist military organisations, 1920; after it was banned, 1921, his private military ventures continued until Nazis took power 1933.
- Ethem Nejad** [1887–1921] – educator; opponent of Ottoman autocracy; joined Turkish revolutionary group while living in Germany during War; joined Istanbul Communist Group after War; delegate to Baku Congress 1920; elected general secretary by founding congress of Turkish CP 1920; assassinated with other members of Mustafa Subhi group while attempting to re-enter Turkey January 1921.
- Fabre, Henri** [1876–1969] – French socialist journalist; launched anti-war daily *Le Journal du peuple* 1916; joined French CP, while expressing criticisms of Comintern through his newspaper; expelled from Comintern by ECCI March 1922; expulsion not ratified by French CP until October 1922; continued left-wing journalistic and political activity until death.
- Facta, Luigi** [1861–1930] – Italian politician; many times cabinet member 1903–22; last prime minister before Mussolini’s takeover, February–October 1922.
- Faisal ibn Husayn** [1883–1933] – born in Arabia; led Arab forces allied with Britain in War; named by British as king of Greater Syria 1920 and then of Iraq 1921–33.
- Faure, Ferdinand** [1880–1963] – clerk, café proprietor, printer; freemason; joined French socialist movement in Saint-Étienne [Loire] about 1900; initially hesitant toward Comintern, took part in formation of CP and was elected to its executive 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; rejected decisions of Fourth World Congress; expelled 1923; rejoined SP 1927.
- Feinstein, Wladyslaw** [Leder] [1880–1937] – joined SDKPiL in Poland 1900; member CP 1919; lived in Russia from 1921; worked in RILU apparatus 1921–4 and later in Soviet administration; died a victim of Stalin purges.
- Fiedler, Franciszek** [Keller] [1880–1956] – writer and historian; member SDKPiL 1905; took part in 1905–7 revolution; founding member Polish CP and its CC 1918; Fourth World Congress delegate; in exile from middle 1920s; active in Resistance in occupied France; returned to Poland 1945; taught and wrote into 1950s.
- Fischer, Ruth** [Elfriede Eisler] [1895–1961] – co-founder of Austrian CP 1918; moved to Berlin 1919; leader of ultra-left opposition in German CP; gained central leadership of CP 1924; alternate member ECCI 1924; ECCI intervention led to removal from German CP leadership 1925; supported United Opposition led by Trotsky and Zinoviev in Soviet CP 1926; expelled from German CP 1926; co-founder of oppositional-communist Leninbund 1928; collaborated with Trotsky 1933–6; in exile in France and US from 1933; condemned in absentia in Moscow frame-up trials; remained socialist until death.
- Forbes, Rosita** [1890–1967] – British traveller and writer; wrote extensively on travels in Middle East in 1920s.
- Foster, William Z.** [1881–1961] – factory worker, longshoreman, and seaman; member US-SP 1901–9; briefly joined IWW 1909; worked within AFL unions from 1910; led strike of 350,000 steelworkers 1919; headed Trade-Union Educational League in 1920s; joined Communist movement 1921; CP candidate for president 1924, 1928, 1932; supported Stalin course in Comintern; CP general secretary 1929–32 and from 1945.
- Friedländer, Paul** [1893–1941?] – joined Austrian SP youth 1916; co-founder Austrian CP 1918; member CC 1919; Fourth World Congress delegate; moved to Berlin 1926; emigrated to

France 1933; interned 1939; expelled from CP for opposition to Hitler-Stalin pact 1939; died in Auschwitz.

Friesland: see Reuter, Ernst.

Fromont, Louis-Émile [1886–1953] – automobile worker; secretary of French CP section in Bagnolet (Seine) 1921; supporter of Renoult current; nominated to CP executive by Fourth World Congress but not confirmed by CP national conference January 1923.

Frossard, Louis-Oscar [1889–1946] – teacher; member French SP 1905; pacifist during War; CP general secretary and leader of its centre current 1920–22; quit CP January 1923; led ‘Socialist-Communist’ formation, then member SP 1927–35; several times minister; voted dictatorial powers to Pétain 1940.

Fuad Pasha [1815–69] – Ottoman statesman; grand vizier 1860 and 1861; leader of Tanzimat administrative-reform process.

Galliffet, Gaston, Marquis de [1830–1909] – French general; commander in brutal suppression of Paris-Commune 1871; minister of war 1899–1900.

Gandhi, Mohandas [1869–1948] – central leader of movement for Indian independence; head of Indian National Congress from 1920; led mass campaigns of civil disobedience and non-cooperation with British authorities; called off mass civil disobedience 1922; jailed 1922–4; led ‘Quit India’ campaign against British rule during World War II; assassinated shortly after achievement of Indian and Pakistani independence 1947.

Garchery, Jean [1872–1957] – active in cooperative movement; joined French SP 1905; Paris city councillor 1919–33; co-founder of French CP 1921; supporter of centre current; member CP executive from December 1921; expelled for protesting against expulsion of other CP councillors 1929; co-founder of Worker-Peasant Party 1929; rejoined SP 1936; voted dictatorial powers to Pétain 1940; expelled from SP 1944.

Garden, John [1882–1968] – born in Scotland; sailmaker, clergyman; moved to

Australia 1904; joined Labour Party by 1909; a leader of New South Wales labour during War; co-founder with Earsman of Australian CP 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; elected to ECCI 1922; won readmission to Labour Party 1923; expelled from Labour Party 1924; quit CP and rejoined Labour Party 1926; left public life after fraud conviction 1948.

Garvey, Marcus [1887–1940] – born in Jamaica; founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914 to unite all blacks in an international freedom struggle; immigrated to US 1916; FBI sought his conviction and deportation from 1919; jailed 1925; deported from US 1927.

Garvin, James Louis [1868–1947] – British journalist; editor of *The Observer* 1908–42; opposed Versailles Treaty as too harsh against Germany.

Gennari, Egidio [1876–1942] – teacher; joined Italian SP 1897; a leader of its left wing; internationalist during War; SP political secretary 1920; co-founder of CP 1921; favoured fusion with SP 1922; elected to ECCI 1922; wounded several times by Fascists; forced into emigration 1926; carried out many Comintern assignments; died in USSR.

Geschke, Ottomar [1882–1957] – metal-worker; member of SPD 1910, USPD 1917, CP 1919; member ECCI 1924; supported CP’s left wing led by Ruth Fischer, later of Thälmann’s pro-Stalin current; removed from most leadership functions 1929; jailed by Nazis 1933–40, 1944–5; active again in CP 1945.

Geyer, Curt [1891–1967] – socialist journalist; leader of USPD from 1917; supported joining Comintern; member German CP Central Bureau and ECCI ‘small bureau’ 1920; opposed March Action with Levi 1921; expelled August 1921; member of Levi’s Communist Working Group; rejoined SPD 1922; exiled 1933; served on SPD executive in exile; left SPD 1941; settled in Britain.

Ghesquières, Henri [1863–1918] – worker; joined socialist movement at age seventeen in Nord region of France; became a leader of the Guesdist wing of French socialism; often elected as deputy and

- municipal councillor in Lille; spoke against CGT policies in parliament 2 December 1911; defended this speech at subsequent SP Lyons Congress 1912.
- Gide, Charles** [1847–1932] – Christian socialist; leader of the cooperative movement; author of *Principles of Political Economy* and other economic works.
- Giolitti, Giovanni** [1842–1928] – Italian politician; five times prime minister 1892–1921; tolerated the violent attacks by Fascist bands 1921 and initially supported Fascist régime 1922–4.
- Gladstone, William Ewart** [1809–98] – British politician; main leader of Liberal Party 1868–94; four-time prime minister; opposed Britain's diplomatic alignment with Turkey in 1870s.
- Goltz, Rüdiger von der** [1865–1946] – German general; led German forces fighting the revolutionary forces and local nationalists in Finland and the Baltic region 1918–19.
- Gompers, Samuel** [1850–1924] – president of American Federation of Labor 1886–1924 [except for 1895]; advocated collaboration with employers; favoured restriction of immigration; opposed industrial unionism; supported US entry into War; member of labour commission at Versailles Conference.
- González, César Rodríguez** – journalist; leader of Spanish SP after War; favoured affiliation to Comintern; member CP and its general secretary 1921–4; Fourth World Congress delegate; returned to SP 1924.
- Gorter, Herman** [1864–1927] – writer and poet; founder of Dutch left-wing Socialist publication *De Tribune*; internationalist during War; supporter of Zimmerwald Left; member Dutch CP 1918; criticised Comintern policies from ultraleft standpoint; member of KAPD and quit Comintern with it 1921.
- Gouraud, Henri** [1867–1946] – French general; headed French army in Syria 1919–23; led brutal suppression of popular uprising in Syria; military governor of Paris 1923–37.
- Gourdeaux, Henri** [1881–1961] – postal worker; joined French SP before War; internationalist during War; co-founder of CP 1921; supporter of centre current 1922; member of party executive/CC, with interruptions, 1921–47; member of CGTU executive 1922–35; a leader of anti-Nazi resistance; maintained ties with CP until death.
- Grable, Edward F.** – grand president of US Maintenance of Way Employees and Railway Shop Laborers 1920–2; kept union out of railway strike 1922; subsequently ousted as president by militant delegates at 1922 convention; appointed by President Harding to Railway Labor Board 1923.
- Gramsci, Antonio** [1891–1937] – joined Italian SP 1913; secretary of its Turin section 1917; co-founder of SP weekly *L'Ordine nuovo* 1919; advocate of workers' councils 1920–1; co-founder of CP 1921; represented Party in Moscow 1922–3; Fourth World Congress delegate; as advocate of united front against Fascism, headed CP 1924–6; objected to campaign against Trotsky 1926; jailed by Fascists 1926; wrote celebrated *Prison Notebooks*; sickened by prison conditions, he died shortly after release.
- Grassmann, Peter** [1873–1939] – typesetter; joined SPD 1893; supported reformist right wing; held leadership posts in printers' union from 1894 and German trade-union federation 1919–33; briefly arrested by Nazis 1933.
- Graziadei, Antonio** [1873–1953] – economist, member Italian SP 1893; initially reformist, but radicalised during War, supporting Maximalist current; co-founder of CP 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; attacked by Comintern leadership for expressing reservations regarding Marxist theory of value 1924; expelled for 'revisionism' 1928; readmitted to CP after fall of Fascism.
- Grepp, Kyrre** [1879–1922] – socialist activist in Norway from about 1902; elected to Labour Party leadership as representative of left wing 1912; with Tranmael, led Labour Party into Comintern; chair of Party 1918–22; member of ECCI 1919–22; died February 1922 of tuberculosis.
- Grepp, Rachel** [1879–1961] – Norwegian journalist; Fourth World Congress delegate representing majority in Labour

Party 1922; joined majority in withdrawing from Comintern 1923; member of parliament 1928–36 and of Oslo city council 1922–49; active in struggle for women's rights.

Grün, Anna [1889–1962] – pioneer in social work; co-founder of Austrian CP 1918; Fourth World Congress delegate; member Austrian CP political bureau 1924; forced into exile 1938; active in French anti-Nazi resistance; jailed 1944; active in Austrian CP after fall of Nazism.

Grün, Josef [1889–1969] – born in Vienna; journalist; socialist from early age; became Communist as war prisoner in Russia 1918; member Austrian CP 1919; represented it in Moscow 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; editor for Comintern's *Inprekorr* from 1923; jailed in France 1939–40; returned to Austria after Liberation.

Guesde, Jules [1845–1922] – veteran of Paris Commune; among France's first Marxists; leader of French Workers' Party, then Socialist Party from 1882; opponent of reformism until 1914; social patriot and minister during War; opposed Comintern.

Gumplowicz, Ludwig [1838–1909] – sociologist and philosopher; born in Kraków, Poland; professor in Graz, Austria, from 1875; defended rights of ethnic minorities; favoured social-welfare measures.

Hapsburgs – ruling dynasty of Austria, then of Austria-Hungary; overthrown 1918.

Harrington, John Lane [1865–1927] – British army officer and diplomat.

Hasrat Mohani, Maulana [1875–1951] – leader of Muslim League of British India from 1916; poet in Urdu language; first nationalist leader to proclaim goal of independence 1921; chair of Muslim League conference 1921; sought Muslim and Hindu autonomy in united India; lived in India after partition 1947.

Heckert, Fritz [1884–1936] – construction worker; member SPD 1902; member Spartacus League during War and German CP from foundation; member CC from 1920; defended March Action but

convinced otherwise at Third World Congress; member ECCI 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; briefly minister in Saxony government 1923; represented German CP in Moscow 1932–4; died in USSR before great Stalin purges.

Heiman, Julius [d. c. 1989] – active in Socialist Propaganda League, a precursor of US CP, 1915–19; prominent in US workers' economic aid to Soviet Russia; chief assistant to Rutgers in establishment of international cooperative in Kuzbas region of Russia 1922–6; active in Scottsboro boys' defence 1934; performed business services for Soviet government into the 1940s; named in House Un-American Activities Committee red-baiting report 1948.

Heine, Heinrich [1797–1856] – German poet and writer; lived in France from 1831; associate of utopian socialists; friend of Karl Marx; supporter of movement for German national freedom.

Heine, Maurice [1884–1940] – French writer; won to anticolonialism by youthful experiences in Algeria; campaigned in Paris for foundation of French CP 1919–20; led revolutionary-syndicalist current in Paris CP; an early defender of Sacco and Vanzetti; expelled from CP 1923; signed surrealist manifesto for independent revolutionary art 1938.

Henderson, Arthur [1863–1935] – iron moulder; organiser for British Iron Founders' union 1892; as union leader, favoured moderate course and avoidance of strikes; member Labour Party from its formation and of its right wing; three times party leader; social chauvinist during War; cabinet member 1924 and 1929–31.

Henriet, Arthur [1866–1954] – co-founder of anarchist group in Ardennes region 1893; active in French cooperative movement from 1895; became leader of socialist cooperatives; a leader of pro-Communist wing of cooperatives 1919–25; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; removed from leadership positions for signing protest against 'Bolshevisation' 1925.

Herriot, Édouard [1872–1957] – leading figure in French Radical Party; minister

in nine cabinets and three times premier; jailed by Nazis during occupation; president of French assembly 1947–54.

Hildenbrand, Karl [1864–1935] – typographer; activist in German printers' union; editor of SPD newspaper in Württemberg 1892–1902; parliamentary deputy for Stuttgart 1903–32; member SPD executive in early 1920s; jailed by Nazis for five months 1933.

Hilferding, Rudolf [1877–1941] – physician, economist, and Marxist theoretician; joined socialist movement as student 1893; based in Germany from 1906; published *Finance Capital*, containing theory of imperialism, in 1910; opposed SPD support of war credits after 1914; joined USPD 1918; opposed Comintern; rejoined SPD 1922; minister of finance 1923, 1928–9; forced into exile 1933; arrested by French Vichy régime 1941; tortured and killed by Hitler's Gestapo.

Hodges, Frank [1887–1947] – coal miner; union organiser 1912; secretary of miners' union 1918–23; member Sankey commission, which recommended nationalisation of coal 1919; shared responsibility for collapse of miners' strike 1921; advocated that miners work longer hours 1925; ultimately broke with labour movement and became successful businessman.

Hoelz, Max [1889–1933] – worker; joined USPD during War; joined German CP 1919; led workers' armed detachments in Saxony 1920–1; expelled from CP for indiscipline and joined KAPD 1920; jailed in frame-up for murder 1921; freed after appeal by Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann, Albert Einstein, and others 1928; rejoined CP; emigrated to USSR 1929; developed criticisms of Stalin régime; drowned under mysterious circumstances; later discovered to have been target of frame-up by Stalin's secret police.

Hoernle, Edwin [1883–1952] – poet, clergyman; left Church and joined SPD 1910; member Spartacus League during War, then CP; member CC 1921–4; member ECCI 1922; specialist on agrarian issues; dropped from CC as supporter of Brandler current 1924;

Reichstag deputy 1924–33; took refuge in USSR under Hitler; held posts in East Germany after 1945.

Höglund, Karl Zeth [1884–1956] – journalist; joined Swedish SDP 1904; campaigned for Norway's right to independence 1905; internationalist and supporter of Zimmerwald Left during War; supporter of Russian October Revolution; led Swedish Socialist Left into Comintern; elected to ECCI 1922; objected to Moscow control and left Comintern 1924; rejoined SDP 1926; mayor of Stockholm 1940–50.

Hohenzollern – ruling dynasty of Prussia and Germany; overthrown 1918; last ruling Hohenzollern was Wilhelm II [1859–1941], Emperor of Germany 1888–1918.

Horthy, Miklós [1868–1957] – headed army that fought Hungarian soviet government and, after its fall, imposed white terror 1919; regent and dictator of Hungary 1920–44.

Huiswoud, Otto [Billings] [1893–1961] – born in Suriname; printer; black liberation fighter; moved to New York 1910; joined US-SP 1918; co-founder of USCP 1919; Fourth World Congress delegate; met with Lenin; editor of *Negro Worker* and leader of American Negro Labor Congress; travelled widely on Comintern assignments; settled in Amsterdam 1949; took part in First International Congress of Black Writers and Artists with Alouine Diop, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, and Richard Wright 1956; member US-CP until death.

Humbert-Droz, Jules [1891–1971] – clergyman; internationalist during War; co-founder Swiss CP 1921; led Comintern work in Latin countries of Europe and Latin America; Fourth World Congress delegate; aligned with Bukharin in late 1920s; removed from Comintern posts 1928; in disfavour with Stalin leadership until 1935; leader of Swiss CP 1935–41; expelled 1943; central secretary Swiss SDP 1947–58; leader of dissident SP from 1959; in final years, supporter of Algerian freedom struggle and anti-war activist.

Husni El-Arabi, Mahmud – lawyer; co-founder Cairo-branch of Egyptian SP 1920, which became CP 1922; member

CC of CP from 1922; Fourth World Congress consultative delegate 1922; jailed during strike movement 1924; expelled from CP 1927; lived in Germany 1933–40; active in Union of the Peoples of the Nile Valley in 1940s.

Isakov, Nahim [1877–1932] – lawyer; joined revolutionary Tesniak wing of Bulgarian SDP 1903; member of Tesniak and Bulgarian CP Control Commission 1909–19, 1922–3; emigrated to Vienna 1924; elected to CC 1925; member secretariat of International Red Aid 1927–30; died in Moscow.

Jacob, Joseph [1896–1976] – joined French SP youth about 1910; secretary of textile workers' union in Troyes, France, 1920; leader of textile strike 1921; active in Russian famine relief 1921; elected to CGTU executive 1922; supporter of centre current in CP; attacked for supporting opposition in Russian CP 1927; opposed Comintern's ultraleft turn 1928; expelled for taking part in electoral alliance with SP 1932; joined pro-fascist party during Nazi occupation, for which he was jailed 1945.

Jansen: see Proost, Jan.

Jaurès, Jean [1859–1914] – central leader of French SP from its foundation 1905; advocated reformist positions; resisted imperialist war; assassinated at outbreak of War.

Jean, Renaud [also known as Renaud-Jean]: [1887–1961] – socialist and activist for peasant rights; director of French CP's work among peasants 1921–39; parliamentary deputy 1920–40; Fourth World Congress delegate; opposed to Comintern's ultraleft policies after 1928; opposed to Stalin-Hitler pact, he refused to publicly repudiate it and was jailed 1939; despite disagreements, stayed in CP until death.

Jílek, Bohumil [1892–1963] – leader in prewar SP; member Czechoslovak CP and its CC 1921; leader of its left opposition 1922; expelled September 1922 but readmitted by Fourth World Congress; Fourth World Congress consultative delegate; CP general secretary 1925; member ECCI 1928–9; expelled as 'rightist' 1929; joined Czech SP; emigrated to US 1948.

Johanssen, Karl [1874–1931] – initially active outside workers' movement; was judge in Congo; became lead writer on international affairs for Norwegian Labour Party *Social-Demokraten* but did not join Party; criticised stand of Comintern in Italian split, Soviet prosecution of Socialist-Revolutionary oppositionists, and other questions 1921–2; came under sharp criticism from Labour Party; expelled from Comintern by Fourth World Congress 1922; continued to write for Labour Party; early radio journalist.

Johnson, Thomas [1872–1963] – born in Liverpool; active in Belfast labour movement after 1902; secretary of Irish Trade Union Congress 1920–8; moderate supporter of Irish republicanism; accepted Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921; reformist leader of Irish Labour Party 1922–7; member of Irish Dáil [parliament] 1922–7; supported Labour Party until death.

Johnstone, Jack [1881–1942] – born in Scotland; welder, construction worker; joined SP in Canada 1903; joined IWW 1906; joined US-CP 1920; supporter of Foster wing of CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; leader of US Trade Union Educational League in 1920s; US representative in Red International of Labour Unions 1923–8; taught in Canadian CP school in 1930s.

Joss, William [1884–1966?] – born in Scotland; member of Independent Labour Party 1903–10; 1918–21; member of British CP 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; member CP organisation bureau 1926; backed Stalin's ultraleft turn 1928; member CC 1927–32; remained in CP until death.

Jouhaux, Léon [1879–1954] – French unionist; general secretary of CGT from 1909; social patriot during War; led split of CGT to prevent Communists from gaining control; supporter of Popular Front 1936; in concentration camp during Nazi occupation; broke with then Communist-led CGT and launched Force Ouvrière union federation 1948.

Kabakchiev, Khristo [1878–1940] – member Bulgarian SDP 1897; went with

- revolutionary Tesniak wing 1905; member Bulgarian CP and its CC from 1919; represented ECCI at Halle and Livorno Congresses 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed for three years after 1923 insurrection; lived in Moscow from 1926; lost leadership posts in Bulgarian CP and ECCI 1928; jailed during Stalin purges 1937–8.
- Kampffmeier, Paul** [1864–1945] – German poet, writer, political theorist; initially leaned toward anarchism, then joined SPD; active in ‘Garden City’ town-planning movement; director of SPD party archives 1921–33.
- Kaplan, Faina** [Fanny] [1890–1918] – Russian Socialist-Revolutionary; jailed 1906–17; wounded Lenin in assassination attempt 1918; executed.
- Kapp, Wolfgang** [1858–1922] – reactionary German politician; led briefly successful putsch against German Republic 1920.
- Kasparova, Varsenika** [1888–1941] – of Tatar origin; teacher; Left Communist after 1917; organiser of political commissars in Red Army 1920; elected to Comintern’s International Women’s Secretariat by Second and Third Conferences of Communist Women 1921 and 1924; Fourth World Congress delegate; head of its work among peoples of the East; head of women’s division of Comintern commission for the East; assigned to remain in Moscow when IWS moved to Berlin 1922; active in Left Opposition against Stalinism; jailed during Stalin frame-up purges; murdered in prison camp.
- Katayama, Sen** [1859–1933] – co-founder of Japanese SDP 1901; moved to US 1914; active in left wing of US-SP during War; founded Japanese-Communist group in New York 1919; represented Comintern in Mexico 1921; moved to Moscow 1922; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; member ECCI from 1922; continued activity in Comintern until death.
- Katterfeld, Ludwig** [Carr] [1881–1974] – born in Alsace, then part of Germany; member US-SP 1905 and its left wing during War; prominent leader of US Communist movement from its formation in 1919; represented it in Moscow for several periods; member ECCI 1921–4; a leader of ‘Goose Caucus’ calling for US CP to remain underground 1922; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; expelled from CP 1929.
- Kautsky, Karl** [1854–1938] – born in Prague; joined Austrian Social Democracy 1874; collaborator of Engels; co-founder and leading editor of SPD journal *Die Neue Zeit* 1883–1917; prominent Marxist theorist and opponent of revisionism until 1914; apologist for social chauvinism during War; joined USPD 1917; opponent of Russian October Revolution; rejoined SPD 1922; moved to Vienna 1924; fled Nazis 1938 and died in exile.
- Keim, Antoine** [Ker] [1886–1923] – teacher; won to socialism during War; joined French SP 1919; co-founder of CP and member of its executive 1921; responsible for party’s international relations; supported centre current; Fourth World Congress delegate; accepting Fourth World Congress decisions, resigned from freemasons and from leadership posts in Party.
- Keller**: see Fiedler, Franciszek.
- Kemal**: see Mustafa Kemal.
- Ker**: see Keim, Antoine.
- Kerensky, Alexander** [1881–1970] – Russian Socialist Revolutionary; prime minister of Russian Provisional Government July–November 1917; emigrated 1918.
- Kerošević, Juro** [b. 1900] – miner; participant in general strike of Bosnian miners 1920; for his role in strike was condemned to death February 1922; after international defence campaign, sentence commuted to twenty years imprisonment December 1922; released 1937; participant in anti-Nazi liberation struggle 1943.
- Khinchuk, L.M.** [1868–1944] – socialist from 1890; Menshevik 1903; chair of Moscow Soviet March–September 1917; joined Bolsheviks 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; held posts in Soviet administration of diplomacy, cooperatives, commerce.
- Kingissepp, Viktor** [1888–1922] – born in Estonia; joined Bolsheviks 1906; edited

Bolsheviks' Estonian-language newspaper; parliamentary deputy 1912–17; leader of underground Estonian CP from 1918; arrested by Estonian secret police in May 1922 and executed for treason.

Kitchlew, Saifuddin [1888–1963] – leader of the Muslim League of India from 1918; colleague of Gandhi in Indian National Congress; repeatedly arrested in 1930s; opposed partition of India 1947.

Klavs-Klavins: Latvian Communist; jailed and sentenced to death 1922. Could be either Aleksandrs Kļavs-Kļaviņš [1888–1937] or Augusts Kļavs-Kļaviņš [d. 1937], both of whom remained active in the Communist movement into the 1930s and were executed in the USSR during the Stalin frame-up purges. A. Klavs was elected to the soviet of Latvian Sharpshooters [Izkolastrel] December 1917.

Kobetsky, Mikhail [1881–1937] – member RSDLP 1903; Bolshevik; often arrested; in exile 1908–17; worked in Comintern apparatus 1919–24; elected to ECCI 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; worked in commissariat of foreign affairs from 1924; arrested and executed during Stalin frame-up purges.

Kobler, Aleksandar [1889–1974] – born in Slovenia; railway worker; joined Bosnian SDP 1907; member Yugoslav CP 1919; member CP's Slovenian regional committee 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; secretary of metalworkers' union 1922–4; jailed 1924; emigrated 1926; settled in USSR.

Kolarov, Vasil [1877–1950] – joined Bulgarian SDP in 1897 and its revolutionary Tesniak wing 1903; member of Tesniak CC 1905; represented it at Zimmerwald conference 1915; secretary of Bulgarian CP 1920–3; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; ECCI member from 1922; a leader of failed Bulgarian uprising 1923; president of Peasant International 1928–39; signed declaration dissolving Comintern 1943; returned to Bulgaria 1944; prime minister 1949–50.

Kolchak, Aleksandr [1874–1920] – tsarist admiral; head of White armies in Sibe-

ria and the Whites' 'supreme ruler' of Russia 1918–20; defeated by Red Army; captured and executed.

Kon, Feliks [1864–1941] – socialist from 1883; a leader of Polish SP left wing; jailed and exiled in eastern Siberia 1884–1904; joined Bolshevik Party 1918; member of pro-Soviet Polish provisional government during war 1920; active in Comintern leadership 1922–35; died during evacuation of Moscow.

König, Arthur [1881–1945] – factory worker; joined SPD 1904; member Spartacus League 1918; co-founder German CP; party chair in Essen 1920; active in Red Army in Ruhr district; represented party left wing in CC 1923; removed from leadership posts 1925; reportedly active in anti-Nazi resistance; shot by Nazis 1945.

Koren, Ludevít [1896–1958] – founding member Czechoslovak CP 1921; leader of Party in Bratislava 1922–6; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled 1927; took part in attempt to found independent CP; later member of Slovak independent SP; died in US.

Kornilov, Lavr [1870–1918] – Russian general; army commander-in-chief under Kerensky; led unsuccessful rightist attempt to overthrow provisional government August 1917; commander White forces in Don region from late 1917; killed by Soviet forces April 1918.

Kostrzewa, Wera [Maria Koszutska] [1876–1939] – teacher; joined Polish SP 1902; a leader of Polish Left SP; founding member of Polish CP 1918; member CC, with interruptions, 1918–29; Fourth World Congress delegate; ousted from leadership for opposition to Stalin's ultraleft policies 1929; in USSR from 1930; arrested during Stalin purges and died in prison.

Kowalski, Wladislaw [Ślusarski] [1883–1937] – member Polish SP from 1903; founding member Polish CP 1918; worked in Moscow from 1926; joined Soviet CP 1928; arrested during Stalin purges 1934; died in prison.

Kreibich, Karel or Karl [1883–1966] – Social Democrat from 1902; supporter

- of Lenin's stand against War 1914; organiser of revolutionary Left in Sudetenland SP; member of Czechoslovak CP political bureau 1921-4, 1927-9; part of Comintern staff 1924-7 and 1929-33; moved to London 1938; worked with Beneš exile government during War; Czechoslovak ambassador to USSR 1950-2.
- Królikowski, Stefan** [1881-1937] – member Polish SP and later of its left wing from about 1900; member Polish CP 1918; Third World Congress delegate; condemned for 'factional' activity 1929; lived in USSR in 1930s; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.
- Krupskaya, Nadezhda** [1869-1939] – joined Marxist movement in Russia 1890; co-founder RSDLP 1898; Bolshevik; collaborator and wife of Lenin; leader in Soviet educational administration; target of insults by Stalin 1922-3; briefly supported United Opposition led by Trotsky and Zinoviev 1926; ostracised due to efforts to defend victims of Stalin purges in 1930s.
- Kucher, Joseph E.** – leader in early 1920s of a council of small independent unions in New York and New Jersey who had quit or been expelled from American Federation of Labor; member US CP; advocated CP support for building militant unions outside AFL; chosen as delegate by CP to present this view to Fourth and Fifth Comintern Congresses.
- Kudelli, Praskov'ia Frantsevna** [1859-1944] – member Russian Social Democracy from 1903; Bolshevik writer; often arrested under tsarism; co-editor *Rabotnitsa* [Woman Worker] 1914 and 1917-18.
- Kun, Béla** [1885-c. 1938] – Hungarian journalist; joined SP 1903; joined Bolsheviks while war prisoner in Russia; organised Hungarian CP 1918; head of Hungarian soviet government March-July 1919; forced into exile; lived in USSR from 1920; supported ultraleft 'theory of the offensive'; as ECCI emissary, contributed to defeat of German workers March 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; supported Stalin against left and right oppositions; arrested, tortured, and executed during Stalin purges.
- Kurella, Alfred** [1895-1975] – born in Germany; writer; joined Socialist Youth 1918; founding member CP; leader of Communist Youth International; based in Moscow from 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; remained in USSR with some interruptions until 1954; thereafter held cultural posts in East Germany.
- Kuusinen, Otto** [1881-1964] – member Finnish SP 1905; its chairman 1911-17; people's commissar in soviet government of Finland 1918; based in Russia from 1918; a founder of Finnish CP 1918; Fourth World Congress delegate; leading figure in Comintern until its dissolution 1943.
- La Bruyère**: probably Jean de La Bruyère [1645-96] – French essayist and moralist.
- Lafont, Ernest** [1879-1946] – French lawyer; socialist; freemason; joined French CP 1921; ECCI called for his expulsion 1922; expelled from CP for opposition to Fourth World Congress decisions January 1923; helped found independent socialist group 1923; rejoined SP 1928; split from SP to the right 1933; minister 1935-6.
- Lagardelle, Hubert** [1874-1958] – joined predecessor of French SP 1893; director of *Le Mouvement socialiste* 1899-1914; became revolutionary syndicalist; broke with socialist movement during War; joined fascist group 1926; minister of labour in pro-Nazi Vichy régime 1942-3; after Liberation, condemned to life imprisonment.
- Laguesse, Paul** [1893-1942] – teacher; member of French SP; founding member of CP 1921; lost teaching post for anti-war activity 1922; supporter of centre current; member of party executive 1922; responsible for international relations December 1922; no longer in party leadership from 1924; arrested and executed by German occupation authorities.
- Landler, Jenő** [1875-1928] – lawyer, journalist; joined Hungarian SP 1904;

became leader of railwaymen's union; member of the Hungarian soviet government and commander of its army 1919; emigrated 1919; led CP faction opposed to Béla Kun; carried out assignments for Comintern executive in 1920s, died in France.

Lansing; see Swabeck, Arne.

Laporte, Maurice [1901–87] – French metalworker, journalist; active in Socialist youth from 1919; advocated their immediate affiliation to Communist Youth International; general secretary of Socialist, then Communist youth 1920–3; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed for antimilitarist activity 1923; left Communist movement in mid-1920s; became much-publicised writer against Communism and Soviet Union, including during Nazi occupation; after Liberation, moved to Switzerland.

Larkin, James [1878–1947] – born in Liverpool of Irish family; docker; dock-union organiser from 1905; took up organising work in Ireland 1907; with James Connolly, formed Irish Labour Party 1912; led great wave of strikes in Dublin 1913–14; moved to US 1914; supporter of Russian October Revolution; jailed for Communist views 1920–3; returned to Ireland 1923 and led communist movement there in mid-1920s; elected to ECCI 1924; later rejoined Labour Party.

Lassalle, Ferdinand [1825–64] – participant in 1848–49 Revolution; founder and first president of General German Workers' Association 1863; campaigner for suffrage and workers rights; killed in duel; followers joined with Marxists to form Socialist German Workers' Party, predecessor of the SPD 1875.

Lauridan, Henri [1885–1963] – municipal employee in Tourcoing (Nord); member of French Radical Party; joined SP 1919; quickly became regional leader of SP; supported affiliation to Comintern; leader of revolutionary minority in regional CGT; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled from CP for 'suspicious relations' with local police chief 1923; joined pro-fascist group 1926;

supporter of Vichy during Nazi occupation; jailed after Liberation 1944–5; subsequently quit political activity.

Lavergne, Adrien [1896–1971] – teacher, unionist; member of CP National Council 1921; leader of far-left current in Paris CP 1922; soon left CP but continued union activity; played prominent role in resistance to Nazi-occupation; headed a teachers' union 1947–56.

Law, Bonar [1858–1923] – British Conservative politician; prime minister October 1922–May 1923; ministry was sustained in November 1922 elections; opposed French occupation of Ruhr January 1923.

Le Chatelier, Alfred [1855–1929] – French colonial official; professor of Muslim sociology.

Lebas, Jean [1878–1944] – member of French SP led by Guesde 1896; mayor of Roubaix [Nord] 1912–40; parliamentary deputy 1919–28, 1932–42; opposed affiliation to Comintern; minister of government 1936–8; active in resistance to Nazi occupation 1940; arrested 1941; died in concentration camp.

Leckie, Jack V. – chair of Scottish Communist Labour Party 1920; helped lead it into fusion that created British CP 1921; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; CP representative in Germany 1923–5; active in Workers' International Relief through 1929.

Ledebour, Georg [1850–1947] – teacher, journalist; joined SPD 1891; in SPD's left wing before 1914; opposed social chauvinism; co-chair of USPD 1919; opposed affiliation to Comintern 1920; refused to rejoin SPD 1922; led a small socialist group through 1920s; member of anti-Stalinist Socialist Workers' Party 1931; fled to Switzerland 1933; continued anti-Nazi and socialist activity until death.

Leder, Z: see Feinstein, Wladyslaw.

Legien, Carl [1861–1920] – German metalworker; joined SPD 1885; chairman of lathe operators' union 1887 and of confederation of pro-socialist unions 1890; supported government war effort 1914–18; as chairman of main German union federation, called general strike that defeated Kapp Putsch 1920.

Leiciague, Lucie [1879–1962] – joined French SP before War; member of Paris region SP executive 1920; supported affiliation to Comintern; member CP executive 1921–4; supported centre current; Fourth World Congress delegate; broke with CP 1928; rejoined SP; continued to write for Socialist press after World War II.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich [1870–1924] – born in Russia, Marxist theorist; central leader of Bolshevik party; called for new International 1914; organised Zimmerwald Left to fight for this goal 1915–17; leader of Russian October Revolution; chair of Soviet government 1917–24; founder and leader of Comintern; member Fourth World Congress Presidium.

Lespagnol, Robert [1900–1974] – journalist; activist in Paris CP in early 1920s; supported Renoult current; Fourth World Congress delegate; elected to CP executive January 1923; left CP during rise of Stalinism.

Level, Charles [1880–1963] – miner; socialist and union activist in Lens (Pas-de-Calais), France; partisan of affiliation to Comintern; supporter of Renoult tendency in French CP 1922; head of CGTU in Pas-de-Calais 1924–30; jailed by Vichy authorities 1940–4; local activist of CP until withdrawal from political activity 1947.

Levi, Paul [1883–1930] – lawyer; joined SPD 1909; supported its left wing; collaborator of Rosa Luxemburg; joined Spartacus group during War; co-founder of German CP 1918; chair of CP 1919–21; led struggle against ultra-leftism and for unification with revolutionary majority in USPD; expelled from CP for disloyalty as result of his public attacks on March Action and 'strategy of offensive'; founded Communist Working Group (KAG); rejoined SPD 1922; was a leader of its left wing until death.

Liebknecht, Karl [1871–1919] – German revolutionary socialist; first president Socialist Youth International 1907–10; first member of German parliament to vote against war credits December 1914; co-founder of Spartacus current;

founding leader of German CP December 1918; murdered by rightist officers during Berlin workers' uprising January 1919.

Likov, Aleksandr [1886–1954] – born in Lom, Bulgaria; studied law in Geneva; secretary of Bulgarian Communist youth 1920–1; editor of *Mladezh* [Youth]; parliamentary deputy 1921–3; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled from Bulgarian CP after September uprising 1923; lived in exile 1923–40; worked in foreign-affairs ministry from 1944.

Liu Renjing [Liu Jen-Ching; Lin Yen-Chin] [1899–1987] – represented Beijing group at Chinese CP founding congress 1921; general secretary of Socialist Youth League; Fourth World Congress delegate; joined Left Opposition led by Trotsky in late 1920s; visited Trotsky in Turkey 1929; helped organise Trotskyist group in China; arrested 1934; accepted Maoism after 1949.

Lloyd George, David [1863–1945] – British prime minister 1916–22; negotiated end of British war in Ireland 1921; favoured armed resistance to Turkey in Chanak Crisis 1922.

London, Jack [1876–1916] – labourer, writer; joined socialist movement 1896; won fame as novelist; wrote *The Iron Heel*, a vision of resistance to a capitalist tyranny, 1906.

London, Meyer [1871–1926] – born in Lithuania; moved to US 1891; lawyer; founding member US SP 1901; a leader of needle-trades unions; elected for SP to US congress 1914–18 and 1920–2; opposed US entry into War but subsequently supported war effort; opponent of Zionism.

Longuet, Jean [1876–1938] – lawyer; Karl Marx's son-in-law; leader of centrists in French SP during and after War; opposed affiliation to Comintern; remained with SP after majority joined Comintern 1920; parliamentary deputy 1914–19; 1932–6.

López y López, José – leader of anti-war SP youth in Madrid during War; took part in early discussions among Comintern supporters; stayed in SP when initial CP formed 1920; general

secretary of the Spanish federation of socialist youth; subsequently joined Comintern and was active in Communist Youth International 1921.

Loriot, Fernand [1870–1932] – teacher; joined French SP 1901; treasurer of teachers' union 1912; a leader of internationalist forces in France during War; secretary of Committee for the Third International in France; jailed 1920–1; withdrew from leadership 1922; opposed 'Bolshevisation' 1925–6; quit Party 1926; later collaborated with Left Opposition led by Trotsky.

Loucheur Louis [1872–1931] – French politician; owner of arms-making company; minister of armaments 1917–18; parliamentary deputy 1919–31; negotiated with Rathenau on reparations 1921; held various ministerial posts until death.

Louzon, Robert [1882–1976] – engineer; revolutionary syndicalist, then Communist; jailed for anticolonial activity in Tunisia 1922; member executive of CGTU; quit CP 1924; rejoined Monatte and syndicalists; jailed by French authorities for anti-war views 1940–4; continued syndicalist and anticolonial journalism until death.

Lozovsky, Solomon Abramovich [1878–1952] – joined RSDLP 1901; in exile 1909–17; active in French revolutionary labour movement during War; returned to Russia and joined Bolsheviks 1917; general secretary of RILU 1921–37; Fourth World Congress delegate; deputy minister of foreign affairs 1939–45; arrested during repression of Jewish writers 1949; shot in prison.

Lubersac, Guy Louis Jean, Marquis de [1878–1932] – French senator; president of Federation of Cooperative Societies of French Liberated Regions; organised reconstruction work in Soissons; represented French proprietors who had suffered war damage in negotiations with Hugo Stinnes 1922.

Ludendorff, Erich [1865–1937] – German general; shaped German military policy in latter years of War; subsequently a leader of reactionary and fascist political movements.

Lüttwitz, Walther von [1859–1942] – German baron and general; appointed by Social Democrats to lead crushing of workers' uprising in Berlin 1919; with Kapp, led briefly successful putsch against German Republic 1920.

Luxemburg, Rosa [1871–1919] – born in Poland; co-founder of SDKPiL 1893; later lived in Germany; led left wing against revisionist Right in SPD and, after 1910, against 'Marxist Centre' led by Kautsky; Marxist theorist and author of *The Accumulation of Capital* 1913; leader of Spartacus current during War; founding leader of German CP 1918; arrested and murdered during workers' uprising in Berlin January 1919.

Macavei, Mihail [1882–1965] – born in Romania; lawyer; member CP 1921; elected ECCI alternate 1922; continued political activity in 1930s; Romanian ambassador to Britain 1949.

MacDonald, Jack [1888–1941] – die-maker; prominent spokesperson for Toronto unions and SDP of Canada in postwar labour upsurge; vice-president of Independent Labor Party 1919; chairman of Canadian CP 1921–3 and national secretary 1923–9; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled for refusing to condemn Right Opposition 1931; joined International Left Opposition in Canada 1932.

MacDonald, Ramsay [1866–1937] – leader of British Labour Party 1911–14 and 1922–31; opposed British entry into the War 1914; opposed Bolshevik Revolution; prime minister 1924 and 1929–35; split from Labour Party 1931.

MacManus, Arthur [1892–1927] – metalworker; member of Socialist Labour Party in Britain; internationalist during War; leader of British shop-stewards' movement; member CC of British CP from its foundation 1920; party chairman 1920–2; member Comintern ECCI 1922–6; imprisoned for sedition 1925; died during visit to USSR and buried in Red Square.

Maeterlinck, Maurice [1862–1949] – Belgian symbolist poet, playwright, and essayist.

Maffi, Fabrizio [1868–1955] – joined SP in youth; parliamentary deputy from 1913; close to Maximalist current; stayed in SP after foundation of CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; supported SP's pro-Comintern current; joined CP 1924; close collaborator of Gramsci 1924–6; jailed 1926; active again in CP after fall of Fascism.

Makhno, Nestor [1889–1934] – Ukrainian anarchist; led peasant army in Russian Civil War from 1918; allied with Soviets 1919–20; came into conflict with them and was defeated 1920; emigrated 1921.

Malaka – see Tan Malaka.

Manner, Kullervo [1880–1939] – joined Finnish SP 1905; chairman of Party 1917–18; headed Finnish soviet government 1918; after its fall, lived in Russia; general secretary Finnish CP 1918–29; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed as Trotskyist 1935; died in prison, as did his wife, Hanna Malm.

Mannerheim, Carl Gustaf [1867–1951] – Finnish general and conservative politician; led White forces in crushing Bolshevik-led revolution in 1918; Finnish head of state 1918–19 and 1944–6.

Manuilsky, Dmitry [1883–1959] – member RSDLP 1903; emigrated 1907; co-editor with Trotsky of *Nashe slovo* in Paris during War; joined Bolsheviks 1917; participant in Russian October Revolution 1917; member of Ukrainian soviet government 1920–2; member Presidium ECCI from 1924 and its secretary from 1928 to Comintern dissolution 1943; theorist of Stalinism; continued to hold high posts in Ukraine until 1953.

Marabini, Andrea [b. 1892] – mechanic; joined Italian Socialist youth 1908, SP 1911; helped organise Zimmerwald Conference 1915; member CP 1921; led local united front against Fascism in Imola 1921–2; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; in exile from 1924; active in Comintern apparatus from 1929; returned to Italy 1945; CP deputy and senator after 1945.

Marchlewski, Julian [Karski] [1866–1925] – joined Polish Marxist group about 1888; founding member of Rus-

sian and Polish Social Democracy; active in SPD left wing before War; co-founder of Spartacus group during War; jailed 1916–18; headed Polish provisional revolutionary government during Polish-Soviet War 1920; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; chair of International Red Aid 1923–5.

Mariátegui, José Carlos [1894–1930] – Peruvian journalist, socialist from 1918; lived in Italy 1920–2; supporter of national-democratic APRA 1923–8; co-founder of SP, later renamed CP, 1928; its general secretary 1929; defended Trotsky against Stalinist slanders; partisan of rights of indigenous population and their contribution to Peruvian socialism.

Marrane, Georges [1888–1976] – mechanic; joined SP 1916; secretary of the CP's Seine federation; supporter of centre current; member Political Bureau October 1922; stayed in CP under Stalin; active in resistance to Nazi occupation; minister 1947; mayor of Ivry-sur-Seine 1925–40 and 1945–65.

Marshall: see Bedacht, Max.

Martens, Ludwig [1875–1948] – born to German family in Ukraine; joined Marxist movement about 1893; jailed 1896; deported 1899; subsequently lived in Britain and US; returned to Russia with Trotsky 1917; represented Soviet government in US 1919–21; founded society for technical aid to Soviet Russia; deported to Russia 1921; member of council on national economy; headed diesel research institute 1926–36; retired 1941.

Martov, Julius [1873–1923] – early member RSDLP; leader of Mensheviks from 1903; pacifist during War; in left wing of Mensheviks during 1917 revolution; opponent of October Revolution; left Russia 1920.

Marx, Karl [1818–83] – co-founder with Engels of modern communist workers' movement; leader of Communist League 1847–52; co-author of *Communist Manifesto*; editor of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848–49 German Revolution; central leader of International Working Men's Association (First Interna-

tional) 1864–76; published first volume of *Capital* 1867; defender of 1871 Paris Commune.

Marynko: see Štukelj, Ciril.

Masaryk, Tomáš [1850–1937] – Czech nationalist writer; led struggle to found Czechoslovak state; Czechoslovak president 1918–35.

Mayoux, François [1882–1967] – teacher, unionist; member French SP 1905–19; jailed for anti-war activity 1918–19; founding member of CP 1921; defended syndicalist views; expelled from CP 1922 and from CGTU 1929; wrote for anarchist publications into 1950s.

Mayoux, Marie [1878–1969] – teacher, unionist; member French SP 1905–19; organised anti-war activity in Tours 1915; briefly jailed for anti-war activity 1918; founding member of CP 1921; defended syndicalist views; expelled from CP 1922 and from CGTU 1929; wrote for anarchist publications into 1950s.

McKay, Claude [1890–1948] – Jamaican poet and writer; moved to US 1912; wrote for Socialist press; an inspirer of Harlem Renaissance generation of black writers; co-founder of African Blood Brotherhood, which merged into CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; lived mostly in Europe in 1920s; attacked by CP after return to US 1934; remained socialist and advocate of black liberation; in final years close to Catholic worker movement.

Melnichansky, Grigory Natanovich [1886–1937] – member RSDLP 1902; member of Moscow military-revolutionary committee in October 1917 Revolution; member Soviet Council of Labour and Defence 1918–20; subsequently worked in trade unions and on economic issues; arrested during Stalin purges; died in prison.

Menzhinskaia, Liudmila [1878–1933] – member RSDLP from 1904; member editorial board of *Rabotnitsa* [*Woman Worker*] 1914; after October Revolution, collaborator of Krupskaya in leadership of Soviet education.

Méric, Victor [1876–1933] – initially anarchist; antimilitarist; joined French

SP 1906; member of Committee for Third International; member of French CP executive 1921; led right-wing current hostile to Comintern discipline and united front; rejected Fourth World Congress decisions; expelled 1923; subsequently wrote for Frossard's paper, then for his own pacifist publication.

Merkulov, Spiridon Dionisevich [1870–1957] – tsarist government official in Vladivostok; supported Whites in Civil War in Russian Far East; chaired anti-Soviet régime in Priamur region 1921–2; was ousted by White generals and went into exile 1922; died in US.

Merrheim, Alphonse [1871–1925] – French syndicalist; leader of metalworkers' union; led internationalist current in CGT during War; supported anti-war Zimmerwald movement until 1917; then allied with reformist forces in CGT; forced by illness to withdraw from union activity 1923.

Meshcheriakov, V.N. [1885–1946] – member RSDLP from 1905; returned from exile and took part in Russian October Revolution 1917; a leader of commissariat of agriculture 1918, education 1922–8, and foreign affairs 1930–6.

Metternich, Klemens Wenzel von [1773–1859] – Austrian minister of foreign affairs 1809–48; notorious for use of repression and military suppression against liberal and nationalist movements; forced from office by 1848 Revolution.

Meyer, Ernst [1887–1930] – statistician, journalist; joined SPD 1908; leader of Spartacus League during War; founding member of CP 1918; member of its CC 1918–23 and 1926–9; party chair 1921–2; Fourth World Congress delegate; broke with Brandler to lead centre tendency of 'conciliators' 1924–9; removed from central leadership by left majority 1924; reintegrated 1926; removed again for opposing Comintern's ultraleft line 1929.

Meyer, Haakon [1896–1989] – a leader of Norwegian Labour Party and trade-union movement; Fourth World Congress delegate representing Labour

- Party majority 1922; prominent spokesperson for socialism between wars; favoured cooperation with Nazi occupiers 1940–5; jailed 1946–9; emigrated to Sweden.
- Meyer, Léon** [1868–1948] – French politician; mayor of Le Havre 1919–36; cultivated support from workers but opposed SP and CP; voted full powers to Pétain 1940, whose anti-Jewish laws deprived him of his posts and led to deportation to Nazi concentration camp 1944–5.
- Michalkowski**: see Warszawski, Adolf.
- Millerand, Alexandre** [1859–1943] – initially a leader of French SP; took ministerial post in bourgeois cabinet 1899 and then moved to right of bourgeois political spectrum; French premier 1920; president 1920–4.
- Milner, Alfred** [1854–1925] – British colonial administrator, politician; headed commission of inquiry into status of Egypt 1919–20; recommended its independence subject to treaty of alliance; retired 1921.
- Milyukov, Pavel** [1859–1943] – Russian politician and historian; leader of Cadet Party under tsar; as foreign minister under Provisional Government, favoured continuation of war March–May 1917; advised Whites in Civil War, then emigrated.
- Misiano, Francesco** [1884–1936] – joined Italian SP 1907; active in railway union; internationalist during War; met Lenin during Swiss exile 1916; jailed in Berlin for work with Spartacists 1919; worked with Bordiga to create CP in Italy; member of CP executive 1921; forced again into exile November 1921; leader of International Workers' Aid 1922–36; accused of Trotskyism 1935–6; died in Moscow.
- Mitchell, John** [1870–1919] – American coal miner; member Knights of Labor 1885–90; founding member United Mine Workers of America 1890; served as its president 1898–1908; co-founder National Civic Federation to promote labour employer collaboration 1900; published book *Organized Labor* 1903; withdrew from activity in labour movement 1913; chair of State Industrial Commission 1915–19.
- Monatte, Pierre** [1881–1960] – French revolutionary syndicalist; worked with Trotsky in internationalist opposition to War; joined CP 1923; expelled for opposing anti-Trotsky campaign 1924; active in resistance to Nazi occupation; editor of syndicalist *La Révolution prolétarienne* until death.
- Monmousseau, Gaston** [1883–1960] – railway worker; revolutionary syndicalist; general secretary CGTU 1922–32; joined CP 1925; jailed five times; active in resistance to Nazi occupation; supported Stalin course until death.
- Morgenthau, Henry** [1856–1946] – US capitalist, diplomat; ambassador to Ottoman Turkey 1913–16; took part as Mideast expert in Paris Peace Conference 1919; active in relief efforts for Middle East and Greece early 1920s.
- Morison, Theodore** [1863–1936] – British colonial official and officer; serving mainly in India, including in Muslim education; wrote extensively on British rule in India.
- Motte, Eugene** [1860–1932] – French capitalist; employed five thousand workers in textile mills of Roubaix; defeated Jules Guesde, long-time deputy for Roubaix, in parliamentary elections 1898; mayor of Roubaix 1902–12.
- Münzenberg, Willi** [1889–1940] – factory worker; active in socialist youth in Germany and (from 1910) Switzerland; secretary of anti-war Socialist Youth International 1915–19; co-founder German CP 1918; secretary of Communist Youth International 1919–21; leader of International Workers' Aid and of a vast communist cultural enterprise; Fourth World Congress delegate; opposed Stalin's ultraleft course 1932; refused to go to USSR during Stalin purges; expelled from CP 1937; organised anti-Stalinist communists in France 1939; victim of political assassination, probably Stalinist in character.
- Muna, Alois** [1886–1943] – tailor; joined Czech SDP 1903; a leader of Czech Communist group formed among prisoners of war in Russia; leader of Czechoslovak CP in Kladno from 1919; alternate member ECCI 1922; full member 1924; expelled as 'rightist' 1929; subsequently led 'Leninist Opposition'.

- Murphy, John Thomas** [1888–1966] – metalworker; leader of British shop-stewards' movement during War; member Socialist Labour Party 1917; member of British CP 1920 and its CC 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed 1925–6; CP representative in Moscow 1926–7; supported Stalin course in Comintern but turned against its ultraleftism 1931; expelled from CP 1932; joined Labour Party; secretary of Socialist League 1934–6; continued to write on socialism into 1950s.
- Mussolini, Benito** [1883–1945] – initially Socialist; editor of SP's *Avanti!* 1912; switched to chauvinist, pro-war position and was expelled from SP 1915; founded Fascist movement 1919; organised Fascist war against workers' movement; prime minister from October 31, 1922; became Europe's first Fascist dictator; executed by Resistance forces.
- Mustafa Kemal Pasha [Atatürk]** [1881–1938] – Turkish general; led independence struggle 1918–23; founder of Turkish Republic and its president, 1923–38.
- Mustafa Subhi** [Suphi] [1886–1921] – member Turkish socialist group from 1910; joined Bolsheviks during exile in Russia 1915; organised a Communist group among Turkish prisoners of war; elected president of Turkish CP at its congress in Baku 1920; returned to take part in Turkish independence war and was murdered by police with fourteen companions.
- Nansen, Fridtjof** [1861–1930] – Norwegian polar explorer, scientist, and humanitarian; led international Red Cross effort to raise funds for Russian famine relief 1921–22.
- Nejad, Ethem:** See Ethem Nejad.
- Neurath, Alois** [1886–1952] – engraver; joined Austrian SP 1909; active in Sudetenland; member Czechoslovak CP 1921; CC secretary 1922–6; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; member ECCI 1922–6; removed from leading posts as supporter of opposition led by Zinoviev and Trotsky 1926; expelled as Trotskyist 1929; joined Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1932; emigrated to Sweden 1948.
- Newbold, Walton** [1888–1943] – joined British Independent Labour Party 1910; pacifist during War; joined British CP and its CC 1921; first Communist elected to parliament 1922; elected alternate member ECCI 1922; quit CP and rejoined Labour Party 1924; split from Labour with Ramsay MacDonald and cut ties with socialist movement 1931.
- Nikbin, Karim** [c1892–1940] – born in northern Iran; journalist; educated in Moscow; joined Bolsheviks 1917; fought in revolution in Gilan 1920; member Iranian CP 1920; CC secretary 1921–7; Fourth World Congress delegate; ousted from leadership posts for 'factionalism' 1931; arrested during Stalin purges 1938; executed.
- Nin Pérez, Andrés** [1892–1937] – teacher and journalist; joined Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and CNT union federation 1917; secretary of CNT executive 1919; favoured affiliation to Comintern; based in Moscow 1921–30; worked in RILU leadership; supported Left Opposition led by Trotsky; expelled from Russian CP 1927; returned to Spain 1930; led Spanish Left Opposition into POUM (United Marxist Workers' Party) 1935; fought to defend Republic during Civil War; member Republican government of Catalonia; defended Trotsky against Moscow frame-up trials; arrested on basis of documents forged by Soviet secret police and shot.
- Nitti, Francesco** [1868–1953] – parliamentary deputy from 1904; Italian prime minister 1919–20; opponent of Fascism; lived many years in emigration; returned to Italy and political activity after fall of Fascism; senator 1948–53.
- Norris, Frank** [1870–1902] – American writer; his novels attacked injustice and social decay in US society.
- Noske, Gustav** [1868–1946] – leader of German Social-Democratic right wing; minister responsible for German armed forces 1919–20; organised violent suppression of workers' uprisings in Berlin and central Germany in early months of 1919; president of province of Hanover 1920–33; jailed by Nazis 1944–5.
- Novaković, Kosta** [Stanić] [1886–1939] – journalist; member Serbian SP 1906;

- co-founder of Yugoslav CP and member of its CC; supporter of minority faction in CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed 1924 and 1926; emigrated to USSR 1927; arrested during Stalin purges 1938; died in camps.
- Nowaczynski, Adolf** [1876–1944] – Polish writer; aligned with right-wing and anti-Semitic National Democracy Party; jailed by Nazis during World War II.
- Olsen, Halvard** [1886–1966] – chair of Norwegian metalworkers' federation 1919; expelled from Labour Party for voting against Labour Party candidate for union executive 1922; reinstated by Comintern Fourth World Congress 1922; co-founder CP 1923 but expelled next year; leader of Norwegian union federation 1925–34; rejoined Labour Party 1927; collaborated with Nazi occupiers 1940–5.
- Oppenheimer, Franz** [1864–1943] – German left-wing physician, sociologist and economist; emigrated in 1938 and took refuge in the USA.
- Orhan:** See Antel, Sadrettin Celal.
- Orlianges, Yvonne** [Clavel] [1894–1976] – teacher; active in revolutionary wing of CGT after War; founding member of CP 1920; elected to CGTU executive 1922; stayed with CP in Stalin era.
- Overstraeten, War [Eduard] van** [1891–1981] – painter, founding member Belgian CP; its general secretary and member ECCI 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed for opposing French/Belgian occupation of Ruhr 1923; led CC majority in opposing expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev 1927; expelled 1928; joined Left Opposition but soon withdrew from political activity.
- Owen, Robert** [1771–1858] – British capitalist and social reformer; utopian socialist; proponent of producer cooperatives.
- Palmerston, Henry John Temple, Viscount** [1784–1865] – British prime minister 1855–58 and 1859–65; sympathetic to South in US Civil War, in which Britain maintained formal neutrality.
- Päprow, Fritz** [1860–1934] – construction worker; union activist in Chemnitz, then Flensburg; member SPD by 1890; head of German construction workers' union 1913–27; helped organise collaboration with employers during War.
- Paquereaux, Marius** [1885–1943] – metalworker; socialist municipal councillor before War; Cachin's secretary 1918–24; joined CP 1921; secretary of its Seine-et-Oise federation; supported centre current; member of CP executive 1922–4; expelled from CP 1930; joined Party of Proletarian Unity; moved to right in late 1930s; active in collaborationist groups under Nazi occupation; assassinated, apparently by anti-Nazi Resistance fighters.
- Pauker, Ana** [1893–1960] – born in Romania; teacher; joined Romanian SDP 1915; leader of Romanian CP; forced into exile 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; returned to Romania and was jailed 1935; exiled in USSR 1941; returned to Romania 1944; a leader of postwar CP; foreign minister from 1947; opposed some Stalinist policies including forced collectivisation; purged as 'cosmopolitan' 1952.
- Pauker, Marcel** [1896–1938] – born in Bucharest; joined Romanian SP 1918; joined CP 1921; member of its leadership from 1921; jailed, escaped, and fled to USSR 1925; filled various roles in Comintern and Soviet administration; disciplined for independent views 1930; executed during Stalin purges.
- Pavlik, Jan** – Czechoslovak Communist and trade unionist; Fourth World Congress and RILU congress delegate, 1922; elected alternate to RILU executive bureau 1922.
- Pavlović, Pavle** [1888–1971] – joined Serbian SP 1905; union activist; co-founder of Yugoslav CP; in emigration 1921–3; supporter of CP minority faction; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed 1923–4; held legislative and union posts 1945–50.
- Péju, Élie** [1901–1969] – member French SP at early age; a leader of pro-Comintern current in Lyons region; supported left current in CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; signed letter of protest against 'Bolshevisation' 1925; expelled for opposition activity 1927; promi-

ment in resistance in Lyons under Nazi occupation.

Peluso, Edmondo [1882–1942] – born in Naples; active in socialist movement in Spain, Portugal, and Germany; represented Portugal at Kienthal anti-war conference 1916; active in Spartacus group; member of Italian CP 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed by Fascists 1925; took refuge in USSR 1927; arrested during Stalin purges 1938; executed.

Penelón, José Fernando [1890–1954] – Argentinian typographer; member of SP left wing during War; leader of graphical union in Argentina; director of *La Internacional* 1918; co-founder Argentinian CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; general secretary CP 1924; expelled 1928; subsequently led independent Communist party advocating united front of workers' parties.

Péri, Gabriel [1902–41] – member French SP youth 1917; supporter of affiliation to Comintern; secretary of CP youth in Marseilles region and nationally 1921; supporter of left current; represented French Communist Youth at Fourth World Congress; member CP executive 1924; leading CP journalist in 1930s; arrested for anti-Nazi activities before German invasion of Soviet Union; shot by Nazis.

Péricat, Raymond [1873–1958] – French construction worker; union activist; internationalist during War; partisan of affiliation to Comintern; member of French CP; took part in anti-Nazi resistance; retained links to construction workers' union and CP until death.

Petlyura, Simon [1879–1926] – a founder of Ukrainian SP 1905; headed anti-Soviet Ukrainian government 1918–19; allied with Poland in anti-Soviet war 1920; notorious for role in anti-Jewish pogroms; assassinated in Paris by anarchist in reprisal for killings of Jews.

Petrović: see Pavlović, Pavle.

Piatnitsky, Iosif [Osip] [1882–1939] – tailor; joined RSDLP 1898; emigrated from Russia 1902; Bolshevik; took part in 1905–7 and 1917 Revolutions; assigned to Comintern secretariat 1921; chief organiser of Comintern until 1937;

opposed Stalin-purges 1937; arrested and shot.

Pierpont, Arthur [1875–1932] – textile worker; joined predecessor of French SP in Tourcoing (Nord) 1894; secretary of its Tourcoing section; partisan of affiliation to Comintern; secretary of CP departmental federation 1921; supported centre current 1922; expelled 1929 for opposition to Stalin ultraleft course; joined dissident communist party.

Pilsudski, Józef [1867–1935] – a leader of Polish SP 1893–1916 and of fight for Polish independence; president of Poland 1918–22; launched war against Soviet Russia 1920; led coup d'état 1926; played leading role in Polish government 1926–35.

Pintos Pereyra, Francisco Ricardo [1880–1968] – member Uruguayan SP 1914; co-founder of CP; delegate at expanded ECCI and Fourth World Congress 1922; parliamentary deputy 1924; CP presidential candidate 1958; remained active in CP until death.

Plais, Louis [1869–1957] – co-founder of French telephone workers' union 1889; joined socialist movement 1903; joined CP 1921; supporter of centre current; nominated alternate member of CP executive at Fourth World Congress; not confirmed at January French CP convention.

Planchon, Gabriel – revolutionary syndicalist; member of French CP 1921; elected to CP national council October 1921; expelled from CP 1923; member of Socialist-Communist Union 1923–6; readmitted to CP 1926 and again expelled 1929.

Plekhanov, Georgy [1856–1918] – pioneer of Marxism in Russia; influential Marxist theorist; supported Mensheviks in 1903; took chauvinist position in War; opposed October Revolution 1917.

Pogány, József [John Pepper] [1886–1937] – Hungarian teacher and journalist; member Social-Democratic Party 1905; joined CP in March 1919 merger; member of soviet government 1919; emigrated 1919 to Vienna, then Moscow; became ECCI functionary; as ECCI envoy, helped instigate KPD's

- March Action 1921; became de facto leader of US Party 1922; held high posts in ECCI 1925–9; arrested and executed during Stalin frame-up purges.
- Poincaré, Raymond** [1860–1934] – French politician; president of France 1913–20; three times premier, including 1922–4; ordered army to seize Ruhr district to punish Germany for a default in war-reparations payments January 1923.
- Preobrazhensky, Yevgeny** [1886–1937] – Born in Russia; economist; joined RSDLP 1903; Bolshevik; alternate member CC 1917; full member 1920; headed CP committee on finances and led transition to New Economic Policy 1921; critic of Stalinist economic policy and a leader of Left Opposition in CP 1923–8; expelled 1927 and exiled to Siberia 1928; readmitted 1930; expelled again and arrested during Stalin frame-up purges 1933 and 1936; refused to confess and was shot.
- Próchniak, Edward** [1888–1937] – born in Poland; metalworker; joined SDKPiL 1903; many times arrested and deported under tsarism; joined Bolsheviks 1917; co-founder Polish CP 1918; Fourth World Congress delegate; member ECCI 1922; arrested and shot during Stalin-purges.
- Proost, Jan** [Jansen] [1882–1942] – artist; helped smuggle Marxist literature into Germany during War; founding member Dutch CP 1918; CP's representative in Moscow 1920–3; left CP with Wijnkoop/Van Ravesteijn group 1926; shot by Nazi-troops during occupation.
- Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph** [1809–65] – French revolutionary theorist and anarchist; friend, later opponent, of Karl Marx; jailed under Louis Napoléon 1849–52; his followers helped found First International 1864.
- Pullman, Joseph**: See Johnstone, Jack.
- Quinton, Augustin** [b. 1890] – metalworker; secretary of metalworkers' union in Calvados-region of Normandy 1919–21; supported left wing in CGT; criticised by Comintern for ties with anarchists June 1922; quit CGTU 1927 and soon withdrew from political activity.
- Radek, Karl** [1885–1939] – born in Austrian Poland; a leader in left wing of Polish and German workers' movement; internationalist, collaborator of Lenin and supporter of Zimmerwald-Left during War; joined Bolsheviks 1917; Bolshevik and Soviet emissary to Germany 1918–19; a central leader of Comintern; with Trotsky, a leader of Left Opposition in Russian CP and Comintern 1923–9; expelled and exiled 1927; capitulated 1929; Soviet journalist 1930–7; arrested 1939; killed by police agent in prison.
- Radić**: see Radovanović, Ljubomir.
- Radovanović, Ljubomir** [Radić] [1887–1964] – professor; member Yugoslav CP from 1919; elected to parliament 1920; emigrated to Austria 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; returned to Yugoslavia and held various leading posts in CP; expelled as 'rightist'.
- Rákosi, Mátyás** [1892–1971] – joined Hungarian SP 1910; became Communist while prisoner of war in Russia 1918; member of Hungarian soviet government 1919; forced into exile after its fall 1919; carried out missions for Comintern executive; Fourth World Congress delegate; captured during mission in Hungary and jailed 1925–40; head of Hungarian CP and a central leader of government 1945–56; organised Stalin purges in Hungary; ousted and exiled to Kirghizia 1956.
- Rakovsky, Christian** [1873–1941] – born in Bulgaria; driven into exile 1890; doctor; active in Socialist movement in several European countries; co-founder of Romanian SP; took part in Zimmerwald Conference 1915; joined Bolsheviks in Russia 1917; leader of Ukrainian soviet government 1919–23; Fourth World Congress delegate; with Trotsky, leader of Left Opposition in Russian CP 1923–34; expelled and exiled 1927; capitulated 1934; rearrested 1937; convicted with Bukharin in frame-up trial 1938; executed.
- Rappoport, Charles** [1865–1941] – born in Lithuania; joined Russian populist movement 1883; in exile from 1887; joined French socialist movement

1897; wrote for *Nashe Slovo* of Trotsky and Martov during War; supported Zimmerwald Left; favoured SP affiliation to Comintern; member French CP executive 1921–2; opposed ‘Bolshevisation’ of Party 1925–26; continued limited activity in CP until 1938, when he denounced Moscow frame-up trials and broke with Stalinism.

Rathenau, Walter [1867–1922] – German capitalist and political leader; organiser of Germany’s economy during War; minister of foreign affairs 1922; advocated collaboration with Entente powers but also negotiated Treaty of Rapallo with Soviet Russia; targeted as a Jew by right-wing hate groups; assassinated by right-wing terror organisation 24 June 1922.

Rauf Orbay, Huseyin [1881–1964] – Ottoman naval officer and minister; joined national uprising led by Mustafa Kemal; first prime minister of Turkish Republic August 1922.

Ravera, Camilla [1889–1988] – teacher; joined Italian SP 1918, CP 1921; writer for Gramsci’s *L’Ordine nuovo*; Fourth World Congress delegate; organised CP’s underground centre in first years of Fascist rule; candidate member of ECCI Presidium 1928; jailed by Fascists 1930–43; opposed Stalin–Hitler pact 1939; expelled for disagreements with CP’s war policy 1941; readmitted and elected to CC 1945.

Ravesteyn, Willem van [1876–1970] – Dutch journalist; member Dutch Social Democracy from 1900; co-founder of left-socialist *De Tribune* 1907; internationalist and supporter of Zimmerwald Left during War; founding member CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled 1926; withdrew from political activity 1927.

Refet Pasha [Bele] [1881–1963] – a leader of Turkish War of Independence 1919–22; government minister 1922; co-founder of Progressive Republican Party in opposition to Kemal Atatürk 1924; after its suppression, withdrew from political life 1926; active again as politician and diplomat from 1935.

Renaud Jean: see Jean, Renaud.

Renaudel, Pierre [1871–1935] – veterinarian; leader of right wing of French SP; social patriot during War; parliamentary deputy 1914–19, 1924–35; opposed SP affiliation to Comintern; led ‘neo-socialist’ split from SP 1933.

Renoult, Daniel [1880–1958] – proof-reader; member of French SP, then CP; led independent ‘centre-right’ current in Party 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed by republican government February 1940 and held in jail by Vichy régime until freed by anti-Nazi resistance July 1944; active in CP until death.

Repossi, Luigi [1882–1957] – lathe operator; member SP from about 1900; jailed for anti-war activity 1917; leader of Milan metalworkers after War; supported SP left wing; member of CP executive 1921; parliamentary deputy 1921; supported Bordiga current; jailed 1926–8; expelled from CP for opposing condemnation of Trotsky 1928; continued Communist activity; interned during war; joined SP after fall of Fascism.

Reşid Pasha, Mustafa [1800–1858] – Ottoman statesman and diplomat; six times grand vizier 1845–57; architect of Ottoman administrative reform known as Tanzimat.

Reuter, Ernst [Friesland] [1889–1953] – teacher; joined SPD 1912; won to Communism while prisoner of war in Russia; leader of pro-Soviet prisoners and of Volga German workers’ commune; member of German CP Central Bureau 1919; supported, then later opposed ultraleft March Action 1921; expelled January 1922; rejoined SPD; jailed by Nazis 1933, in emigration 1935–46; mayor of West Berlin 1948–53.

Rieu, Roger [1896–1936] – secretary of CP in Bordeaux region 1922; supporter of left current; Fourth World Congress delegate; member of the CP executive 1923–4 and CC 1925–6; left CP by 1931.

Rios, Fernando de los [1879–1949] – university teacher; joined Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party 1919; elected to its executive 1920; visited Soviet Russia 1920; opposed affiliation to Comintern; opposed Primo de Rivera dictatorship

- 1923–30; jailed 1930–1; minister 1931 and 1933; ambassador for Republic in Paris and New York during Civil War; taught in New York after fall of Republic.
- Roosevelt, Theodore** [1858–1919] – commanded US detachment in Cuba during Spanish-US War 1898; US president 1901–9.
- Rosenberg, Arthur** [1889–1943] – university teacher and historian; member USPD 1918; joined KPD 1920; supporter of left opposition led by Ruth Fischer; member ECCI Presidium 1924; Reichstag deputy 1924–8; quit KPD 1927; in Swiss, British, then US exile from 1933.
- Rosmer, Alfred** [1877–1964] – proof-reader; French revolutionary syndicalist; leader in France of internationalist opposition to War; member ECCI in Moscow 1920–1; leader of left current in French CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled for opposition to anti-Trotsky campaign 1924; organiser of pro-Trotsky Left Opposition 1929–31; broke with Trotsky 1931 but collaborated with him and with Movement for Fourth International after 1936.
- Rossbach, Gerhard** [1893–1967] – German officer; after 1918, led independent right-wing military unit based first in Latvia and then in rural Prussia; engaged in brutal suppression of workers' and peasants' struggles, with surreptitious aid from the German army; joined Nazis 1922; purged by Nazis from official posts for alleged homosexuality 1934.
- Rossoni, Edmundo** [1884–1965] – joined Italian SP about 1900; union activist; initially antimilitarist; backed Italy's entry in War 1914; joined Fascist movement; led Fascist trade unions from February 1922; later Fascist minister; opposed Mussolini 1943; convicted for collaboration with Fascism 1945; amnestied 1948.
- Roy, Manabendra Nath** [1887–1954] – active in Indian independence movement from 1910; emigrated 1915; won to Marxism in US 1917; co-founder of Mexican CP 1919; worked in Comintern Far Eastern Bureau and founded CP of India in exile in Tashkent 1920; member ECCI 1922–7; Comintern representative to China 1927; expelled for 'opportunism' 1929; worked with anti-Stalinist opposition led by Brandler; returned to India 1930; led current critical of Comintern sectarianism on national question; jailed 1931–6; joined Congress Party 1936; founded Radical Democratic Party 1940.
- Rozmirovich, Yelena** [1886–1953] – member of RSDLP 1904; member Bolshevik CC by 1913; took part in international socialist women's conference in Bern 1915; chair of investigating commission of Soviet supreme court 1918–22; held other leading posts through 1930s.
- Rudas, László** [1885–1950] – joined Hungarian SP about 1905; journalist; co-founder Hungarian CP and member of its CC 1918; in exile from 1919; teacher and writer in Moscow from 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; active in ECCI apparatus 1922; briefly arrested 1938 and 1941; headed party school in Hungary from 1945.
- Rupprecht von Bayern** [1869–1955] – Bavarian crown prince and general until 1918 Revolution; subsequently pretender to the Bavarian throne.
- Rutgers, Sebald Justinus** [1879–1961] – engineer; joined Dutch SP 1899; member left-socialist SDP from 1909; moved to US during War and joined SP Left; moved to Russia 1918; delegate to Comintern founding congress 1919; took part in left-communist Comintern bureau in Amsterdam 1920; Fourth World Congress delegate; headed international cooperative in Kuzbas, Siberia, 1922–6; returned to Netherlands at height of Stalin purges 1938; remained in CP until death.
- Ruthenberg, Charles E.** [1882–1927] – joined US SP 1909; editor of *Cleveland Socialist*; jailed for a year for anti-war statements 1918; national secretary US CP from 1919; jailed again 1920–2; Fourth World Congress delegate; alternate member ECCI 1922; full member 1924.
- Rybacki, Stefan** [1887–1937] – joined SDKPiL 1906; parliamentary deputy for Polish CP, arrested 1922; later emi-

- grated to USSR; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.
- Safarov, G.I.** [1891–1942] – Bolshevik from 1908; exiled, then returned to Russia with Lenin 1917; leader of Soviet and Comintern work among peoples of the East; defender of rights of national minorities; Fourth World Congress delegate; member ECCI 1922; supporter of Leningrad opposition led by Zinoviev 1925 and United Opposition led by Zinoviev and Trotsky 1926; expelled from CP 1927; readmitted 1928; re-expelled and arrested 1934; executed.
- Salandra, Antonio** [1853–1931] – Italian conservative politician; premier 1914–16; led Italy into War; supported Fascism during its rise to power.
- Salih Hacıoglu** [1880–1954] – army officer; co-founder of Turkish CP; jailed 1921; represented Party in Moscow 1922–3; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled from Turkish CP 1923; arrested in USSR during Stalin purges about 1938; died in Soviet concentration camp.
- Salles** – metalworker in Paris region; active in CP in Paris region and supporter of its left current; alternate member of CP executive 1922–3; member Control Commission 1924; ‘Salles’ was among signers of 1927 appeal on behalf of Left Opposition in Russian CP; may have been Camille Salles, born in Bordeaux region 1885.
- Samoilova, Konkordia** [1876–1921] – born in Irkutsk, Russia; active in revolutionary movement 1897; joined RSDLP 1903; co-editor of *Pravda* and *Rabotnitsa* [Woman Worker] 1912; co-editor *Kommunistka* [Communist Woman] 1918; chair of Petersburg commission for work among women after 1917.
- Samuelson, Oskar** [b. 1885] – joined Swedish socialist youth 1909; elected to executive of Communist Youth International 1921; co-founder Swedish CP 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; alternate member ECCI 1924–8; Stockholm city-councillor for CP in 1930s.
- Sankey John** [1866–1948] – British politician and jurist; Conservative, later with Labour Party; headed official commission of inquiry into conditions in coal mines 1919; recommended their nationalisation.
- Sasha**: see Stokes, Rose Pastor.
- Savinkov, Boris** [1879–1925] – a leader of Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party; minister in Provisional Government 1917; led armed actions against Soviet government during Civil War; organised anti-Soviet detachments in Poland 1920–1; reentered Soviet Republic 1924 and died in Soviet custody.
- Scheflo, Olav** [1883–1943] – member Norwegian Labour Party from 1905; a leader of left opposition in unions 1911; supported Labour Party affiliation to Comintern; member ECCI 1921–7; Fourth World Congress delegate representing Labour Party minority 1922; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; stayed with Comintern when Labour Party split 1923; criticised CP’s stance toward Labour Party and quit CP 1928; rejoined Labour Party 1929; defended Trotsky during his stay in Norway 1935–6.
- Scheidemann, Philipp** [1865–1939] – typesetter, journalist; joined SPD 1883; member SPD executive 1911; co-chair of Reichstag fraction 1913; social chauvinist during War; led in suppressing workers’ revolution 1918–19; German prime minister February–June 1919; forced by Nazis into emigration 1933.
- Schiffel, Jozef** [1880–1959] – member CC of Czechoslovak CP 1921; delegate to Fourth World Congress 1922; remained long-time member of CP.
- Schreiber, Hesekil** [1899–1943] – born in Poland; member of Polish CP and its Central Committee; Fourth World Congress delegate; lived in Palestine from mid-1920s; recruited there by Leopold Trepper to Soviet intelligence service; interned in France 1940; worked in the Lyons unit of Trepper’s Europe-wide resistance organisation ‘Rote Kapelle’ 1942–3; arrested by Nazis and executed in Berlin.
- Schreiner, Albert** [1892–1979] – mechanic; joined SPD 1910; member Spartacus group during War; member CP; a leader of its military wing 1923; expelled from CP as ‘opportunist’ 1929; joined Brandler’s opposition

- group; forced by Nazis into emigration 1933; rejoined CP in late 1930s; fought in International Brigades in Spanish Civil War; returned to East Germany 1946; assailed for oppositional record 1950–2.
- Schüller, Richard** [1901–1957] – joined Austrian Communist youth and Party 1918; leader of Communist Youth International 1919–28; Fourth World Congress delegate; member ECCI organisational bureau 1922, member ECCI 1924; returned to Austria 1928–34; frequently arrested; in Soviet Union 1934–45; elected to CC of Austrian CP 1948.
- Schumann, Georg** [1886–1945] – tool-maker; joined SPD 1905; in Spartacus group during War; jailed for socialist work in army; leader of CP in Leipzig from 1919; member CC 1923–4; supported Meyer's 'conciliator' current in Party; jailed again 1926–7; opposed Stalin course but made 'self-criticism' 1929; in Nazi concentration-camp 1933–9; leader of Communist resistance in Leipzig from 1941; contrary to Moscow line, called for struggle for socialism; arrested 1944; tortured and executed.
- Scoccimarro, Mauro** [1895–1972] – initially supporter, then opponent of War; member Italian SP 1917 and CP 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; jailed by Fascists 1926; freed by Resistance 1943; fought in anti-Fascist resistance; active in CP after Liberation.
- Seiden, Armin** [1885–1931] – active in Hungarian workers' movement in Slovakia; member Czechoslovak CP 1921; leader of its local committee in Košice; later removed from CP's staff; lived abroad.
- Sellier, Henri** [1883–1943] – bank and commercial employee; joined French socialist movement about 1898; union and cooperative activist; mayor of Suresnes 1919–41; joined CP 1921; leader of right wing hostile to Comintern discipline; expelled 1922; rejoined SP 1924; noted for local initiatives in social housing and public health; ousted from mayoralty by Vichy régime.
- Sellier, Louis** [1885–1978] – postal worker; member French SP 1909; member CP executive 1921; supported centre current; CP general secretary 1923–4; expelled as 'rightist' 1929; led dissident-communist current 1930–7; rejoined SP 1937; voted powers to Pétain 1940; served in municipal offices during German occupation; expelled from SP 1944.
- Serrati, Giacinto Menotti** [1874–1926] – member of Italian SP left wing from youth; leader of Maximalist left wing; internationalist during War; led SP in affiliation to Comintern 1919; opposed break with reformists and remained head of SP after CP formation 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; led SP's pro-Comintern current into CP 1924.
- Shapiro, L.G.** [M. Shanin] [1887–1957] – joined Bund in Riga 1903; Menshevik; joined Bolsheviks 1918; active in Soviet educational work; member of presidium of Soviet political-education division; expelled from CP in campaign against corrupt elements 1921; subsequently readmitted.
- Shatskin, Lazar Abramovich** [1902–37] – joined Bolshevik Party 1917; Communist Youth League first secretary 1919–22; a leader of Communist Youth International from 1919; Fourth World Congress delegate; supported Stalin in late 1920s; barred from political activity for oppositional views 1931; expelled from CP and arrested 1935; tortured and shot.
- Siegfried, Jules** [1837–1922] – French cotton merchant; parliamentary deputy from Le Havre 1885–97; 1902–22; advocate of low-cost housing and votes for women.
- Sirolle, Henri** [1885–1962] – French railway worker; anarchist; active in revolutionary Left of CGT after War; partisan of affiliation to Comintern; attended first congress of Red International of Labour Unions 1921; quit CGTU 1922; rejoined CGT 1927; later active in railway management.
- Sliwinski, Artur** [1877–1953] – member Polish SP 1914; active in Polish independence movement; municipal official in Warsaw 1918–22; prime minister June–July 1922.

Ślusarski: see Kowalski, Wladislaw.

Šméral, Bohumir [1880–1941] – member of Czech Social Democracy from 1897; elected to its CC 1904; held chauvinist positions during the War; leader of Marxist Left from 1919; head of Czechoslovak CP 1921; member ECCI 1921–35; Fourth World Congress delegate; in Moscow 1926–35; member International Control Commission 1935–41.

Smidovich, Sofia Nikolaevna [1872–1934] – joined RSDLP 1898; Bolshevik; secretary of Moscow bureau of Bolshevik CC 1917; leader of women's division of Russian CP [Zhenotdel] in Moscow 1919–22; head of Zhenotdel 1922–4; represented Russian CP in International Women's Secretariat from 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; on staff of party control commission 1925–30; subsequently worked for Society of Old Bolsheviks.

Smith, F.E., Earl of Birkenhead [1872–1930] – British Conservative politician; lord chancellor 1919–22; favoured armed resistance to Turkey September 1922.

Smuts, Jan Christian [1870–1950] – South African lawyer, officer, and politician; fought against Britain in Boer War and with Britain in two World Wars; prime minister [1919–24, 1939–48]; supporter of racial segregation and disenfranchisement of black majority.

Sneevliet, Henk [Marling] [1883–1942] – Dutch railway worker; joined Dutch Social-Democratic Workers' Party 1902; resettled in Java 1913; founding leader of Indies Social-Democratic Association 1914; supported Russian October Revolution 1917; deported from Dutch Indies 1918; joined Dutch CP 1919; Comintern representative in China 1921–3; left Dutch CP as supporter of Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1927; led Revolutionary Socialist Party sympathetic to Trotsky's views from 1929; active in resistance to Nazi occupation until captured and executed.

Sorel, Georges [1847–1922] – French revolutionary syndicalist; theorist of the role of myth and violence in social change; after 1909, broke with syndicalism and joined a monarchist move-

ment, yet hailed the Bolshevik-led October Revolution in Russia.

Soutif, Edmond – freemason; joined French SP 1909; joined CP 1920; active in its Paris region leadership; member of CP executive 1921; supported centre current; expelled December 1922.

Souvarine, Boris [1895–1984] – jewellery worker; internationalist during War; leader of French Committee for the Third International; leader of left wing of SP and then of CP; member ECCI 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled for defence of Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1924; a leader of Left Opposition in France 1925–9; anti-Stalinist writer in 1930s; later moved to reformist positions.

Spector, Maurice [1898–1968] – member of SDP of Canada youth wing 1914; joined Communist movement 1920; editor of *The Communist* 1921; editor of *The Worker* 1921–2 and 1923–8; Fourth World Congress delegate; opposed Stalin-led campaign against Trotsky 1924–6; elected to ECCI 1928; won to Trotsky's views and expelled as Trotsky supporter 1928; leader of pro-Trotsky Left Opposition in Canada 1928–36; a leader of US Trotskyists and editor of their *New International* 1936–9.

Stal', Liudmila [1872–1939] – member RSDLP 1897; Bolshevik; in exile 1907–17; active in Petrograd and Kronstadt party committees during 1917 Revolution; held leading posts in Soviet government; member of Comintern women's secretariat 1921–3; editor *Kommunistka* [Woman Communist] from 1924.

Stampfer, Friedrich [1874–1957] – born in Brno; leader of right wing of SP in Austria, then Germany; social chauvinist during War; opposed Germany's signing of Versailles Treaty; editor of SPD's *Vorwärts* 1916–33 and its continuation in exile 1933–40; returned to Germany 1948; taught in university and continued to write for SPD.

Stanić: see Novaković, Kosta.

Stern, Victor [1885–1958] – teacher; member Austrian SDP 1904; joined German USPD 1919; member German CP 1920; Communist leader in Austria 1921–3;

- Fourth World Congress delegate; lived in Czechoslovakia 1923–35; taught in USSR 1935–45 and East Germany after 1946.
- Stinnes, Hugo** [1870–1924] – influential German capitalist and politician; organised expansion and vertical integration of family holdings in heavy industry; during 1918 Revolution, negotiated concessions to trade unions; later campaigned against eight-hour day and nationalisation; had ties to far Right; opposed Versailles Treaty.
- Stirner, Alfred**: see Woog, Edgar.
- Stoddard, T. Lothrop** [1883–1950] – born in Massachusetts; opponent of immigration and theorist of racism; predicted rise of Islam as threat to West; best known for *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy* [1920].
- Stokes, Rose Pastor** [1879–1933] – born in Poland; moved to Britain, then US as child; cigar maker from age 13; later journalist; socialist and union activist from 1905; won to Russian October Revolution 1918; member US CP and its executive 1919; Fourth World Congress delegate; continued revolutionary activity until death.
- Struve, Pyotr** [1870–1944] – co-founder of Russian Social Democracy 1893; later leader of legal Marxism; joined Cadets; opposed October Revolution; joined Whites, then emigrated.
- Štukelj, Ciril** [Marynko] [1903–50] – journalist; active with Communist youth in Slovenia; delegate of Yugoslav Communist youth to Fourth World Congress; secretary of Slovenian CP committee 1925; expelled from CP end of 1925; turned to reformism; leader of workers' education in Ljubljana; translator of Marxist literature after 1945.
- Štunc, Václav** [1858–1936] – agricultural worker, then journalist; edited first Social-Democratic newspaper in Czech language 1890; first chairman of the Czechoslovak CP; expelled 1922 and then reinstated by Fourth World Congress; Fourth World Congress consultative delegate 1922; expelled again as 'rightist' 1929; rejoined SP 1932.
- Sturm, Hertha** [Edith Schumann] [1886–1945?] – teacher; member SPD 1911; member German CP from 1919; jailed for role in Bavarian workers' republic 1919; member International Women's Secretariat in Berlin 1921–4; Fourth World Congress delegate; removed from leading posts as 'rightist' 1924; subsequently worked with Clara Zetkin in Moscow 1924–8; after return to Germany, removed from party staff as 'rightist'; worked with left socialists of 'New Beginning' 1934–5; arrested, tortured, and jailed for many years under Nazis; said to have died in air raid.
- Subhi, Mustafa**: See Mustafa Subhi.
- Sullivan**: see Alfred S. Edwards.
- Sun Yat-sen** [1866–1925] – leader of Chinese national revolution that overthrew the Qing dynasty in 1911; founder and leader of the Kuomintang Party from 1912; headed government in Guangdong 1921–2 and from 1923; accepted help of Soviet Russia from 1923.
- Suzuki, Bunji** [1885–1946] – labour organiser and writer; began movement to unite Japanese unions 1911; founder of Japanese Federation of Labour 1919; co-founder Japanese SP; elected to diet 1928.
- Švehla, Antonín** [1873–1933] – three times Czechoslovak prime minister 1922–9; member of Agrarian Party.
- Swabeck, Arne** [1890–1986] – born in Denmark; after moving to US, edited SP Scandinavian weekly; a leader of US CP from foundation; Chicago district organiser; a leader of CP's trade-union work; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled for support of Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1928; leader of Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party; became Maoist in 1960s; expelled for indiscipline 1967.
- Taine, Hippolyte Adolphe** [1828–93] – French historian, critic, and philosopher; wrote three-volume history of French Revolution as part of *Les Origines de la France contemporaine*.
- Tan Malaka, Ibrahim Datoek** [1897–1949] – born in Sumatra, became Marxist while student in the Netherlands; returned to Dutch East Indies and joined predecessor of CP 1919; became CP's chairman 1921; expelled from country 1922; Fourth World Congress

delegate; represented Comintern in Southeast Asia 1922–6; left Comintern in early 1930s; returned to Dutch East Indies 1942; a leader of struggle for Indonesian independence; executed by Dutch occupation army 1949.

Tasca, Angelo [1892–1960] – joined Italian SP youth 1909; *Ordine nuovo* collaborator 1919–20; co-founder CP 1921; favoured united action with SP; Fourth World Congress delegate; member ECCI 1924; arrested by Fascists 1923, 1926; emigrated to France 1927; expelled from Italian CP for anti-Stalinist positions 1929; rejoined Italian SP 1935; broadcast for Vichy radio while working with Resistance group; after Liberation, wrote works of political history.

Tayerle, Rudolf [1877–1942] – right-wing Czech Social Democrat; general secretary of Social-Democratic union federation 1911–39; arrested by Nazis 1941; died in concentration camp.

Tennenbaum, Edda [Else Baum] [1878–1952] – born in Latvia; moved to Poland 1898; joined SDKPiL 1903; arrested and exiled to Siberia 1908; escaped; worked in Germany with Clara Zetkin on SPD women's publication *Gleichheit* [Equality] 1909–11; subsequently active in French Socialist Party; worked for Comintern in Moscow 1919; helped edit German CP's women's newspaper 1920–4; staffer for Comintern's Women's Secretariat 1925; associate of Brandler; removed from party posts as 'rightist' 1928; arrested in Moscow 1937 during Stalin frame-up purges, in which her husband and son perished; after nine years in Stalin's Gulag, returned to Warsaw, where she educated German prisoners of war; died in Warsaw.

Teodorovich, Ivan [1875–1937] – revolutionary activist in Russia from 1895; member RSDLP 1898; Bolshevik; elected to CC 1907; Fourth World Congress delegate; people's commissar of agriculture 1922; head of Peasant International 1928–30; expelled as 'rightist' 1930; victim of Stalin purges; shot.

Terracini, Umberto [1895–1983] – member Italian SP 1916; internationalist during

War; a leader of *Ordine nuovo* current; member of CP and its executive 1921; elected to ECCI 1921; member ECCI 1921–2; parliamentary deputy 1922–4; jailed by Fascists 1926–43; opposed Stalinist policy on World War II and was expelled from CP 1943; active in anti-Fascist resistance 1943–5; rejoined CP and its leadership after Liberation.

Thalheimer, August [1884–1948] – writer; joined SPD 1904; director of SPD paper in Göppingen 1909; member of Spartacus group during War; member of CC of German CP 1919–24; supported 'theory of the offensive' 1921, but subsequently opposed ultraleftism; Fourth World Congress delegate; held responsible, with Brandler, for workers' defeat in 1923; taught philosophy in Moscow, 1924–8; opposed Stalin's ultraleft course 1928; expelled as 'rightist' 1929; co-founder with Brandler of CP (Opposition); emigrated 1933; Allied powers refused his re-entry into Germany after 1945; died in Cuba.

Thaon di Revel, Paolo [1859–1948] – Italian aristocrat; admiral; commanded navy 1917–19; minister of the navy under Mussolini 1922–5.

Thomas, James Henry [1874–1949] – railway worker; railway union president 1905; Labour Party member of parliament 1910; social chauvinist during War; head of International Federation of Trade Unions ['Amsterdam International'] 1920–4; withdrew rail union's support for miners' strike, leading to its defeat 1921; cabinet minister 1924 and 1929–36; broke with Labour Party 1931.

Togliatti, Palmiro [1893–1964] – member Italian SP 1914; co-founder of *L'Ordine nuovo* 1919; member CP 1921 and its CC 1922; central leader of CP from 1926; supported Stalin leadership in Comintern; worked for Comintern in exile from late 1920s to 1944; returned to lead postwar Italian CP 1944.

Tolstoy, Leo [1828–1910] – Russian novelist; advocated Christian anarchism and pacifism.

Tommasi, Joseph [1886–1926] – cabinet-maker, mechanic; member of French SP 1904; union activist; supporter of

- CGT left wing during War; member of CGT administrative committee 1919; supported affiliation to Comintern; member of CP executive committee 1921–2; supporter of left current in CP; forced into exile by French police 1924; became supporter of Left Opposition led by Trotsky; lived in Moscow 1924–6.
- Tonetti, Giovanni** [1888–1970] – radicalised during War; member Italian SP 1919; stayed in SP when CP formed 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; subsequently leader of pro-Comintern tendency in SP; joined CP 1924; withdrew from politics after 1925; later active with SP in anti-Fascist resistance and postwar politics; rejoined CP 1959.
- Torp, Oscar** [1893–1958] – electrician; union activist from 1908; chair of Norwegian Labour Party in Sarpsborg 1918 and nationally 1923–45; Fourth World Congress delegate representing Labour Party majority 1922; minister of defence 1935–6; twice mayor of Oslo; minister in 1942–5 exile government; prime minister 1951–5.
- Tranmael, Martin** [1879–1967] – construction worker; leader of left wing of Norwegian Labour Party; internationalist during War; supported affiliation to Comintern; led Labour Party out of Comintern 1923; in Swedish exile during 1940–5 Nazi occupation; supported Norway's joining NATO 1949.
- Treint, Albert** [1889–1971] – teacher; member French SP 1912; member Committee for the Third International; member CC of French CP from 1920; supported left current; expelled as supporter of Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1928; led a pro-Trotsky current 1929–34; rejoined SP 1934.
- Tresso, Pietro** [Blasco] [1893–1943] – joined Italian SP youth 1907; joined CP 1921; supporter of Bordiga current; Fourth World Congress delegate; member CC 1927; after frequent arrests, emigrated to Switzerland and France; took part in founding congress of Fourth International led by Trotsky 1938; active in French Resistance under Nazi occupation; arrested, liberated by Resistance, and then executed on orders of Stalinist agent.
- Trilisser, Meier or Mikhail** [Moskvin] [1883–1940] – joined RSDLP 1901; Bolshevik; jailed under tsarism; a leader of Siberian CP 1918; assigned to work in Far East 1918–20; leader of work abroad of Soviet security police [Cheka] 1921–35; Fourth World Congress delegate; assigned various tasks in Comintern from 1935; arrested during Stalin purges 1938; shot.
- Troelstra, Pieter** [1860–1930] – leader of Dutch SP 1894–1924; made unsuccessful bid for power during mass workers' upsurge November 1918.
- Trotsky, Leon** [1879–1940] – born in Ukraine; joined socialist movement 1897; supported Mensheviks at RSDLP Congress 1903; internationalist and supporter of Zimmerwald movement during War; joined Bolsheviks and elected to CC 1917; people's commissar of foreign affairs 1917–18 and of war 1918–25; leader of Left Opposition in Russian CP and Comintern from 1923; expelled 1927; exiled abroad 1929; called for new International 1933; main target of 1936–8 Stalin frame-up trials; co-founder of Fourth International 1938; murdered by agent of Stalin.
- Tugan-Baranovsky, Mikhail** [1865–1919] – Ukrainian economist; contributor to Marxist theory of crises; joined liberal-bourgeois Cadet Party during 1905–7 Revolution; active in cooperative movement; opponent of Russian October Revolution; minister of Ukrainian People's Republic 1917–18.
- Turati, Filippo** [1857–1932] – co-founder of Italian SP 1892; leader of its reformist right wing; parliamentary deputy 1896–1926; opposed Italy's entry into War but backed war effort; opponent of Comintern; led right-wing split from SP 1922; founded dissident-socialist grouping; emigrated to France 1926.
- Ulbricht, Walter** [1893–1973] – cabinet-maker; joined SPD 1912; in Spartacus group during War; CP leader in Thuringia district; supported Brandler leadership, then 'conciliator' current led by Meyer; supported Stalin's ultraleft course 1928; emigrated after Nazi take-

over; in USSR 1938–45; led anti-Nazi 'Free Germany Committee' 1941–5; general secretary of CP and SED from 1945; East German head of state from 1960; retired 1971.

Unfried, Emil [1892–1949] – member SPD 1912; member of Spartacus group during War; member of German CP 1919; vice-chair of CP in Stuttgart 1919–21; secretary for agrarian work for CP leadership 1921–4; Fourth World Congress delegate; removed from leading posts as 'rightist' 1924; headed film division of Münzenberg's Communist-led political-cultural enterprise 1924–33; withdrew from politics and continued to produce films under Nazi rule; rejoined CP after fall of Nazism; arrested by Soviet authorities in East Germany 1945; died in Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Urbahns, Hugo [1890–1946] – teacher; socialist from 1912; member Spartacus group 1918; a leader of CP in Hamburg; Fourth World Congress delegate; helped organise Hamburg uprising 1923; jailed 1924–5; leader, with Fischer and Maslow, of CP 'left' current; expelled 1926; supported Left Opposition led by Trotsky until 1930–1; campaigned for united front against Hitler; emigrated to Sweden after Nazi takeover; Stalinists secured a Swedish deportation order against him, but no other country would take him; died in Sweden.

Urquhart, John Leslie [1874–1933] – British capitalist with huge investments in petroleum and mining in Russia before 1917 October Revolution; helped organise intervention against Soviet government; negotiated unsuccessfully to obtain concession to operate mines in Soviet Russia 1922.

Vaillant-Couturier, Paul [1892–1937] – joined French SP as soldier 1916; jailed for anti-war articles 1918; SP parliamentary deputy 1919; a leader of CP left current 1921–2; member of CP executive 1920–4 and CC 1925–37; lead editor of *L'Humanité* 1926–9 and 1935–7; twice demoted from responsible party positions 1924–6 and 1929–31.

Vajtauer, Emanuel [b. 1892] – psychologist; anarchist writer; member Czechoslovak CP 1921; supported leftist opposition 1921–2; an editor of CP's *Rudé Právo* 1921–3; Fourth World Congress delegate; expelled April 1929; later edited Social-Democratic paper; Nazi collaborator during World War II; after War went into exile.

Vámbery, Arminius [1832–1913]: Hungarian traveller and writer; expert on Near-Eastern languages and culture.

Vandervelde, Émile [1866–1938] – lawyer; leader of Belgian SP; defended chauvinist positions and was government minister during War; led in reconstitution of Second International; served as its president 1929–36.

Varga, Eugen [Jenő] [1879–1964] – economist; member Hungarian Social Democracy 1906; joined CP 1919; member soviet government 1919; emigrated to Soviet Russia 1919; worked for ECCI; Fourth World Congress delegate; prominent Soviet economist until criticised by Stalin 1947; later partially rehabilitated; died in USSR.

Vella, Arturo [1886–1943] – socialist from 1902; assistant secretary of Italian SP 1912; supporter of its Maximalist left wing; jailed for agitation within army 1918–19; stayed in SP after formation of CP 1921; opposed unity with CP 1922–3; withdrew from political activity in late 1920s.

Vercik, Julius [1894–1959] – metalworker; member of Czechoslovak CP; member of CC 1921–5; alternate member ECCI 1924–30; leader of left wing in Czechoslovak red union federation late 1920s; expelled for 'opportunism' and 'nationalism' 1930.

Verdier, Guillaume – French revolutionary syndicalist; CGT leader in Decazeville (Aveyron) 1919–21; supported affiliation to Comintern; signed pact of anarchist syndicalists 1921; supported 'pure syndicalist' wing in CGTU; left CP, probably in 1922.

Verfeuil, Raoul [1887–1927] – postal worker, journalist; member French SP; centrist during War; joined French CP after Tours Congress 1920; leader of

- right wing hostile to Comintern discipline; expelled from CP on instructions of ECCI October 1922; rejoined SP 1924.
- Vliegen, Willem** [1862–1947] – typographer, editor; joined Dutch Social-Democratic movement 1883; a leader of right wing in Dutch Social-Democratic Workers' Party through 1930s.
- Voitinsky, Grigory** [1893–1953] – born in Russia; lived in North America 1913–18; joined Bolsheviks 1918; worked in Comintern apparatus from 1920; assigned to work in Far East; visited China several times in 1920s; assigned to research work in 1930s.
- Votava, Karel** [b. 1884] – journalist; member of Czech Social Democracy; joined CP 1921; secretary of its Brno city organisation 1921–3; identified with its 'right' wing; expelled 1925; rejoined SP 1926; edited its city newspaper in Ostrava 1929–38.
- Vujović, Voja** [1895–1936] – joined Serbian SP 1912; leader of French SP youth during War; co-founder of Communist Youth International 1919; secretary of Youth International's Executive 1921–6; Fourth World Congress delegate; criticised Stalin for opportunist policy in China; expelled from Russian CP and deported as supporter of Left Opposition 1927–8; readmitted to CP 1930; arrested during Stalin purges 1935; disappeared in camps.
- Walecki, Henryk** [Maksymilian Horwitz] [1877–1937] – mathematician; member Polish SP from 1899; internationalist during War; took part in Zimmerwald Conference; a leader of Polish CP in 1920s; ECCI representative in US July–October 1922; Fourth World Congress delegate; attacked as 'opportunist' 1924; moved to USSR 1925; worked in Comintern apparatus; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- Wallenius, Allan** [1890–1942] – took part in Finnish Revolution 1918; then emigrated to Sweden and Soviet Russia; Comintern librarian; carried out Comintern assignments in US, Scandinavia; arrested during Stalin purges; died in concentration camp.
- Warski**: see Warszawski, Adolf.
- Warszawski, Adolf** [Warski, Michalkowski] [1868–1937] – pioneer of early Polish socialist movement; co-founder of SDKPiL; a leader of RSDLP after 1905 Revolution; took part in Zimmerwald movement against War; co-founder Polish CP 1918; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; ousted from Polish CP leadership for opposition to Stalin course 1929; lived in USSR from 1929; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- Webb, Beatrice** [1858–1943] – British writer and social reformer; wrote *Cooperative Movement of Great Britain* 1891; with husband Sidney, central figure in Fabian Society, which advocated socialism through incremental change; co-author of *Soviet Communism*, a defence of the Stalinist order 1935.
- Webb, Harry** [b. 1889] – metalworker; member Socialist Labour Party 1906–20; represented Ashton Communist Group in formation of British CP; opposed running in elections and affiliation to Labour Party 1921; jailed for two months 1921; Fourth World Congress delegate; member CC 1929–32.
- Wels, Otto** [1873–1939] – upholsterer and union activist; joined SPD 1891; Reichstag deputy 1912; joined party executive 1913; leader of its right wing; party chairman 1919; led SPD deputies in voting against emergency powers for Hitler 1933; was deprived of citizenship and emigrated.
- Welti, Franz** [1879–1934] – Swiss lawyer; socialist from 1908; internationalist during War; co-founder of Swiss CP 1919; its chair 1921–7; Fourth World Congress delegate; criticised Comintern's ultraleft course 1928–9; removed from CP leadership 1930; remained in CP until death.
- Werth, Gérard** – metalworker; supporter of Renoult current in French CP; Fourth World Congress delegate; member CC 1922–3; supporter of 'Bolshevisation'; expelled 1925.
- Wilhelm**: see Hohenzollern.
- Wilson, Woodrow** [1856–1924] – president of US 1913–21; led US into World

War I; announced 'Fourteen Points' favouring non-punitive peace and formation of association of nations 1918.

Wirth, Joseph [1879–1956] – German politician; a leader of Catholic Centre Party; head of German government that encompassed SPD May 1921–November 1922; in exile as an opponent of Nazi rule 1933–49; subsequently favoured reunited, neutral Germany.

Wittelsbach: ruling dynasty of Bavaria until 1918.

Woog, Edgar [Stirner] [1898–1973] – born in Switzerland; joined Swiss Socialist youth 1916; co-founder Mexican CP 1920; active in early Comintern as expert on Latin American affairs; member German CP 1922–4; represented Mexican CP at Fourth World Congress 1922; member ECCI 1922–4; active in Comintern through 1930s; active in Swiss pro-Soviet socialist party in 1940s and 1950s.

Wrangel, Piotr [1878–1928] – Russian General; commander of White forces in southern Russia 1919–20; emigrated to Yugoslavia 1920; subsequently led White exile army.

Wu Peifu [1874–1939] – Chinese warlord based in Beijing; was the dominant figure in north China 1922.

Yelizarova-Ulyanova, Anna Ilyinichna [1864–1935] – sister of V.I. Lenin; member RSDLP 1898; leading party activist within Russia before 1917; contributor to *Rabotnitsa* [*Woman Worker*]; active in education and mother/child care after 1917; wrote works on party history.

Younghusband, George [1859–1944] – British general; fought in many wars against colonial peoples in Asia and Africa.

Yudenich, Nikolai [1862–1933] – Russian general; leader of White forces in northwest during Russian Civil War; emigrated 1920.

Zápotocký Antonín [1884–1957] – stonemason; member of Czech SP 1902 and of its left wing 1919; member of Czechoslovak CP CC 1921; CC secretary 1922–

9; general secretary of Czechoslovak red unions 1929–39; held in Nazi concentration camp 1939–45; prime minister of Czechoslovakia 1948–53 and president 1953–7.

Zetkin, Clara [1857–1933] – joined German socialist movement 1878; driven into exile by Bismarck's anti-socialist laws 1882–90; co-founder of Socialist International 1889; a leader of its Marxist wing; campaigner for women's emancipation; close associate of Rosa Luxemburg in SPD left wing; organised international anti-war conference of socialist women 1915; joined German CP 1919; member ECCI from 1922; opposed ultraleftism in CP during March Action 1921 and thereafter; member Fourth World Congress Presidium; headed Communist Women's Movement; opposed 'Bolshevisation' campaign 1924–5 and Stalin's ultraleft turn from 1928; remained prominent figure in German CP and Comintern, without recanting, until death in Moscow.

Zhang Zuolin [c. 1875–1928] – Chinese warlord based in Manchuria and aligned with Japan.

Zinoviev, Grigorii [1883–1936] – joined RSDLP 1901; Bolshevik; elected to CC 1907; internationalist and collaborator of Lenin during War; chair of Petrograd Soviet 1917–26; president of Comintern 1919–26; collaborated with Stalin to isolate Trotsky from central leadership 1923–4; broke with Stalin 1925; with Trotsky, led United Opposition to bureaucratic degeneration 1926–7; expelled 1927; recanted and was readmitted 1928; re-expelled 1932 and 1934; convicted at first Moscow frame-up trial and shot.

Zubatov, Sergei Vasilevich [1864–1917] – official in tsarist secret police; formed legal pro-government workers' organisations 1901–3; these organisations escaped from police control and were banned 1903; committed suicide during February 1917 Revolution.

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