

## The Communist Movement at a Crossroads

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# The Communist Movement at a Crossroads

*Plenums of the Communist International's  
Executive Committee, 1922–1923*

*Edited by*

Mike Taber

*Translated by*

John Riddell



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# Editorial Introduction

On 1 January 1922, the Communist International (Comintern) issued an appeal to ‘working men and women of all countries’ calling for the creation of a workers’ united front to fight the ravages of capitalism. It stated:

The Communist International calls ... on all upstanding workers around the world to come together ... as a family of working people who will respond to all the distress of our time by standing together against capital. Create a firm spirit of proletarian unity against which every attempt to divide proletarians will break down, no matter where it originates. Only if you proletarians come together in this way, in the workplace and the economy, will all parties based on the proletariat and seeking to win a hearing from it find that joining together in a common defensive struggle against capitalism is necessary.<sup>1</sup>

This appeal for united action also summoned the Comintern’s member parties to send representatives to a special conference: an ‘enlarged plenum’ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). Such conferences – Grigori Zinoviev would label them ‘small world congresses’ – thereafter became regular Comintern events.<sup>2</sup>

*The Communist Movement at a Crossroads* contains the proceedings and resolutions of the three enlarged plenums that took place while Lenin was still alive. For any study of the Communist International, these plenums are close in importance to the four Lenin-era world congresses that took place between 1919 and 1922.<sup>3</sup> Many of the Comintern’s main decisions in those years were

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1 See p. 59.

2 Zinoviev, in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 97.

The ECCI was elected following each world congress, with a membership generally around thirty. This number was expanded at ‘enlarged plenums’ by inviting parties to send additional representatives.

3 The proceedings and resolutions of these four congresses have been published in English in a series edited by John Riddell. The volumes include: *Founding the Communist International: Proceedings and Documents of the First Congress, March 1919* (1WC); *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress* (2WC); *To the Masses: Proceedings of the Third Congress of the Communist International, 1921* (3WC); and *Toward the United Front: Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922* (4WC). See bibliography for publication details.

taken by these plenums, making important contributions to the Communist International's political legacy.

This introduction aims to review each of these three conferences, putting them in context and highlighting their main discussions and decisions.

### World Situation in 1922–3

#### *Capitalist Contradictions*

In the first three years following the end of World War I, the capitalist rulers of Europe faced a real threat of proletarian revolution, which was inspired by the Russian Revolution and driven by the explosion of class tensions that had been accumulating over the course of the war. The main efforts of the rulers in these years were geared to ensuring the very survival of their system. By late 1920, however, it had become clear that world capitalism had withstood the initial onslaught and was achieving a tenuous stabilisation.

Nevertheless, by early 1922 contradictions within the world imperialist system were sharpening.

Through the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and related treaties, the war's victors had sought to impose on the vanquished powers a new world order: redrawing borders, creating new nation-states, and re-dividing the world into new spheres of influence. But rather than ensuring a stable and lasting order, the Versailles system had the opposite effect.

The most immediate cause of this instability was Germany's inability to pay the massive war reparations imposed by the Versailles Treaty. Numerous financial conferences and meetings were held during these years to work out new payment plans. When none of these worked, the victorious powers resorted to outright theft. In early 1921 French troops were sent to occupy the Ruhr region – Germany's main coal-producing district – in an attempt to seize this valuable resource. In January 1923, a larger invasion and occupation of the Ruhr was undertaken.

In leading governmental circles, the threat of renewed imperialist war was openly discussed, generating an arms race. In his report to the Third Enlarged Plenum on the world political situation, Karl Radek quoted a perceptive bourgeois observer: 'It was said by idealists, that this war [World War I] would end all wars; but it seems as though it had merely sown the seeds of further wars', giving rise to a 'mad race in armaments which they are still pursuing'.<sup>4</sup>

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4 See p. 504.

During these years, capitalist governments held various conferences in a vain effort to reconcile their competing interests – in Genoa, Lausanne, Paris, The Hague, Washington, and other cities. All of these conferences merely served to demonstrate the irreconcilability of rival interests, as well as the vulnerabilities of the imperialist world order as a whole.

### *Soviet Russia*

The Russian Soviet republic was a major factor in this picture.

During the Soviet regime's first three years after its establishment in October 1917, no capitalist power sought significant diplomatic or economic relations with it, banking instead on the overthrow of Soviet power. During the Russian Civil War the leading capitalist states armed and supported the Russian counterrevolutionary armies. Not satisfied with that, over a dozen of these states – including Britain, France, Japan, and the United States – actively intervened by sending troops.

But by the end of 1920, the Red Army had beaten back the counterrevolutionary forces militarily, leading some capitalist governments to change their approach. Thinking they could utilise Soviet Russia to improve their positions vis-à-vis rivals, some powers began seeking economic and diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, hoping that the Soviets would in return abandon their revolutionary perspectives.

In 1922, Germany and Soviet Russia signed the Rapallo Treaty, normalising relations between the two countries. Britain, too, had signed the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement the previous year, as a way of counterbalancing its rivalry with France.

For the first time, Soviet Russia even started to receive invitations to participate in governmental conferences.

As a general principle, Soviet Russia expressed a willingness to negotiate and enter into relations with all capitalist governments. But the Bolshevik leadership rejected out of hand calls to abandon its support for world proletarian revolution, as well as for the struggles of the colonial peoples against imperialist subjugation.

As these contradictions within the capitalist world deepened, the class struggle was intensifying in a number of European countries, above all in Germany. Alongside this picture, an upheaval in the colonial world was also taking place.

### *Colonial World in Revolt*

The October 1917 revolution in Russia gave a major boost to the developing movement for freedom and national liberation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Revolutionary explosions

were felt in every corner of the world: China, Korea, the Dutch East Indies, British India, predominantly Islamic countries of southwestern Asia and north Africa, as well as Latin American countries such as Mexico and Cuba.

Not only did the Communist International pledge its full support to the struggle of the colonial peoples, but it also gave major attention to building Communist parties in these countries. For the first time, a genuine worldwide revolutionary movement began to take shape – not limited to Europe and North America, as had been the case with the First and Second Internationals.

To advance this perspective, the Comintern took important initiatives. It organised the 1920 Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East and the 1922 Congress of the Toilers of the Far East.<sup>5</sup> As more permanent bodies, it organised a Central Asian Bureau and a Far Eastern Secretariat.

In addition to support from the Communist International, the movement for national liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial world received the full support of Soviet Russia itself. During the period covered by the present volume, the Soviet republic began establishing ties of support and collaboration with independent states such as Turkey and China, countries that were engaged in struggles to break free from imperialist control.

### **The Communist International's 1921 Turn**

The revolutionary wave that swept Europe following the end of the First World War was so powerful that in two places – Hungary and Bavaria – Communist parties were swept into power without having a clear understanding of what was happening or what to do next. In other countries (Italy, Germany), workers were close to victory.

During these years, the Third, Communist International was formed and held its first two congresses. Based on the experiences of the October 1917 revolution in Russia, the Bolshevik leadership aimed to transform the Communist movement – composed of disparate revolutionary forces – into centralised and politically competent parties. To make this possible, the first two congresses focused on setting down the programme and basic perspectives of the new world movement.

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5 The First Congress of the Peoples of the East was held in Baku 31 August–7 September 1920; for the proceedings, see Riddell (ed.) 1993. The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East was held in Moscow and Petrograd, 21 January–2 February 1922; for the proceedings, see Comintern 1970 [1922].

The young and inexperienced Communist forces, however, were unable to take advantage of the revolutionary wave in Europe. Between 1918 and 1920 promising revolutionary movements went down to defeat, one after another.

By late 1920, it had become clear that the revolutionary wave was receding. That fact was recognised by the Comintern's Third Congress in June–July 1921. In doing so, the congress affirmed the goal of winning a working-class majority, registered in its watchword of 'To the masses!'

The world situation at the time was summed up by Leon Trotsky in his report to the Third Congress:

[T]he situation has become more complicated, but it remains favourable from a revolutionary point of view. ... But the revolution is not so obedient and tame that it can be led around on a leash, as we once thought. It has its ups and downs, its crises and its booms, determined by objective conditions but also by internal stratification in working-class attitudes.<sup>6</sup>

In line with this analysis, the congress stressed the importance of strategy and manoeuvre, adopting the general perspective of the workers' united front.

The Communist International's turn of 1921 posed a number of strategic and tactical questions that came up for discussion and debate at the three enlarged ECCI plenums that met in Moscow in 1922 and 1923.

### *A Crossroads*

The three enlarged plenums recorded in this volume show the world Communist movement at a crossroads:

- While the Comintern was formed in 1919 during a period of revolutionary advance in Europe, the Communist movement by 1922–3 had entered a new conjuncture. It was a period that required a mature strategic outlook and the ability to manoeuvre in order to advance the Comintern's perspective of world proletarian revolution. In this context, the fight for a working-class united front moved to the centre of its strategic orientation.
- While confronting growing opportunities for building Communist parties, by 1923 the international Communist movement stood on the verge of a struggle over whether it would remain a revolutionary working-class movement, or instead become subordinated to the narrow interests of a bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Under the thumb of an ever-

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6 In Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 131–2.

more-powerful Comintern apparatus in Moscow, by the 1930s Communist parties around the world would be fully transformed from independent-minded revolutionary vanguards into monolithic agencies promoting the shifting policies of the Soviet bureaucracy.

To fully appreciate this crossroads, a review of the proceedings and resolutions of the first three enlarged ECCI plenums is necessary.

## **I        FIRST ENLARGED PLENUM (FEBRUARY–MARCH 1922)**

### **Adoption of United-Front Policy**

While the idea of a workers' united front has antecedents in the history of the socialist movement going back to the First International led by Marx and Engels and to the Bolshevik Party of Russia, the immediate roots of the Comintern's united-front policy of 1921–2 can be found in Germany.

The German workers' movement at the time was sharply divided between three main parties: the reformist Social-Democratic Party (SPD), the centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party (USPD), and the Communist Party (KPD).

In the face of an escalating capitalist offensive – with attacks on wages and working conditions, growing unemployment, and the beginnings of the hyperinflation crisis – by late 1920 powerful sentiment had developed within the ranks of the German working class in favour of a united fight by all currents within it.

Recognising this sentiment, in early January 1921 the German Communist Party issued what became known as the Open Letter. This was a document addressed to all major German workers' organisations calling for united action to defend the life-and-death interests of the German proletariat. While the Open Letter stirred initial opposition within the world Communist movement – including within the Russian CP leadership – its basic approach received Lenin's strong support.<sup>7</sup>

The Comintern's Third Congress endorsed the German Open Letter, calling for the same approach to be adopted by Communist parties internationally:

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7 For the Open Letter and the ECCI debate on it, see Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 1061–9. For Lenin's position, see pp. 1086–7 and 1098–9.

... Communist parties are obliged to attempt, by mustering their strength in the trade unions and increasing their pressure on other parties based on the working masses, to enable the proletariat's struggle for its immediate interests to unfold on a unified basis. If the non-Communist parties are forced to join the struggle, the Communists have the task of preparing the working masses from the start for the possibility of betrayal by these parties in a subsequent stage of struggle. Communists should seek to intensify the conflict and drive it forward. The VKPD's Open Letter can serve as a model of a starting point for campaigns.<sup>8</sup>

That perspective was codified five months later, when the Comintern Executive Committee adopted a set of theses formulating the new policy. The perspective of the December 1921 theses was premised on the working class internationally being forced onto the defensive, but with an increasing willingness to fight back.

[U]nder 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. ...

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, attempting to bring the parties and organisations of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals into struggle together with the Communists against the capitalist attacks.

The theses also stressed that Communist parties must 'maintain absolute autonomy and complete independence' when engaged in united-front activity. 'While supporting the slogan of the greatest possible unity of all workers' organisations in every *practical action against the united capitalists*,' the theses declared, 'the Communists must not abstain from putting forward their views, which are the only consistent expression of defence of the interests of the working class as a whole.'

The new policy was not without possible dangers, however:

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8 Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 939–40.

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, tendencies that would genuinely mean the dissolution of Communist parties and groups into a formless united bloc.<sup>9</sup>

Not everyone in the Communist movement supported the new approach, however. The policy evoked strong objections from the leaderships of the Communist parties of France, Italy, and Spain, whose representatives expressed their disagreements at the First Enlarged Plenum two months later.

### Plenum Debate on United Front

In his report on the united front to the plenum, Zinoviev went over the motivations for the new policy. During the revolutionary wave of 1918–20, he explained, prospects seemed to indicate that workers were on the road to rapidly taking power and rejecting their Social-Democratic misleaders. Driving through a split with them quickly, Zinoviev asserted, was the central task for Communist forces during these years.

In the wake of the defeat of the postwar revolutionary wave, however, ‘after four years of hunger and breakdown, the working class has need for a respite.’ But the capitalists, in their quest for profits, will not give that to them.

The working masses that previously were striving for a respite now begin to comprehend that there is no way forward without struggle. ... [But] the workers seek unity; they want to struggle together against the bourgeoisie. If Communists do not take this mood into account, they will become sectarians.<sup>10</sup>

It was this mood within the working class that gave rise to the united-front policy, which Zinoviev described as a ‘tactical manoeuvre’.<sup>11</sup>

Zinoviev’s report was followed by counter-reports given by Daniel Renoult of France and by Riccardo Roberto and Umberto Terracini of Italy.

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9 For the December 1921 theses on the united front, see pp. 254–64 of this volume.

10 See p. 107–8.

11 See p. 106.

In his counter-report, Renoult objected to 'concluding partial and temporary agreements with the discredited leaders of Social Democracy or the reformist syndicalists'.

Terracini's counter-report went even further:

Should we, in order to win the masses, abandon precisely the principles that have enabled us to acquire strength? In our view, the methods proposed to us by the Executive Committee may indeed enable us to win the masses, but we will then no longer be Communist parties, but rather the spitting image of Social-Democratic parties.<sup>12</sup>

Terracini also drew a distinction between trade unions and political parties. A united front, he argued, was suitable for unions but not parties. 'Every party must set down a number of issues suitable for engaging all workers, issues relating to the economic situation and to political and military reaction. This proposal is to be directed solely to the national trade unions and not to the political parties.'

Roberto echoed this view: 'We must loudly declare that every Communist Party has the duty to establish a united front not with the leaders but with the masses organised in trade unions, who will carry the Social Democrats and the leaders along with them and expose them.'

During the debate, delegates spoke for and against the united-front policy. In his remarks, Trotsky responded to the objections raised against the policy:

We do not know when the moment for the conquest of power will come. Perhaps in six months, perhaps in six years. I ask Comrades Terracini and Renoult: Is the proletariat's struggle supposed to stand still until the moment when the Communist Party will be in a position to take power? No, the struggle goes forward. Workers outside our party do not understand why we split from the Socialists. They think, 'These groups or sects should give us an opportunity to struggle for our daily necessities.' We cannot simply tell them, 'We split in order to prepare for your great day after tomorrow.'

But the Communist Party comes to them and says, 'Friends, the Communists, syndicalists, reformists, and revolutionary syndicalists all have their separate organisations, but we Communists are proposing an imme-

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12 See pp. 119 and 128.

ciate action for your daily bread.' That is fully in step with the psychology of the masses.<sup>13</sup>

Following the debate, which lasted for seven sessions, the united-front perspective was adopted by majority vote, over the opposition of the Italian, French, and Spanish delegations. Those opposing the decision nevertheless pledged to carry out the new policy.

### Discussion on Soviet Russia

Another noteworthy feature of the First Enlarged ECCI Plenum was its attention to developments in Soviet Russia.

It was considered fully appropriate for Comintern congresses and leadership meetings to discuss, debate, and issue judgments on important issues that arose in the Soviet republic. This norm – standard procedure in the early Comintern – contrasted sharply with the Stalin-led Comintern of the 1930s, in which the policies of the Soviet CP were viewed as sacrosanct.

The First Enlarged Plenum examined:

- A set of theses presented by Grigorii Y. Sokolnikov on the implementation of the New Economic Policy.<sup>14</sup> The NEP comprised a series of measures introduced in Soviet Russia in March 1921 and subsequently, aiming to restore economic relations between 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.
- An appeal from the Workers' Opposition. This was a group within the Russian CP, formed in 1920, that called for trade-union control of industrial production and greater autonomy for CP fractions in the unions. Its appeal to the plenum raised criticisms related to the introduction of the NEP, and growing bureaucratisation within the Communist Party. The Russian Communist Party Central Committee issued a written response to this appeal.<sup>15</sup> A commission was assigned to investigate, which prepared a resolution that was approved by the plenum.

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<sup>13</sup> See p. 149.

<sup>14</sup> See pp. 201–5.

<sup>15</sup> See pp. 181–2 and 183.

- A report by Willi Münzenberg on the international relief campaign for victims of the famine in Russia, which killed several million people in 1921–2.<sup>16</sup> This campaign was undertaken as a broad workers' movement reaching out to all political tendencies. As Münzenberg reported, it was an 'attempt to unify all workers in the campaign, whatever their party or trade-union affiliation', an 'attempt to realise the united front in practice'.

### Other Topics Discussed

Other topics discussed at the First Enlarged Plenum included:

- *The trade-union question.* The plenum heard reports by S.A. Lozovsky and Heinrich Brandler on the progress of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU, or Profintern, based on its Russian initials) and on Communists' tasks in the unions.

The RILU had been formed the previous year at a congress in Moscow as a revolutionary class-struggle trade-union pole, consisting of both Communists and revolutionary syndicalists. It was openly counterposed to the Social-Democratic-led International Federation of Trade Unions, also known as the Amsterdam International. Despite its opposition to the right-wing Amsterdam leadership, the Profintern's perspective was not to split the unions. Its goal was instead to transform the existing unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle. Wherever unions remained affiliated to Amsterdam, the RILU sought to act as loyal and disciplined minorities within them. The Amsterdam leaders, however, did not share this interest in trade-union unity. When the social-democratic union heads felt their control to be threatened by Communists and revolutionary syndicalists, they would often simply expel the offending unions and unionists.<sup>17</sup>

- *Youth.* The plenum heard a report from a leader of the Communist Youth International that focused on the situation of young workers and outlined a programme of demands for Communist parties to use in their work among them.<sup>18</sup>
- *The war danger.* The plenum heard a report by Clara Zetkin on the renewed danger of imperialist war. 'After the World War ended, the cry went up:

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<sup>16</sup> See pp. 198–201.

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 185–97.

<sup>18</sup> See pp. 207–9.

“Never again war,” Zetkin told the meeting, ‘But today we face new dangers of war. The world is loaded with explosive material that at any moment could set off new and even worse wars.’ United-front action was required to combat this danger, she pointed out, ultimately posing the need for revolutionary change:

Against the threat of world war we must establish a solid united front of the proletariat for the struggle against war and imperialism. The struggle against the dangers of war and armaments must be a step forward toward winning political power of the proletariat. Only the overthrow of capitalism can lead humankind to world peace.<sup>19</sup>

## II SECOND ENLARGED PLENUM (JUNE 1922)

### Conference of the Three Internationals

At the First Enlarged Plenum, there had been discussion about plans for an upcoming international conference of the three international working-class organisations, which would be held in April 1922. The First Plenum had viewed such a conference as a battleground in the campaign for a united front. Drawing a balance sheet of this whole experience was one of the central reasons for convening the Second Enlarged Plenum of June 1922.

The background of this conference helps explain why it generated considerable interest among the working-class public at the time.

The international workers’ movement in 1922 was divided into three main international currents: the Second International, the centrist ‘Two-and-a-Half International’ (formally the International Working Union of Socialist Parties), and the Third, Communist International.<sup>20</sup>

In February 1922, the Comintern had been approached by the leadership of the Two-and-a-Half International proposing a world conference of the three Internationals to discuss the need to combat the capitalist offensive and the threat of war.

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19 See pp. 217 and 219.

20 The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals merged in May 1923. An additional international current at the time was that of the anarcho-syndicalist forces. In late 1922 these groups formed the ‘International Working Men’s Association’.

Despite its political opposition to the Social-Democratic and centrist world bodies, the Comintern leadership responded positively to the proposal, based on its support for united working-class action. Out of this initiative came the Conference of the Three Internationals, which took place in Berlin in early April 1922. The stated objective of this conference was to convene a world congress of labour that would include the major tendencies in the workers' movement.

Among those who viewed the Berlin Conference with the greatest interest was Lenin. Recognising its importance for organising united proletarian action, Lenin attempted to assist in the Comintern's participation, giving practical advice to its delegation. Among Lenin's suggestions was to minimise unnecessary obstacles – including in the language used. Referring to a resolution of the First Enlarged Plenum on participation in the Berlin Conference, Lenin wrote:

My chief amendment is aimed at deleting the passage which calls the leaders of the II and II ½ Internationals accomplices of the world bourgeoisie. You might as well call a man a 'jackass'. It is absolutely unreasonable to risk wrecking an affair of tremendous practical importance for the sake of giving oneself the extra pleasure of scolding scoundrels, whom we shall be scolding a thousand times at another place and time.<sup>21</sup>

As Lenin saw it, the meeting would result either in concrete proletarian action, or in exposing reformist and centrist opposition to such action. In either case, he believed, the result would be advantageous to the Communist movement.

The Comintern delegation to the Berlin Conference was headed by Radek, Bukharin, and Zetkin, who each addressed the gathering.<sup>22</sup>

In the course of the meeting, the Communist delegation made various concessions in the interests of common action. At the same time, they were able to use the platform of the conference to publicly explain to the world working class why they supported united action with the very same forces who had betrayed the working class during the First World War and subsequently.

Out of the Berlin Conference came a common declaration, which called for the formation of a Committee of Nine (with three representatives from each International), charged with organising the projected world congress of labour.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See pp. 372.

<sup>22</sup> For the list of the entire Comintern delegation, see p. 366.

<sup>23</sup> For the text of this common declaration, see pp. 367–8.

At the conference, as well as afterward, the representatives from the Second International made clear their opposition to holding such a congress. In face of this opposition, and the Two-and-a-Half International's refusal to force the issue, the Committee of Nine broke apart at its first and only meeting on 23 May 1922.

Lenin criticised some of the concessions the Comintern delegation had made at the Berlin Conference. But he did not back down from his support for the Communist International's participation, and he recognised some of the positive achievements that came out of this participation. Highlighting the Communists' success in propagandising their views, Lenin asserted that 'we have made some breach in the premises that were closed to us,' adding:

Communists must not stew in their own juice, but must learn to penetrate into prohibited premises where the representatives of the bourgeoisie are influencing the workers; and in this they must not shrink from making certain sacrifices and not be afraid of making mistakes, which, at first, are inevitable in every new and difficult undertaking.<sup>24</sup>

In Radek's report to the Second Enlarged Plenum drawing an overall positive assessment of the experience, he made the observation that through its participation and clear-cut stance at the Conference of the Three Internationals, the Comintern was earning a reputation within the working class as the force most in favour of united proletarian action. This reputation was to play an important part in the Comintern's successes over the next year in the trade unions and other areas.

### **Advancing the United-Front Campaign**

One of the other aims of the Second Enlarged Plenum was to draw an initial balance sheet of Communist parties' united-front experiences, as well as to overcome hesitation by several of the parties that had opposed the policy and were still reluctant to carry it out, despite having promised to do so. Radek's report spoke to this point, as did supplemental remarks by Zinoviev.

In the process, Comintern leaders also made two important political observations about the united front:

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<sup>24</sup> For Lenin's assessment of the results of the Berlin Conference, see pp. 374–7.

1. In their opposition to the united front, a number of leftist delegates had counterposed a 'united front from below' to a 'united front from above'. The Comintern leadership rejected such a dichotomy, pointing out that the two things could not be separated. Indeed the idea of a 'united front from below' was a negation of the very concept. If it were possible to achieve united proletarian action over the heads of the existing working-class organisations, then there would be no need for united fronts at all. Communists could simply call for united action in their own name. Radek spoke to this point at the Second Enlarged Plenum in June 1922. 'A genuine united front will come into being when it leads the masses into struggle', he explained. 'Now the question is: How do we go to the masses? Anyone who now says, "united front from below" misunderstands the situation.'<sup>25</sup>
2. The united front was envisioned as a tool for action in defence of working-class interests; it was not seen as an attempt to achieve a broader 'organic unity' of the participating organisations. As Lenin had pointed out, referring to the Conference of the Three Internationals, united fronts should be seen exclusively 'for the sake of achieving possible practical unity of direct action.'<sup>26</sup>

### Three Parties Spotlighted

Months earlier, the First Enlarged Plenum had organised a separate agenda point on the problems of the French Communist Party. The Second Enlarged Plenum did so too, along with agenda points on the Czechoslovak and Norwegian parties. These three parties had all come to the Communist International directly out of the Second International, and were each saddled with many Social-Democratic traditions.

- *France*. The majority of the old French Socialist Party had voted to join the Comintern at its December 1920 congress in Tours, deciding to change its name to Communist Party. A minority (known as the 'Dissidents') split off and retained the old party name. While becoming a Communist Party in name, however, the new party in many respects still retained the traditions and structures of the old Socialist Party.

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<sup>25</sup> See pp. 284.

<sup>26</sup> See pp. 371.

The French CP was divided into factions: a centre majority, led by the party's leader Frossard, a left wing that was generally closer to Comintern positions, and a right wing.

The Second Enlarged Plenum heard a report on the French party given by Trotsky. Trotsky also drafted a resolution on the French CP that was adopted.<sup>27</sup>

- *Norway*. The Norwegian Labour Party was one of the first parties to affiliate to the Comintern in 1919, although it never changed its name. The NLP was the leading party of the working class in Norway, and had come directly out of the Second International. Organisationally, however, it was unique. It combined individual party membership with group affiliations through trade unions and other workers' organisations. Within the Comintern, the NLP fought to maintain its basic traditions, agreeing to transform itself into a genuine Communist party but stalling on implementation of that decision. During 1922 and 1923, moreover, the party was embroiled in a faction fight between the party majority, led by Martin Tranmael, and a minority favouring closer ties with the Comintern, which was also in the leadership of the youth organisation.
- *Czechoslovakia*. The majority of the old Social-Democratic Party in Czechoslovakia had voted to join the Comintern in early 1921, with a Social-Democratic minority splitting off. But the new Communist Party remained divided by nationality within the new country of Czechoslovakia. With the Comintern's help, these nationally divided Communist organisations united into a single party in late 1921. The united party was nevertheless embroiled in a factional struggle, paralysing much of its work. The Second Enlarged Plenum heard reports from the leaders of the two main factions, Bohumir Šmeral and Bohumil Jílek.<sup>28</sup>

### Other Topics Discussed

Other matters were also taken up at the Second Enlarged Plenum:

- The trial of the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries. The plenum heard a report by Zinoviev on the trial that had just begun in Moscow of 47 members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, charged with maintaining ties with

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<sup>27</sup> See pp. 310–9 and 351–8.

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 296–300.

Anglo-French imperialism and being involved in armed counterrevolutionary attacks in Russia during the Civil War. The trial was being utilised by the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals in their campaign against Soviet Russia, and they raised it prominently at the Berlin Conference. As a result, the Communist delegation at Berlin announced that no death sentences would come out of the trial, and agreed to allow the Social Democrats to have open access to the trials, including functioning as defence counsels. At the same time, the plenum outlined a political campaign that Communist parties were urged to wage around the trial, which was to stress the Social Democrats' support for armed counterrevolutionary acts committed against Soviet Russia.<sup>29</sup>

- In preparation for the Fourth World Congress, scheduled to be held four months later, the Second Enlarged Plenum elected a commission to prepare a programme for the Comintern.

### Fourth World Congress

In November–December 1922, the Comintern held its Fourth Congress. One of the main themes of that congress was the united front.

In addition to approving the perspective adopted at the First and Second Enlarged ECCI Plenums, the congress discussed the united-front policy in a strategic framework. As Radek told the congress:

[T]he 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.<sup>30</sup>

At the Fourth Congress, the Comintern's united-front perspective was broadened strategically in another way, with the call for an 'anti-imperialist united front' in the colonial and semi-colonial world. Such a front, a congress resolution stated, would 'promote the development of a revolutionary will and of class consciousness among the working masses, placing them in the front ranks

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29 See pp. 269–71.

30 Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 452.

of fighters not only against imperialism but also against survivals of feudalism'. And it added that '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'.<sup>31</sup>

An additional application of the united front proposed at the Fourth Congress concerned the fight against fascism. The call for an anti-fascist united front originated from Fourth Congress delegates who were dissatisfied with the lack of a perspective by the ECCI leadership to combat the fascist rise. Swiss delegate Franz Welti told the congress that 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'.<sup>32</sup> This idea, acknowledged toward the end of the Fourth Congress,<sup>33</sup> would be at the centre of the discussion on fascism at the Third Enlarged Plenum.

The Fourth Congress also recognised the limits of the united-front slogan. It rejected seeing united fronts as electoral blocs or coalitions. As a resolution of the Fourth World Congress stated, '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.'<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, congress delegates frequently expressed different interpretations of the united front, with disagreements and reservations on its usefulness and applicability.<sup>35</sup>

### III THIRD ENLARGED PLENUM (JUNE 1923)

The Third Enlarged ECCI Plenum of 12–23 June 1923 was in several ways a contradictory meeting – more so for what it did not discuss than for what it did.

Three months earlier, Lenin had suffered a devastating stroke that left him incapacitated and ended his political life. Indeed, by mid-1923 elements of the post-Lenin Stalinist degeneration had already begun to appear in the Soviet

31 Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1187.

32 Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 476.

33 Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 20, 1154.

34 Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1158.

35 See Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 9, as well as Trotsky 1972, 2, p. 92.

Union. As will be described later in this introduction, this question was not discussed at the plenum, which also largely passed over the approaching revolutionary crisis in Germany.

Despite these negative signs, however, the Third Enlarged Plenum was nevertheless in general continuity with the first four Comintern congresses and the first two enlarged plenums, making important contributions to the Comintern's political legacy in several key areas. For these reasons, the Third Enlarged Plenum deserves to be categorised as a legitimate part of the Lenin-era Comintern.

## Political Background

### *Growth of Communist Movement*

By June 1923, the Comintern's united-front efforts had resulted in substantial gains for the Communist movement in several countries, above all Germany. This progress was reflected in a relative decline in the strength of its Social-Democratic opponents.

The centrist Two-and-a-Half International, which had initiated the Berlin Conference discussed earlier, had been formed in February 1921 as an alternative to the Communist International, and had garnered a significant amount of support from proletarian militants who were discouraged by the split in the workers' movement and desired unity. Among these layers, the Comintern's united-front efforts had made a significant impact, undercutting support for the Two-and-a-Half International. As a result, the centrist International was left with little alternative but to reunite with the reformist Second International. It did so at a May 1923 congress in Hamburg, Germany, held several weeks prior to the Third Enlarged Plenum.

The declining attraction of Social Democracy among working-class activists was paralleled by a growing appreciation for the Communist movement, which was increasingly seen as the champion of proletarian unity.

But gains from the united-front policy were perhaps felt most strongly in the trade-union movement. Working-class sentiment for united action to fight the capitalist offensive was such that two of the Amsterdam International's union federations felt pressured to respond favourably to the united-front initiatives of the Red International of Labour Unions. In May 1923 united-front agreements were reached between Communist-led union forces and the Amsterdam International's metalworkers and transport workers' federations.

### *World Political Situation*

The world political situation that confronted the Third Enlarged Plenum in June 1923 was one of intensifying crisis.

On 11 January 1923, the Ruhr region in Germany was invaded by sixty thousand French and Belgian troops, who occupied the area in an attempt to exact war reparations. That invasion and occupation exacerbated the social crisis within Germany.

The Ruhr invasion also increased tensions among the imperialist powers, particularly the rivalry between Britain and France. 'What has taken place in the last six months in the Ruhr,' Radek reported to the Third Enlarged Plenum, 'shows not only that the international bourgeoisie is incapable of rebuilding the capitalist world economy, but the bourgeoisies of the individual countries are incapable of subordinating their specific interests to the common interests they all share.'<sup>36</sup>

Another theme of Radek's world political situation report was the danger facing Soviet Russia. A month earlier, the British government had sent an ultimatum to the Soviet republic signed by its foreign secretary, Lord Curzon. The ultimatum demanded that the Soviets recall their diplomatic representatives from Iran and Afghanistan, apologise for anti-British acts, reduce maritime limits around its borders, and other things. The note threatened to cancel the British-Soviet trade agreement of 1921 unless these demands were met, with an implicit threat of war.

One other feature of the world situation in 1923 that clearly showed the unfolding crisis was the growth of rightist movements throughout Europe. In line with this, one of the biggest contributions of the Third Enlarged Plenum was its discussion of fascism.

### **Fascism**

Italian fascism arose as a reaction to the rising proletarian movement in Italy, and to that movement's inability to utilise the country's social crisis to lead the working class toward the seizure of power. The achievement of proletarian rule in Italy had in fact been sharply posed during a September 1920 wave of factory occupations that had rocked the country. But that promising revolutionary opportunity was lost when the Italian Socialist Party – then a member of the Comintern – and the main trade union federation under its influence refused

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<sup>36</sup> See p. 489.

to see this month-long movement as anything more than a simple trade-union battle. In the wake of this failure, fascist forces led by Benito Mussolini escalated their attacks on the working class and its organisations, receiving increasing backing from Italian capitalists. At the end of October 1922, the fascists were able to take power, with Mussolini becoming prime minister of Italy.

Fascist movements were on the rise in other European countries, too, the strongest being in Germany. Fascist-type formations also sprang up in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and elsewhere.

The Fourth World Congress had heard a report on fascism by Italian CP leader Amadeo Bordiga. While that report included some useful observations about the fascist movement in Italy, its attempt to analyse the fascist phenomenon in general was nonetheless inadequate and schematic. In essence, Bordiga stated, there was little substantive difference between fascism and bourgeois democracy, and he predicted that fascism was unlikely to last long. Moreover, Bordiga provided little perspective on how the working class could conduct a struggle against fascism. That deficiency was not Bordiga's alone; the fight against fascism received scant attention in Zinoviev's main report to the Fourth Congress.

Only on the second-to-last day of the congress did Zinoviev say that Communists should unite with non-Communist forces in the struggle against fascism.<sup>37</sup>

It was an important first step, nevertheless. On 3 January 1923, the ECCI issued an appeal calling for an international united front against fascism. In line with this, an International Provisional Committee against Fascism was formed, chaired by Clara Zetkin.

### *Zetkin Report and Resolution*

Given the inadequacy of the Fourth Congress analysis of fascism, the clarity of Clara Zetkin's report to the Third Enlarged Plenum is all the more remarkable. In fact, this plenum should be recognised as the site of the first major discussion in the international Marxist movement on the causes and nature of fascism.

Zetkin's analysis included the following key elements:

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37 For Bordiga's report at the Fourth Congress, see Riddell (ed.) 2012, *4WC*, pp. 403–23. For Zinoviev's comments on Italy, see *ibid.*, pp. 1032–55.

An indication of the Fourth Congress deficiency on fascism was the lack of a resolution on the question; its Resolution on the Italian Question (*4WC*, pp. 1138–42) failed to even address the rise of fascism in that country, aside from a passing reference.

- Fascism's emergence is inextricably tied to the crisis of capitalism and the decline of its institutions. This crisis is characterised by escalating attacks on the working class, and by middle layers of society being increasingly squeezed and driven down into the proletariat.
- The rise of fascism is based on the proletariat's failure to resolve capitalism's social crisis by taking power and beginning to reorganise society. This failure breeds demoralisation among workers and among the forces within society that had looked to the proletariat and socialism as a way out of the crisis.
- Fascism possesses a mass character, with special appeal to petty-bourgeois layers threatened by the decline of the capitalist social order. To win support from these layers, fascism makes use of anti-capitalist demagogy.
- Fascist ideology elevates nation and state above all class contradictions and class interests.
- A major characteristic of fascism is the use of organised violence by anti-working-class shock troops, aiming to crush all independent proletarian organisation.
- At a certain point important sections of the capitalist class begin to support and finance the fascist movement, seeing it as a way to counter the threat of proletarian revolution.
- Once in power, fascism tends to become bureaucratised, and moves away from its demagogic appeals, leading to a resurgence of class contradictions and class struggle.
- Workers' self-defence is crucial in order to confront the fascist terror campaign. Above all, this includes organised workers' defence guards to combat fascist attacks.
- United-front action to combat fascism is essential, involving all working-class organisations and currents, regardless of political differences.
- In addition to combating fascism physically when necessary to defend itself, the working class needs to combat fascism's mass appeal politically, making special efforts among middle-class layers.

These basic ideas can all be found in Trotsky's later writings on the rise of fascism in Germany, which are better known. While Trotsky has been widely credited with being the originator of a Marxist theory of fascism,<sup>38</sup> many of the points he raised can be found in this 1923 discussion.

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<sup>38</sup> See for example Ernest Mandel's introduction to Trotsky 1971.

Zetkin's report and resolution also contrasts sharply with the analysis of fascism put forward subsequently by the Comintern under Stalin. There were two such Stalinist approaches, equally erroneous:

1 'Social Fascism'

Adopted during the Comintern's ultraleft 'Third Period' of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the thrust of this view was to equate Social Democracy and fascism, thereby justifying the German Communist Party's refusal to seek a united front with the powerful Social-Democratic Party in the fight against the Nazis. Had such a united front been organised, it would have had the support of the overwhelming majority of working people in Germany and would almost certainly have been powerful enough to counter the Nazis. The adamant refusal to seek such united action by both the KPD and the SPD leaderships can rightly be said to have opened the road to Hitler's assumption of power.

2 'Popular Frontism'

This view was first fully presented in a report by Georgy Dimitrov to the Seventh Congress of the by-then fully Stalinised Comintern in 1935. Fascism, Dimitrov stated, was 'the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital'. It 'acts in the interests of the extreme imperialists', 'the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie'.<sup>39</sup>

Based on this analysis, the task of Communists was to form blocs – 'popular fronts' – with supposedly less reactionary, less chauvinistic, and less imperialist sections of the bourgeoisie – its 'anti-fascist wing' – and to subordinate independent working-class struggle and political action to this objective. In practice such an approach meant that Stalinist parties opposed all independent proletarian revolutionary action in general, seeing this as an obstacle to the projected popular front.<sup>40</sup> Such a perspective also became the justification for giving back-handed support to 'anti-fascist' capitalist politicians such as Franklin D. Roosevelt in the US, under the guise that his Republican opposition represented 'the chief menace of fascism'.<sup>41</sup>

39 Dimitrov's report is contained in Comintern 1939, pp. 124–93. It can also be found online at Marxists Internet Archive.

40 Leon Trotsky and other Marxist leaders pointed out how this approach led to the defeat of the Spanish revolution and civil war of the late 1930s. See for example Trotsky 1973, Morrow 1974, and Broué and Témime 1972.

41 *The Communist*, no. 6, June 1936, p. 489.

### *The 'Schlageter Speech'*

To the extent that the discussion on fascism at the Third Enlarged Plenum has been studied, much of the attention centres not on Zetkin's report or the resolution she authored, but on Karl Radek's 'Schlageter speech' given during the discussion.<sup>42</sup>

Albert Leo Schlageter was a member of the right-wing Freikorps troops involved in carrying out sabotage actions against French occupation forces in the Ruhr. Captured by French troops and charged with blowing up the railway near Düsseldorf, he was executed on 26 May 1923. The Nazis and other rightist forces treated him as a martyr.

Characterising Schlageter as 'our class opponent' and a 'courageous soldier of the counterrevolution', Karl Radek's speech to the plenum was a somewhat lyrical attempt to discuss the motives that led Schlageter to join the fascist forces. By doing so, Radek pointed to fascism's nationalist appeal to the petty-bourgeois masses, as well as to sections of the working class.

[W]e believe that the great majority of the nationalist-minded masses belong not in the camp of the capitalists but in that of the workers. We want to find the road to these masses, and we will do so. We will do everything in our power to make men like Schlageter ... not spill their eager, unselfish blood for the profit of the coal and iron barons, but in the cause of the great toiling German people, which is a member of the family of peoples fighting for their emancipation.

Radek's speech was not an individual flight of fancy. As he reported to the Comintern's Fifth Congress a year later, he had been assigned to deliver it by the ECCI leadership. 'The Schlageter speech', he said, 'was given at the [Third] Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee with the agreement – not just silent but written – of the chairman of the Executive Committee [Zinoviev].'<sup>43</sup>

Following the speech, it was widely claimed that Radek was proposing a rapprochement with fascism. The Social-Democratic Party was especially insistent about this claim. Its central organ *Vorwärts* published an article entitled 'The New National Hero: Radek Extols Schlageter'.<sup>44</sup> The Social Democrats spoke of the 'collusion of the Communist and fascist leaders'. Even Ruth Fischer, a

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42 See pp. 613–8 of this volume.

43 Comintern 1924c, p. 713.

44 'Der neue Nationalheld. Radek feiert Schlageter'.

leader of the leftist faction in the KPD at the time, subsequently accepted this interpretation, stating that Radek had 'openly proposed a united front' with the German nationalists.<sup>45</sup>

Radek decisively rejected this claim, however. In an article printed in *Inprecorr*, he reminded readers that he had specifically referred to the Nazis as the workers' 'class opponent'. He then spoke of the underlying reason for the speech:

Fascism is a political movement embracing wide masses of the proletarianised petty bourgeoisie. And if we are to combat it, we must combat it politically. It is only possible to combat fascism politically, by first opening the eyes of the broad, suffering masses of the petty bourgeoisie to the fact that their justifiable feelings are being taken advantage of by capital, which is to blame, not only for their economic misery but also for the national misery of Germany. ... The Communist Party must be capable of awakening in the petty bourgeois masses the great and holy faith in the possibility of overcoming misery, of awakening the conviction that petty bourgeoisie and working class in cooperation are able to overcome misery, and to create the foundations for a new life in Germany.<sup>46</sup>

#### KPD's 'Schlageter Line'

Coming out of the Third Enlarged Plenum, the German Communist Party organised a campaign of joint discussion meetings and public debates with fascist and Nazi forces, which took place over the course of July and August 1923.

Communist speakers addressed nationalist audiences in meetings held at universities.<sup>47</sup> In her memoirs, then-KPD leader Ruth Fischer stated that 'Communists built up small groups in which nationalists and socialists met to discuss the necessity of a united German front against France.' Fischer recounted that in one such meeting Hermann Remmele, a Communist Reichstag deputy, spoke at a meeting in Stuttgart and, according to a report in *Die Rote Fahne*, 'was greeted by "enthusiastic applause from fascists and workers". Communist speakers declared, "The time is not far off when the *Völkische* [*Völkischer Beobachter*, the Nazi newspaper] and the Communists will be united."' <sup>48</sup>

45 See Fischer 1948, p. 268.

46 Radek, 'Fascism, Ourselves and the German Social-Democrats', in *Inprecorr*, no. 30, 12 July 1923.

47 Broué 2005, pp. 728–9.

48 Fischer 1948, pp. 282–3.

According to Pierre Broué, 'Communist orators sometimes let themselves get carried away in their desire to please their audiences and made dangerous concessions to them.' The Social Democrats even accused the KPD of having made anti-Semitic statements, referring specifically to Fischer.<sup>49</sup> No convincing evidence for this assertion has been provided, Broué insists. Fischer herself vociferously denied the charge.<sup>50</sup>

Despite claims that the Schlageter line aimed to achieve a united front of Communists and Nationalists,<sup>51</sup> no credible evidence has been supplied that such a goal was ever a serious aim of the KPD leadership at the time.

This assertion could possibly be made with a view toward the subsequent de-facto bloc of the by-then Stalinised Communist Party with the Nazis in the so-called 'Red Referendum' of 1931.<sup>52</sup> But no convincing evidence has been provided of any effort at a 'united front' between the Communists and Nazis in 1923.

Radek's Schlageter speech and the KPD's 'Schlageter line' were meant to open the eyes of the Communist movement to fascism's appeal to the petty bourgeoisie, and to sections of the working class. To that extent, the line involved no violation of Communist principle and fulfilled a political need.<sup>53</sup> Nor could there be a principled objection, in and of itself, to debating with these forces and appealing to their supporters. Moreover, the initiative was taken at a time of significant uncertainty and vacillation in the nationalist ranks.

The experience of the anti-fascist struggle over the last century, however, raises two important considerations concerning the suitability of such initiatives in the future:

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49 *Vorwärts*, 22 August 1923.

50 Broué 2005, pp. 729–30. Fischer stated: 'At a meeting of Berlin University students organised by the Berlin party branch, I was the speaker. The attitude of the nationalists against capitalism was discussed, and I was obliged to answer some anti-Semitic remarks. I said that Communism was for fighting Jewish capitalists only if all capitalists, Jewish and Gentile, were the object of the same attack. This episode has been cited and distorted over and over again in publications on German Communism.' In Fischer 1948, p. 283.

51 See for example Carr 1966 v. 4, p. 193.

52 The 'red referendum' was a name given by the German CP to a 1931 referendum in which the CP was allied with the Nazis in supporting a vote to oust the coalition government in Prussia headed by the Social Democrats. See 'Against National Communism (Lessons of the "Red Referendum")', in Trotsky 1971, pp. 93–114.

53 Broué 2005, p. 730, asserts that the Schlageter line 'corresponded to the needs of the time – and history has proved this to be correct – even if its application went awry at times'.

1. The real and significant danger of political adaptation to rightist and fascist forces cannot be ignored, including the prospect of individuals and currents in the working-class movement crossing over entirely to the class enemy. Such was the case in Italy – with Mussolini himself as well as other forces in the Communist movement (Nicola Bombacci). The same phenomena took place in Germany, where one wing of the National Bolshevik tendency within the leftist Communist Workers' Party (KAPD) wound up in the camp of the Nazi movement. Experience has shown that the anti-capitalist and often anti-Semitic demagoguery of fascist and ultra-right forces can become attractive to sectors of the workers' movement.<sup>54</sup>
2. The most effective way for the working class to educate and win over those attracted to fascism is not primarily through political appeals to its supporters or attempts to debate them, but rather by showing the proletariat's absolute determination to take power out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and resolve capitalism's social crisis. In doing so, organised countermobilisation and self-defence by the working class and its allies in response to fascist threats can be seen as an effective educational tool.

### **Workers' Government**

In the Comintern's discussions of 1922 and 1923, the united front was seen as integrally tied to the demand for a workers' government. As stated by a resolution of the Fourth Congress: 'The slogan of the workers' government flows unavoidably from the entire united-front tactic.'<sup>55</sup>

The issue of the workers' government, which originally arose out of the experience of the German workers' movement, was a key point of discussion at the Fourth Congress.<sup>56</sup> It was also an important theme of Zinoviev's main report to the Third Enlarged Plenum, focusing on two aspects:

#### **1      *The Centrality of the Governmental Question***

One of the contributions of the Comintern in 1922 and 1923 was on the central place of the governmental demand in a Communist party's programme. 'The slogan of the workers' government,' Zinoviev reported to the plenum, 'serves as

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54 One recent example is that of the Lyndon LaRouche organisation in the United States, which evolved in the 1970s from a left-wing sect into a proto-fascist cult.

55 Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1159.

56 For an analysis of this discussion, see the introduction to Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 20–7.

a link between our programme of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the small demands around which we can now mobilise the masses.<sup>57</sup>

Along these lines, Zinoviev's report to the Third Enlarged Plenum pointed to how the Communists' governmental demand separated them from the Social-Democratic tradition.

In order to understand the psychological essence of the [Communist] parties ... you must take into account that these parties do not yet feel themselves to be striving to win the majority in their countries. They are not yet parties struggling for power and for leadership of the state. So far, most of our parties still have the psychology of merely an oppositional workers' party in the framework of bourgeois society, a party that does not feel itself to be a leading force, the bearer of hegemony, which has set out to win the majority of the people, to overthrow the bourgeoisie, and to replace it in a leadership role. ...

We must awaken the will to power in our parties. We must make them into parties aware in their every move of their task to overcome the bourgeoisie. Our parties are the vanguard of the working class. Imbued with the will to power, this vanguard will transmit this commitment to the broad layers of workers in their millions. And when millions and millions of proletarians are imbued with this will to power, victory will no longer be so difficult.<sup>58</sup>

## 2 *The 'Workers' and Peasants' Government' Slogan*

The Fourth Congress had raised the possibility of a 'government of workers and the poorer peasants' in 'the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, and so on'.<sup>59</sup> The Third Enlarged Plenum applied this concept more broadly, reformulating the workers' government slogan into that of a 'workers' and peasants' government', pointing to the class alliances necessary for the proletariat in its fight for power.

Speakers in the discussion referred to the experience of the Bolsheviks in the years prior to the 1917 revolution, in which Lenin had outlined the class alliances necessary for the coming revolution, presenting an algebraic formula based on this necessary alliance, since, as Lenin said, 'politics is more like algebra than arithmetic'.<sup>60</sup> In line with this perspective, the Third Enlarged Plenum's resolution on the workers' and peasants' government stated:

<sup>57</sup> See p. 289 of this volume.

<sup>58</sup> See pp. 411 and 423.

<sup>59</sup> Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1161.

<sup>60</sup> Lenin, 'Left-Wing Communism – An Infantile Disorder', *LCW*, 31, p. 102. The Bolsheviks'

The 'workers' and peasants' government' slogan is a propagandistic formula that enables us to express arithmetically what was previously expressed only algebraically. As such, it can be universally helpful.<sup>61</sup>

As Radek told the plenum, 'The Bolsheviki Party was very early in orienting to the peasants, but only in the slogan of the 1905 revolution, for a coalition with the peasants, did this assume great significance.'

Mention was made of how following the October Revolution, the Bolsheviki had made an alliance with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries – a party based on peasant support, which was part of the government that had held power in Soviet Russia until mid-1918. As Trotsky put it at the Fourth Congress, the Left SRs 'represented the peasantry in the workers' government'.<sup>62</sup>

The workers' and peasants' government slogan also figured prominently in the discussion on fascism at the Third Enlarged Plenum, where it was presented as a way to combat fascism's mass appeal to petty-bourgeois layers. And it played a prominent part in the plenum's assessment of events in Bulgaria.<sup>63</sup>

### Bulgaria Coup

On the eve of the June 1923 Enlarged Plenum, a right-wing coup in Bulgaria overthrew the government headed by radical Peasant Party leader Aleksandar Stamboliyski, sparking armed resistance by Peasant Party supporters.

The Communist Party of Bulgaria had the support of the overwhelming majority of the working class of the country, dwarfing the Social-Democratic party, with dominance in the trade unions and among working-class deputies in parliament. Within the Comintern, the Bulgarian CP had often been pointed to as a model party.

But during the coup, the party failed the test. Rather than opposing the right-wing governmental seizure and seeing it as an attack on the working class and peasantry as a whole, the CP took a neutral stance, presenting the coup as an

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algebraic slogan was for a 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'.

61 See p. 654.

62 Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1003.

63 The slogan was also subsequently given an opportunistic interpretation, justifying Communists' participation in the formation of multiclass peasant parties. See for example Thomas Dombal, 'The Peasants' International' in *Pravda*, 19 June 1923 and *Inprecorr*, 26 June 1923.

internecine struggle within the bourgeoisie that workers had no stake in. During the days of the coup, the Bulgarian party repeatedly defended this stance of neutrality.

The coup and the CP's failure was the subject of a report by Radek given to the last session of the Third Enlarged Plenum. Radek's report subjected the Bulgarian CP and its leadership to withering criticism, focusing on 'the absence of a will to struggle' within the party going back years. 'It accomplished wonders in the sphere of propaganda and organisation, but at a historic moment it was not able to carry out the transition from agitation and opposition to the deed, to action.' Much of the report was centred on the question of the Executive Committee's degree of responsibility, given Radek's description of the longstanding nature of the Bulgarian CP's problems. Radek denied any ECCI responsibility for the Bulgarian party's stance.

In contrast to the approach of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Radek cited the example of the Bolsheviks in 1917 during the attempted coup by General Lavr Kornilov against the Provisional Government led by Alexander Kerensky. Although the Bolsheviks were opponents of Kerensky, who had persecuted them fiercely, they nevertheless helped organise the successful resistance to Kornilov.

After Radek's report, the meeting adopted an appeal that urged Bulgarian toilers to 'Unite in struggle against the white putsch not only with the broad peasant masses but with the surviving leaders of the Peasant Party.' And it called for 'a common struggle for a workers' and peasants' government'.<sup>64</sup>

### National Question in Germany

Prior to 1871 Germany was divided into more than a score of independent states and principalities, with feudal remnants abounding. In that context the developing revolutionary workers' movement supported the fight for German unification as part of an advancing democratic revolution, which it viewed as a prelude to the fight for socialism.

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64 For the report and resolution, see pp. 637–49.

The June 1923 failure in Bulgaria had a sorry epilogue. Three months later, in September, as if to atone for their failure to combat the coup, the Bulgarian CP helped initiate an ill-prepared uprising against the new regime with the goal of setting up a 'workers' and peasants' government'. The uprising was quickly crushed. According to Alfred Rosmer, a leader of the Red International of Labour Unions in Moscow at the time, the adventure was directly instigated by Zinoviev (Rosmer 1971, pp. 203, 208).

When German unification was largely achieved in 1871, however, power was in the hands of the dynastic Prussian regime of Otto von Bismarck, laying the groundwork for a modern bourgeois and imperialist state. For the German Social-Democratic Party, German unification then ceased being a burning question. The unification left outside the country a large German population in Austria-Hungary plus small minorities elsewhere.

During World War I, Germany had been at the head of one of the rival groups of imperialist powers. Even though the German government and other supporters of the war publicly declared that it was being waged in defence of Germany's national interests, Lenin had dismissed this claim in his attack on the German Social Democracy's support for the war. This same basic stance guided the position of the early Comintern toward the 'national question' in advanced capitalist countries.

In the context of the Versailles Treaty's demands on Germany and the occupation of the Ruhr, however, the national question began to find a deep resonance in German society that could not simply be ignored by the Communist movement.

In his ECCI report to the Third Enlarged Plenum, Zinoviev stated that 'we Communists are against the bourgeois fatherland, but if we achieve a socialist government, we will defend this socialist fatherland.' This view was echoed by Radek in the discussion, presenting the perspective that 'salvation is to be found only through the Communists. We represent today the only road forward. Strong emphasis on the nation in Germany today is a revolutionary act.'<sup>65</sup>

This question became the subject of debate between the rival factions in the KPD. The debate originated around an article written by August Thalheimer, a leader of the party majority, which stated:

The German bourgeoisie, however counterrevolutionary it is in its essence, has been brought by the cowardice of the petty-bourgeois democracy (above all the Social Democrats) into a situation where it can act externally in an objectively revolutionary fashion. It is externally revolutionary (at least for a time) against its own will, as was the case with Bismarck from 1864 to 1870, and for analogous historical reasons.<sup>66</sup>

The leftist faction in the KPD vociferously opposed this view. At the Third Enlarged Plenum, Alois Neurath, a leader of the Czechoslovak party who sup-

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65 See pp. 445–6.

66 See p. 509.

ported the KPD minority, criticised Thalheimer's viewpoint as a concession to social patriotism. The 'broad masses of petty-bourgeois proletarian layers', he stated, will not be won 'if we try to compete with the German nationalists. Instead, we must always emphasise in this critical situation our intransigent internationalism.'<sup>67</sup>

While not endorsing all of Thalheimer's conclusions and formulations, Rak-dek responded to Neurath's argument:

Comrade Neurath says that Germany is being flooded by a tide of nationalism, which we must combat rather than adapting to it. The party has not adapted in the slightest; it sharply combats nationalism. The German party has not overlooked an important fact neglected by Comrade Neurath, namely the difference between nationalism and the revolutionary national interests of Germany, which at present coincide with the revolutionary national interests of the proletariat.<sup>68</sup>

### **'Limits of Centralism'**

Another point on the agenda at the Third Enlarged Plenum was a report by Bukharin on 'the limits of centralism in the Comintern'.

### ***The Comintern and Centralism***

The question of centralism was not a new one for the Communist International.

The Second International had never claimed to be centralist in nature, functioning largely as a 'mailbox', as it was characterised by the Comintern's Second Congress.<sup>69</sup> The resolutions adopted at the Second International's congresses had only moral weight, with no mechanism to assure their implementation by the different parties.<sup>70</sup>

The consequences of that type of functioning were brought into sharp relief during the First World War. Despite all the resolutions passed at earlier inter-

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67 See p. 512.

68 See p. 524.

69 Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 1, pp. 294–5.

70 By contrast, the Third Comintern Congress discussed how a form of 'bureaucratic centralism' existed within most of the Second International's parties, in which leaders did what they pleased, not bound by membership decisions. See Koenen's report on the organisational question in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, p. 811.

national congresses to oppose imperialist war and support the struggle against it, the main parties of the Second International lined up, one after another, to support the war efforts of their respective capitalist classes.

The hypocrisy of international Social Democracy left a deep mark on revolutionary-minded workers and youth. What these militants aspired to was something completely different: an international movement that did what it said it would do, with no gap between word and deed.

When the Communist International was formed in 1919, the new movement made a sharp break with the decentralised structure of the Second International. Instead, it set out to build an instrument to fight the centralised power of the bourgeoisie, making this a key part of its Statutes:

The Communist International knows that in order to achieve victory more rapidly, the international workers' association that fights to destroy capitalism and create communism must have a strictly centralised organisation. The Communist International must be, truly and in fact, a united Communist party of the whole world. The parties that work in each country are only its individual sections. The organisational apparatus of the Communist International must guarantee the workers of every country that at any given moment they will receive maximum assistance from the organised proletarians of other countries.<sup>71</sup>

To carry out this centralisation, the Comintern created a leadership body – the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). The Statutes defined the ECCI's functions as follows:

The Executive Committee directs all the activities of the Communist International from one congress to the next, publishes the central organ of the Communist International (the magazine *Communist International*) in at least four languages, issues in the name of the Communist International such appeals as are required, and issues directives binding on all organisations and parties belonging to the Communist International. 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. Such parties have the right to appeal to the world

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71 Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, p. 696.

congress. As necessary, the Executive Committee organises in different countries technical and other auxiliary bureaux, which are strictly subordinate to the Executive Committee. Executive Committee representatives discharge their political duties in the closest possible communication with the party leaderships of their respective countries.<sup>72</sup>

Nevertheless, in outlining international centralism, the Twenty-One Conditions for Admission to the Comintern adopted by the Second Congress made a point of stating international centralism's limits:

[I]n all their activity, the Communist International and its Executive Committee 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.<sup>73</sup>

Respect for the specific conditions facing each party was the general practice in the Communist International's first years. During this time, the ECCI was judicious about issuing directives and orders, focusing on political collaboration with the Comintern's national sections. Zinoviev referred to this general practice at the Third World Congress in 1921:

An attempt has been made to claim that we impose a dreadful pressure, a dreadful centralism. The opposite is true. Our organisation has been far too loose. We are well aware that many important questions are of such a nature that they must be resolved by the parties directly concerned, in the framework of national conditions. We have thoughtlessly proposed slogans to resolve on an international level issues that are inherently capable of resolution only on a national level.

However, there are issues where international guidelines must be established. We must have a much more centralised organisation, and we must build connections that are much tighter and more effective than has previously been the case.<sup>74</sup>

Returning to this question at the Third Enlarged Plenum, Zinoviev stated:

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<sup>72</sup> Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, p. 698.

<sup>73</sup> Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, p. 770.

<sup>74</sup> Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, p. 234. For the discussion at the Fourth Congress, see Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 41–5.

[T]he Communist International is really beginning to become a unified Communist world party. What does that mean – a world party? It absolutely does not mean, as a few scattered comrades suppose, the liquidation of our national parties. No, it means only that at moments when history demands truly international action ... the Communist International will bring its parties together and direct their energies in a manner consistent with the demands of the international struggle.

### *ECCI's Role*

At the Third Enlarged Plenum, there was some discussion of the ECCI's role and its collaboration with individual sections.

Much of the ECCI's work in the 1919–23 period was devoted to providing collaborative advice and assistance to individual member parties. As mentioned at the Third Enlarged Plenum, such collaboration included:

- Coordinating international campaigns. These included actions in support of Soviet Russia, the defence of political prisoners, and the united-front effort.
- Working for unification of Communist forces (US, Austria, Italy, etc.).
- Convincing parties to fight for legalisation (US, Japan).
- Helping parties to ease inner-party conflicts and restore collaborative relations between warring factions (Germany, Denmark, etc.).
- Encouraging small parties' involvement in working-class struggles (Britain, Switzerland, etc.).

One of the activities of the ECCI that engendered occasional criticism from Communist parties concerned the practice of sending envoys to the various sections.

Many ECCI emissaries provided valuable and universally welcomed assistance, particularly in facilitating the unification of Communist groups and currents and in winning forces from the Social Democracy to Communism. Among the most outstanding examples of such efforts was Zinoviev's October 1920 trip to Germany, during which he helped win the majority of the German USPD to the Comintern, in the process creating a mass Communist party. Similarly, Zetkin's December 1920 trip to France to attend the congress of the French Socialist Party, at which she helped convince the majority of that party to join the Comintern, was widely praised.<sup>75</sup>

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75 See Lewis and Lih (eds.) 2011, and *Parti socialiste* 1921.

The impact of other emissaries, however, was not as positive. Negative outcomes of such missions were a special risk in cases where envoys sought to impose tactical policies, based on insufficient knowledge of the local situation and compounded by their own lack of political experience and judgment. The most notorious example was that of the Comintern envoys sent to Germany in March 1921, who helped instigate the March Action of 1921.<sup>76</sup>

### *Norwegian Question*

The agenda point on centralism at the Third Enlarged Plenum centred on Norway. It focused on the Norwegian Labour Party's explicit rejection of any degree of centralism within the Communist International, asserting their party's virtual autonomy. This rejection was part of a move by the Norwegian party's majority away from communism, which would culminate in its open break from the Comintern by the end of 1923.

The Third Enlarged Plenum sought to hold on to the NLP and win it to the perspective of transforming itself into a Communist party. During the debate, the Norwegian party majority received support from within the Swedish CP, while a strong minority in the Norwegian party supported the line of the Comintern.

The complete identification of the 'international centralism' agenda point with the Norwegian question is illustrated by the fact that the commission assigned to take up this issue was referred to interchangeably as the 'Norwegian Commission', the 'Scandinavian Commission', and the 'Commission on the Centralism Question'.

While some of the discussion on centralism at the plenum went in the direction of calling for increased ECCI involvement in parties' local activity and tactics, and denying any 'limits' to centralism,<sup>77</sup> the resolution ultimately adopted was careful not to encroach on the authority of the Norwegian party leadership in local matters. Its proposals for changes to NLP policy and structure were made in the form of recommendations.<sup>78</sup>

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76 For the Comintern envoys to Germany in March 1921 (Béla Kun, Józef Pogány, and August Guralsky), see introduction to Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 16–18.

77 For example, Arthur Ewert from Germany stated, 'In our view, centralism in the Comintern is far from being sufficiently developed. It is true that a general staff capable of intervening authoritatively regarding the policies, tactics, and tasks of the individual parties cannot be created overnight. It will be constituted only over a lengthy period of development.' See p. 439.

78 One binding decision on a party that the Third Enlarged Plenum did make involved the

### Other Questions Discussed

The Third Enlarged Plenum took up a number of other issues. Among these were:

- *Trade unions.* In his report to Session 11, Solomon A. Lozovsky took up three main issues related to the work of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU, or Profintern): the significance of the gains made through united-front efforts in creating a left wing within the Amsterdam International; the fight for trade-union unity to oppose the Amsterdam leadership's expulsion of Communist-led unions; and the importance of the fight for union federations and individual unions to affiliate to the Profintern. A second trade-union report was given by Jakob Walcher.
- *Religion.* Prior to the enlarged plenum Swedish Communist leader Zeth Höglund – a defender of the Norwegian Labour Party – had asserted that religion was a private matter, both with relation to the state and to the Communist Party. In response, Comintern leaders initiated a discussion at the Third Enlarged Plenum on how from a Marxist viewpoint religion is indeed a private matter vis-à-vis the state, but it is not a private matter within the party, referring to the writings of Lenin on this question.<sup>79</sup> While the party does not exclude religiously minded workers from joining the party and treats their beliefs with sensitivity, Comintern leaders stated, it nonetheless maintains and defends a materialist and atheist worldview, and is particularly insistent that party leaders uphold this perspective.
- *The programme of the Comintern.* The Fourth World Congress had initiated a discussion around the need for a written programme for the Communist International. That debate was continued at the Third Enlarged Plenum with a report by Bukharin, who proposed that it be resolved the following year at the Fifth Comintern Congress.

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Italian CP, then locked in a bitter factional dispute. The plenum adopted a proposal to select a new mixed central leadership body, with three members from the majority and two from the minority, maintaining the existing factional balance. That decision was opposed by the party majority. See Spriano 1967, 1, pp. 283–5.

79 Particularly 'The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion', in *LCW*, 15, pp. 402–13, and 'Socialism and Religion' in *LCW*, 10, pp. 85–6.

There were also brief discussions on the cooperative movement, the Communist Women's Movement, the Communist Youth Movement, and of concrete problems of several national parties that special commissions had been organised to investigate.

### Two Questions Not Discussed

Two decisive questions, however, were not specifically addressed at the Third Enlarged Plenum although they nevertheless remained constantly in the background:

#### 1 *The Revolutionary Situation in Germany*

As the Third Enlarged Plenum was meeting in June 1923, a revolutionary crisis in Germany was unfolding. The situation was rooted in the profound crisis of German capitalism and its devastating impact on the proletariat, peasantry, and middle classes, with two overriding political and economic contributing factors:

- (a) In January 1923 the Ruhr region in Germany, the country's leading coal-producing area, was invaded by 60,000 French and Belgian troops, who occupied the region in an attempt to exact war reparations. While the German capitalist government called for 'passive resistance' to the French occupation but did nothing to organise it, the working class took the lead on the industrial front, with strikes and demonstrations. Right-wing forces were also present, waging armed resistance against the occupiers.
- (b) Germany in 1923 was undergoing a catastrophic hyperinflation, caused primarily by the massive printing of paper money in order to make the reparations payments imposed on Germany by the victorious Allied powers. Whereas the exchange rate of the mark to the dollar was some 4-to-1 in 1914 and 8-to-1 in 1918, it exploded in 1922 and 1923, reaching over 4-trillion-to-1 by late 1923. The impact on the working class, peasantry, and middle classes was devastating. Members of the middle class lost their life savings and were ruined, while large sections of the toilers were pauperised. Broad masses of the population saw no way out under the capitalist system, and were open to a revolutionary solution.

From early June 1923, Germany was rocked by strikes and mass street demonstrations. Communist-led trade unions and factory councils played a major role

in these battles. This wave culminated in a spontaneous general strike that rocked the entire country in early August. Facing what the capitalist rulers feared was an approaching insurrection, Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno resigned, in an attempt to assuage the growing rebellion.

Despite the clear revolutionary character of these mobilisations, neither the German CP – either of its two main factions – or the Comintern leadership saw the crisis at that time as anything other than an opportunity to win members and influence, and to forge a united front with wings of the Social-Democratic Party.

While the Third Plenum spoke in general terms about the approaching revolution in Germany, it failed to recognise the concrete revolutionary situation that was developing in real life.<sup>80</sup>

## 2 *The Struggle in the Russian Communist Party*

In the background at the Third Enlarged Plenum was the still-developing struggle in the Russian Communist Party that was to publicly explode in October and November 1923.

From late 1922 on, Lenin had initiated a broad fight within the Soviet leadership around a number of issues, including the national question, defence of the monopoly of foreign trade, and the alliance with the peasantry. At the root of many of these questions was the growing bureaucratisation of the Communist Party, whose general secretary was Joseph Stalin.

To wage this fight, Lenin had formed a bloc with Trotsky, urging him to champion their common positions on these questions within the party leadership,<sup>81</sup> and he had called for Stalin to be removed as general secretary. But Lenin's plans were derailed on 10 March, when Lenin suffered an incapacitating stroke that ended his political life.

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80 The August general strike finally convinced Zinoviev and other ECCI leaders that a revolutionary situation existed in Germany. Summoning the German CP leadership to Moscow, the Comintern leaders convinced the KPD of the need to move toward organising an insurrection. With Soviet support and encouragement, hasty technical preparations for an insurrectional struggle were made over the next two months, with the insurrection scheduled for October. But while thousands of KPD cadres responded enthusiastically to these efforts with discipline and heroism, the preparations were too little and too late. In the end, the plans for an insurrection had to be called off. The 'German October' ended in failure.

81 Lenin's writings on these questions are scattered over his *Collected Works*. One collection that assembles them together and groups them thematically is Fyson (ed.) 1995. For Lenin's proposals to Trotsky, see *LCW*, 45, p. 607, and Trotsky 1970, pp. 478–80.

To counter the efforts of Lenin and Trotsky, Stalin had succeeded in forging an alliance with Zinoviev and Kamenev. This 'troika' was a secret faction within the Soviet Politburo that was waging an underground struggle to undercut Trotsky's influence at every step.

Conscious of this struggle against him, with Lenin out of the picture Trotsky sought to avoid a showdown at the Twelfth Party Congress in April 1923. The same reason may also explain why Trotsky did not take the floor at the June 1923 Third Enlarged Plenum.

These two questions – the German events of 1923 and the struggle in Soviet Russia – although beyond the scope of the present volume, were to be decisive in the Comintern's political break from the Lenin era. This break was registered at the Communist International's Fifth World Congress.

### **Fifth Congress Break with Leninism**

A year after the Third Enlarged Plenum, the Comintern's Fifth Congress of June–July 1924 registered a decisive reversal of Lenin's course. The congress took place less than six months after Lenin's death in January 1924.

With Lenin dead and Trotsky marginalised, Comintern president Grigori Zinoviev – then part of the 'troika' with Stalin – now assumed the role of principal political leader. As such, he mapped out a series of major policy changes that reversed the Comintern's adopted positions on the united front and the workers' government. Karl Radek, who had previously been the other main Russian CP leader assigned to day-to-day Comintern work, had supported Trotsky in the Russian discussion and was attacked repeatedly at the congress.

During the debate at the congress, Radek and Zetkin defended the previous Comintern positions, but their arguments were rejected.<sup>82</sup>

The international analysis made by the Fifth Congress was shaped by the German defeat of the previous year.

Rather than facing up to this defeat and drawing the lessons from it, however, the congress insisted that the German revolution was still on the rise. While doing so, it sought to scapegoat individual leaders for whatever failures had occurred in Germany – above all putting the blame on the KPD's Heinrich Brandler and Comintern leader Karl Radek around secondary issues. The Comintern leadership as a whole was exempted from any criticism.

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82 For the main speeches by Radek and Zetkin at the Fifth Congress, see Comintern 1924c, pp. 162–90 and 320–39, respectively.

To help gloss over the German defeat, the congress determined that the centre of the world class struggle had shifted to Britain in the wake of the inauguration of a Labour Party government in January 1924. While the British election was certainly an important development, the Comintern's characterisation can reasonably be considered a transparent attempt to shift the focus off the German failure.

This strategic error was summarised by Trotsky four years later:

The fundamental tasks of the Fifth Congress were: first, to call this defeat [in Germany] clearly and relentlessly by its name, and to lay bare its 'subjective' cause, allowing no one to hide behind the pretext of objective conditions; secondly, to establish the beginning of a new stage during which the masses would temporarily drift away, the social democracy grow, and the communist party lose in influence; thirdly to prepare the Comintern for all this so that it would not be caught unawares and to equip it with the necessary methods of defensive struggle and organisational consolidation until the arrival of a new change in the situation.

But in all these questions the congress adopted a directly opposite attitude.<sup>83</sup>

Highlighting the Fifth Congress reversal of course, was the open rejection of key programmatic decisions of the Lenin-era Comintern on three central issues:

1. *The united front.* Zinoviev's report to the Fifth Congress on behalf of the ECCI endorsed the view presented by a minority at earlier Comintern meetings of a supposed dichotomy between the united front from above and from below.<sup>84</sup>

'Regarding this issue, we can therefore assert the following,' Zinoviev stated, 'United front from below – almost always. United front from below combined with from above – quite often, with all the necessary guarantees, as a tactic for the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses. United front from above by itself – never!'<sup>85</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the Second Enlarged Plenum had argued specifically against such a dichotomy, seeing it as a negation of the very idea of a united front.

83 See Trotsky 1996, p. 117.

84 See for example Ruth Fischer's comments in Riddell 2012, 4WC, p. 146.

85 Comintern 1924c, p. 81.

Zinoviev also disparaged the 1921 Open Letter initiative of the German CP that Lenin had wholeheartedly endorsed, and essentially rejected any attempts to reach concrete agreements with the Social-Democratic Party for common action.

Unfortunately, in practice our most frequently applied method was the following: draft an open letter to the Social Democrats followed by long and boring negotiations with the leadership over creation of a 'joint programme'. This was the line of least resistance.<sup>86</sup>

2. *The workers' government.* At the Fourth World Congress in November 1922, Zinoviev had at first presented the view that the 'workers' government' slogan was merely a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. A number of delegates objected to this view, pointing to the slogan's value as a transitional demand. As a result of these objections, Zinoviev himself withdrew the 'pseudonym' view in his summary to the Fourth Congress.<sup>87</sup>

But in Zinoviev's main report to the Fifth Congress, he returned to the 'pseudonym' view that he had discarded. 'The workers' government slogan', he stated, 'is for us the most attractive, accessible, and popular way of winning the masses for the proletarian dictatorship.'<sup>88</sup>

3. *Fascism.* In sharp contrast to the analysis of fascism by Zetkin at the Third Enlarged Plenum, Zinoviev presented the Fifth Congress with the view of a supposed identity between Social Democracy and fascism. 'The Social-Democratic Party has become a wing of fascism,' he declared. 'The fascists are the right hand and the Social Democrats the left hand of the bourgeoisie.'<sup>89</sup>

These policy reversals illustrate the Fifth Congress's status as the dividing line between the Lenin-era Comintern and its subsequent degeneration.

Along these lines, a centrepiece of the Fifth Congress was to line the Comintern up in the struggle within the Soviet CP against the Left Opposition, condemning 'Trotskyism' and taking initial organisational measures against its

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86 Ibid.

87 Zinoviev had raised the 'pseudonym' view earlier at the Second Enlarged ECCI Plenum (see p. 350 of this volume). His remarks to the Fourth Congress withdrawing the idea can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 266.

88 Comintern 1924c, p. 90.

89 Comintern 1924c, pp. 66–7.

supporters in Communist parties around the world.<sup>90</sup> For the first time, 'monolithism' became the stated goal of the Comintern.<sup>91</sup>

Lining up the Communist International behind the anti-Trotsky struggle was done under the rubric of 'bolshevisation', which became a theme of the congress.<sup>92</sup> The significance of this term was described later by Trotsky:

The 'bolshevisation' of 1924 assumed completely the character of a caricature. A revolver was held at the temples of the leading organs of the communist parties with the demand that they adopt immediately a final position on the internal disputes in the CPSU without any information and any discussion.<sup>93</sup>

In the years after the Fifth Congress, the Comintern became completely subordinated to the interests of the Soviet bureaucratic caste headed by Stalin. The radical zigzags it became known for over the coming years reflected the shifting needs of this caste. By the time of the Comintern's formal dissolution in 1943 as a favour by Stalin to his wartime US and British allies, it had long since ceased being a revolutionary working-class international organisation.

The profound chasm between the Lenin-era and Stalin-era Comintern was highlighted in the late 1930s, when Stalin's purges led to the wholesale murder of most early Comintern leaders who were then living in the Soviet Union. A look at the biographical sketches contained in the glossary to this volume strikingly illustrates this fact.

### The Comintern's Legacy Today

The delegates participating in the Communist International's leadership meetings were all profoundly influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1917.

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90 Accepting a proposal made by the Fifth Congress, an enlarged ECCI meeting held immediately after the congress voted to expel French CP leader Boris Souvarine, who had voiced support for the Russian Opposition. See Comintern 1924c, pp. 1032–4.

91 From Zinoviev's embrace of monolithism at the Fifth Congress, see Comintern 1924c, p. 507.

92 The perspective of 'bolshevisation' was laid out in Zinoviev's summary to his main report to the Fifth Congress. See Comintern 1924c, pp. 508–9.

93 Trotsky 1996, p. 169.

They had seen working people overthrow their oppressors, take political power, and begin to build a new society. Having witnessed this in real life, they were absolutely convinced that world revolution was a realistic prospect.

In their view, Communists were living through the beginning of the epoch of workers 'storming the heavens', as Marx had described the Paris Commune of 1871.<sup>94</sup> Rather than the objects of history – the customary role of working people for millennia – workers had suddenly become the conscious makers of history.

To meet this historic opportunity, revolutionaries sought to create an international movement of action, of deeds. They rejected the model of the Second International, whose grandiloquent verbiage masked a gap between word and deed – a gap that grew into a chasm during the bloodbath of World War I, when the Second International's main sections supported the war efforts of their respective capitalist classes.

Counterposed to the Social-Democratic model, the young Communist cadres sought to build something entirely new: an international working-class movement that would eliminate the gap between word and deed and act in a unified manner. 'The Communist International is an International of the deed,' Communist youth leader Lazar Shatskin proudly told the Third Enlarged Plenum.<sup>95</sup>

What comes across from the proceedings of the first three enlarged plenums, above all, is a picture of the Communist International as a living movement, one that showed itself capable of always moving forward, although sometimes in fits and starts and along winding roads. But even when it took a misstep, the early Communist movement was able to recover its footing and keep advancing. With whatever errors and false starts, the Lenin-era Comintern was a movement deeply involved in working-class struggles, showing itself able to learn from them.

Indeed, most of the major policies adopted in 1922–3 came out of the movement's concrete experiences in these battles. Such was the case with the positions that the first three enlarged plenums are best known for: those on the united front, the workers' government, and fascism.

Contrary to many standard narratives of the Communist International, the Comintern under Lenin was not based on directives and orders from Moscow. Its decisions were largely collaborative and not imposed, as a careful reading of the proceedings of this volume shows.

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94 Karl Marx letter to Ludwig Kugelmann, 12 April 1871, *MECW*, 44, p. 132.

95 See p. 438 of this volume.

The Comintern's congresses and conferences were working meetings, where debates evolved and conclusions were not foreordained. Whatever one may think about the policies that the Comintern adopted, free debate and an open exchange of views were an integral part of its meetings.



Why study the early Communist International today, almost a century later?

While the world of the twenty-first century is obviously different in many ways from that facing the early Communist cadres, the similarities are both striking and relevant.

Those attending the three enlarged plenums of the Comintern in 1922 and 1923 faced a world of deepening inter-imperialist rivalries and the threat of new wars. They encountered a growing international capitalist offensive on workers' wages, working conditions, and basic livelihoods. Joblessness was rampant and growing, especially among youth. Peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were beginning to rise up and assert their humanity as they sought to free themselves from imperialist and colonial bondage. Women were being increasingly drawn into capitalist production, beginning to break down some of the gender roles that had existed in society for millennia. And the basic social fabric seemed to be coming apart at the seams, leading to a growing appeal for emerging rightist movements around the world.

Much of this picture will sound familiar to contemporary readers confronting twenty-first-century capitalism. Even the deepening ecological crisis that casts a shadow over the world today simply reproduces in a new form the permanent contradiction between capitalist property relations and social progress, a contradiction addressed frequently by the early Communist movement.

As growing numbers take up the fight against this system, some will seek to link up with traditions of struggle by earlier generations. As they do so, many will find the lessons and example of the Communist International under Lenin to be of lasting value.

Those who do so will find much to learn from its discussions of programme, strategy and tactics, revolutionary experiences, and problems of organisation.

In an increasingly interconnected world – with ever-expanding economic, cultural, and informational ties among the world's population – many militant workers, revolutionary-minded youth, and fighters for social change will find especially attractive the early Comintern's perspective of international collaboration around a common programme to fight for a society built around human needs and human values.

Many of these activists and fighters will become convinced, through their own experiences, of the Comintern's firm belief that the only road to lasting social progress lies in working people taking political power out of the hands of the billionaire ruling families through revolutionary struggle.

And many of them will be inspired by the early Comintern's revolutionary promise, potential, and clarity of vision, summed up in the ringing words of Clara Zetkin at the Third Enlarged Plenum:

Symptoms of fascist decay and disintegration in bourgeois society speak to us loudly and piercingly of coming victory, provided that the proletariat struggles with knowledge and will in a united front. That's what must be!

Above the chaos of present conditions, the giant form of the proletariat will rear up with the cry: 'I have the will! I have the power! I am the struggle and the victory! The future belongs to me!'<sup>96</sup>

*Mike Taber*

January 2017

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96 See p. 606.

# About This Edition

The translation of the documents in this volume is taken primarily from the official German-language proceedings published by the Comintern at the time.<sup>1</sup>

Also utilised was the French-language version of the proceedings of the First Enlarged Plenum.<sup>2</sup> For the Third Enlarged Plenum, a Russian-language edition of the proceedings was also published.<sup>3</sup>

Use was made, too, of the English-language version of the proceedings of the Second and Third Enlarged Plenums that was published in *International Press Correspondence (Inprecorr)*.<sup>4</sup> These versions were also published in the German, French, and Russian editions of this publication.

The character of the official published record of these plenums is different from the official proceedings of Comintern congresses, which consist largely of edited stenographic transcripts. In the case of the plenums, with the exception of major reports and a handful of other speeches, the official published version includes only detailed or abbreviated summaries.

A number of the speeches at the Second and Third Enlarged Plenums on the French question were published in full transcript versions by the French Communist publication, *Bulletin communiste*.<sup>5</sup> Several other speeches and reports

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1 For the First Plenum: *Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale gegen die Offensive des Kapitals: Bericht über die Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, vom 24. Februar bis 4. März 1922*. For the Second Plenum: *Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Präsidiums und der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale für die Zeit vom 6. März bis 11. Juni 1922*. For the Third Plenum: *Protokoll der Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, 12.–23. Juni 1923*.

2 *Compte rendu de la Conférence de l'Exécutif Élargi de l'Internationale Communiste, Moscou, 24 Février–4 Mars 1922*.

3 *Rassirennyj plenium Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticeskogo Internacionala (12–23 ijunja 1923 g. toda)*. Otčet, Moskva, Krasnaja nov', 1923.

4 Proceedings of major portions of the Second Enlarged Plenum were published in *Inprecorr*, 16 June and 14 July 1922. Proceedings of the Third Enlarged Plenum were published in *Inprecorr* from 22 June through 23 July 1923.

5 *Bulletin communiste* published transcripts of a number of speeches on the French question and by French delegates to the First and Second Enlarged Plenums. Its transcripts from the debate at the First Enlarged Plenum can be found in its issue of 22 April 1922 (vol. 3, nos. 16 and 17). It published transcripts of several speeches from the Second Enlarged Plenum in its issues of 6 July and 13 July 1922 (vol. 3, nos. 28 and 29). *Bulletin communiste* issues are available online at <http://www.bibnumcermtri.fr/spip.php?rubrique13>.

on different topics were published at the time by the Communist press in German, Russian, and other languages.<sup>6</sup>

In preparing the translations for this volume, we have largely adhered to the official published record, and have not used these transcripts, except for consultation purposes. Our reasoning was that as the official records of these meetings, the published proceedings were what was distributed to and utilised by the world Communist movement at the time. Moreover, while not stenographic in character, they are generally quite thorough and do reflect the exchange of views that took place at these plenums.

For the same reasons, we have not translated from the raw and unedited stenographic transcripts that are now available to researchers in the Comintern archives.<sup>7</sup>

The one exception to this editorial policy is Session 1 of the Second Enlarged Plenum, in which use has been made of the archival transcript. In this case, the main reports to the plenum – Zinoviev's report on the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Radek's report on the Berlin Conference and the breakup of the Committee of Nine, and Zinoviev's report on the united front – were not adequately rendered in the German-language proceedings, and the transcript was deemed necessary for readers of this volume to fully grasp the discussions that took place at that plenum.

Wherever we have utilised such versions, this is footnoted in the text.



In the preparation of this volume, contributions by a number of individuals are gratefully acknowledged.

First and foremost is John Riddell, the editor of the proceedings of the first four congresses of the Communist International as well as other preparatory and supplementary volumes (see Bibliography). In addition to his translation work, John assisted in every aspect of the book: from its conception and preparation to the editing of the introduction and the annotation. Without his collaboration and assistance, this volume would not have been possible.

Jeff White copyedited the manuscript. Sean Larson, Nancy Rosenstock, Bob Schwarz, Suzanne Weiss, and Mark Ugolini read all or part of the manuscript and provided helpful suggestions.

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6 A full list of these can be found in Vilém Kahan's *Bibliography of the Communist International (1919–1979)*, pp. 199–203.

7 For the First Plenum, RGASPI 495/159; for the Second Plenum, RGASPI 495/160; for the Third Plenum, RGASPI 495/161.

Research assistance and/or consultation was provided by Barbara Allen, Tom Alter, Eric Blanc, Daniel Gaido, Wladek Flakin, Lars Lih, Joseph T. Miller, Mete Tunçay, and Jacob Zumoff. Bob Schwarz in New York and Lüko Willms in Frankfurt did extensive library research. Responsibility for any errors, of course, lies with the editor alone.

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Sebastian Budgen from Historical Materialism, as well as John McDonald and Ahmed Shawki from Haymarket Books, gave constant encouragement throughout the preparation of this volume.

# List of Abbreviations

1WC	First Congress of Communist International
2WC	Second Congress of Communist International
3WC	Third Congress of Communist International
4WC	Fourth Congress of Communist International
ADGB	General German Trade Union Federation
AFL	American Federation of Labor
CGL	General Confederation of Labour (Italy)
CGT	General Confederation of Labour (France)
CGTU	Unitary General Confederation of Labour (France)
CNT	National Confederation of Labour (Spain)
CP	Communist Party
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KAPD	Communist Workers' Party of Germany
KPD	Communist Party of Germany
KPÖ	Communist Party of Austria
LCW	V.I. Lenin, <i>Collected Works</i>
MECW	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Collected Works</i>
NLP	Norwegian Labour Party
PCF	French Communist Party
PCI	Italian Communist Party
PSI	Italian Socialist Party
PPS	Polish Socialist Party
RCP	Russian Communist Party
RGASPI	Russian State Archive of Social and Political History
RILU	Red International of Labour Unions
RSDLP	Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party
SDKPiL	Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania
SDP	Social-Democratic Party
SP	Socialist Party
SPD	Social-Democratic Party of Germany
SRS	Socialist-Revolutionary Party
UGT	General Union of Labour (Spain)
USPD	Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany

**FIRST ENLARGED PLENUM**

*21 February–4 March 1922*

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# Appeal by the Communist International Executive Committee

Working men and women of all countries!

The Executive Committee of the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), after devoting three sessions to the situation of the world and of the international proletariat, has concluded that a unification of all forces in the international proletariat is urgently called for. A united front must be established of all parties rooted in the proletariat, regardless of the differences that divide them, provided only that they are prepared to struggle together for the immediate and urgent needs of the proletariat.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International will convene an enlarged session for 19 January 1922. Communist parties of every country are to send double their regular number of delegates. The Executive Committee also calls on proletarians of all parties to do everything possible so that their parties are prepared for unified action.

Working men and women!

Three years have passed since the end of the great imperialist war, in which you sacrificed your lives for the interests of capitalism. For three years international capitalism has had a free hand to demonstrate whether it is capable of establishing any type of humane order that would assure the broad popular masses of a minimum of security and the minimal conditions needed for survival.

## Worldwide Economic Chaos

The results are clear to see.

Six million jobless in the United States; two million in Britain; growing unemployment in the neutral countries. Unemployment is growing both in the victor states and in the neutral countries that grew rich during the war, because they lack markets for their exports. Meanwhile, the devastated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, of Russia, the Balkans, and Turkey are gripped by grinding poverty. They need immense quantities of goods from the industrialised counties to revive their economies, so that they can deliver food and raw materials to the industrialised world. Meanwhile, wedged between East and West, Germany is labouring tirelessly, spewing forth heaps of goods at ruinously low prices.

There is no unemployment in Germany, but the workers there are worse off than those in Britain. Against their will, German workers depress the wages of workers in other countries. The housing shortage is growing, and so too is the burden of taxes.

Until now the world, fractured and torn, resounded with the cry, 'Woe to the vanquished'. Soon the cry will be 'Woe to the victors'. The bourgeoisie cannot bring peace and tranquillity to this world. The ruins of northern France, Belgium, Serbia, Romania, Poland, and Russia are not yet cleared away. The victorious powers seek to load the costs of reconstruction onto a single country, Germany. The result is that Germany itself will inevitably break down under the burden, and will itself be transformed into a heap of ruins. And wherever the bourgeoisie undertakes reconstruction, this becomes a source of speculation, exploitation, and yet more conflict.

As for Soviet Russia, after three years of imperialist war plus three years of armed intervention waged against it by the Allies, and despite Soviet Russia's heroic resistance, this granary of Europe lies devastated. This summer's drought threatens 25 million people with deadly famine.<sup>1</sup> This makes the reconstruction of Russia a question of life and death for millions of Russian workers and peasants. It is increasingly obvious to even the most dim-witted capitalists that unless the invincible Soviet government is recognised, unless reconstruction takes place in Russia, neither the world economic crisis nor the intense global political conflicts can be even temporarily alleviated.

Unless Russia again appears on the world market as a raw-materials supplier and a market for exports, a crevice will be driven into the global economy. And so long as Soviet Russia has not been secured against new attacks, it will have to keep the Red Army under arms, and there will be constant danger that adventures by the little watchdogs of global capitalism, by the Romanian *boyars*, will unleash a world conflagration once again.

But the global bourgeoisie is denying aid to the starving millions of Russia, in the expectation that famine will make them more compliant with the demands of world capitalism. And these demands amount to the Soviet government, in return for recognition, ceding its sovereignty to an international financial consortium that would conduct business in Russia just as it does in Turkey or China.

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<sup>1</sup> The famine in Russia, coming after seven years of world war and civil war and the breakdown of the country's rail and industrial infrastructure and aggravated by a period of severe drought, lasted from early 1921 through 1922. While the famine's exact toll has never been established, it is estimated that several million died.

The Russian people defended themselves arms in hand for four long years to prevent the establishment, in the guise of a dictatorship by the Russian Whites, of rule by world capitalism in Russia. They will of course defend themselves against this 'peaceful' attempt to enslave them. The question of encompassing Russia in the global economy and of a general peace will provoke great new struggles.

### **The Washington Conference**

But the relationship of world capitalism to Germany and to Soviet Russia is not the only source of great new disruptions. The Washington Conference, which set out to resolve the problem of the Far East, failed in this task.<sup>2</sup> The people of China, four hundred million strong, remain the object of haggling and of continued struggle. The Allied powers are aware that they are incapable of either resolving these disputes or doing without the plundering of China. They have therefore concluded a four-power treaty that merely reflects how, aware of the war danger, they are seeking to prevent each other from taking unilateral initiatives.

The powers were not so bold as to attempt any limitation, even on paper, of land armies. And the entire uproar over naval armaments ended up in an agreement to decommission obsolete ships, restrict the number of capital ships (dreadnoughts) on the surface, while expanding armaments below the surface (submarines) and in the air. Meanwhile, they are striving to discover new asphyxiating gases that could poison entire populations.

### **Capitalism's Offensive against the Working Class**

Incapable of uniting for global reconstruction, incapable of assuring nourishment and peace, capitalists of every country are uniting in their attack on the working class. Everywhere they seek to reduce wages, which are actually

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2 The Washington Conference of four powers – Britain, US, Japan, and France – known officially as the International Conference on Naval Limitation, took place from 12 November 1921 to 6 February 1922. The conference aimed to settle clashes of imperialist interests in relation to Asia and the Pacific, as well as to limit the naval arms race. Two principal treaties came out of the conference: a Four-Power Pact was signed 13 December 1921, and a Five-Power Naval Limitation Treaty was signed 6 February 1922 (with Italy). Nevertheless, the conference failed to mitigate the underlying conflicts of interest among the four powers involved.

not even providing workers with what they received before the war to eke out a meagre existence. Despite unemployment, they are striving everywhere to lengthen the working day. Capitalism has launched a worldwide offensive against the working class, and had no choice in this. The war bequeathed mountain-high government debts, and the imperialist peace settlement raised them still further. The capitalist governments do not dare to repudiate them. Someone has to carry this weight, and since the capitalists do not care to do so, they seek to impose this burden on the workers.

What are government debts? They represent the capitalists' right to appropriate a portion of what workers create, without effort and without involvement in any way in the process of production. The offensive aims to compel workers to labour more, to produce more, so that the victors in the war and the speculators of peacetime can receive a constantly growing portion of what is produced by proletarian exertion.

During the war, through its labour in the factories and its obedience to capital, the proletariat made it possible for the world to be smashed into rubble. Now, in peacetime, it is called on, through intensified labour, to enable the hyenas of the battlefield to enjoy on these ruins a life of pleasure and luxury.

### **The Successes of Reformist Politics**

For three years you have been hoping – despite all the lessons of the war – that things would get better; that the capitalists would keep their wartime promises to grant you democracy, self-determination, bread, and freedom. Your hopes have been betrayed. British miners are witnessing not the nationalisation of coal<sup>3</sup> but the reduction of their wages by the coal barons. German workers, who believed that by accepting bourgeois rule they would achieve socialisation of industry by a peaceful path,<sup>4</sup> are now witnessing how the princes of German industry – Stinnes and company – are taking in hand the country's productive forces. They want to monopolise control of the railways. They want to export the country's treasures, in order to pile up deposits in foreign banks with foreign

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3 In 1919 the British miners' union had begun a mass campaign demanding nationalisation of the coal mines.

4 A resolution of the Comintern's Third Congress declared, 'In Germany, the farce of socialisation, which the Scheidemann-Noske government used in March 1919 to hold back the working class from an uprising, is at an end.' From *Theses on Tactics and Strategy*, in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 925–6.

currencies. These riches are hidden from the German people, who are denied access to them. France is more and more at the mercy of capital, which became more homogeneous during the war. In the United States, rule by the Republican Party signifies the undisguised, naked reign of the trusts.

Even the government subsidies reducing the price of bread have been abolished in every country. Anyone who cannot afford the higher prices of bread is left to die of hunger. Postwar democracy is nothing other than a mask for the rule of war speculators, a façade behind which a brainless diplomacy hatches plots against the peoples.

White terror is raging in a number of capitalist countries. In India and Egypt, the British global oligarchy is turning this terror, which previously targeted small groups, against the masses. In the United States, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia, proletarian militants are outlawed and made fair game. All the promises of the Second International, the Two-and-a-Half International, and the Amsterdam trade-union federation have come to nothing.<sup>5</sup> All of these international associations have demonstrated their powerlessness. They are unable even to lead you in struggle for mere democracy and reforms, because their coalition with the bourgeoisie condemns them to impotence. Whether willingly or not, they merely help to reinforce bourgeois rule.

### **A United Front is Indispensable**

Previous experience has demonstrated even to the blind how right the Communist International was to tell you that the working class can achieve freedom only if it breaks the power of the bourgeoisie, establishes workers' rule, and joins in close international alliance to clear away the ruins of war and begin the work of reconstruction. Yet we know how strong are the chains of the past and the influence of the capitalist schools, press, and church. We know well how reluctant and fearful the proletarian masses are of grasping power and forging their own future. We know how much the broad proletarian masses fear defeats like those suffered by Communist minorities in the struggles they have conduc-

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5 The 'Two-and-a-Half International' refers to the centrist International Working Union of Socialist Parties, or Vienna Union, founded at a congress in Vienna, 22–27 February 1921. It was established in opposition to both the reformist Second International and the Communist Third International. 'Amsterdam International', or 'Amsterdam Bureau', was the commonly used name for the social-democratic-led International Federation of Trade Unions, headquartered in Amsterdam.

ted to liberate the broad masses from their slave-like existence. We know how the capitalist press around the world seeks to rob you of courage by pointing to the wounds suffered by an isolated Russian proletariat in its duel with the entire capitalist world.

And so we say: You do not dare to launch the struggle anew. You do not yet venture to launch the struggle for power and for the [proletarian] dictatorship, arms in hand. You do not yet venture to storm the citadels of world reaction. So at least join together in the struggle for life itself, for a crust of bread, for peace. Join together in this struggle as a united force in a common line of battle; join together as a proletarian class against the class of exploiters and destroyers of the world. Tear down the barriers that have been erected to divide you. Take your place in the struggle – whether you're a Communist, Social Democrat, anarchist, or syndicalist – in the struggle against generalised privation.

The Communist International has always called on workers who favour a dictatorship of the proletariat and soviets to join in independent parties. We do not take back a single word of what we have said to motivate the building of independent Communist parties. We believe that broader masses will become convinced over time that our course of action was correct. But despite everything that divides us, we tell you: Proletarian men and women! Join in a common front to struggle for what all of you recognise as a common goal.

All workers – whether Communists or Social Democrats or syndicalists or even Christians or Liberals – agree that they do not want to permit further wage reductions. They do not want to work longer hours, hungry and cold. And that is why we must unite into a common front against the employers' offensive.

No workers – whether Communists or Social Democrats, whether syndicalist, Christian, or Liberal trade unionists – want to go begging day after day at the factory gates, seeking work. They all fear being thrown into the street. That is why they must join together in struggle against everything that increases joblessness.

What is more, unemployment will not disappear in the industrialised countries so long as the German proletariat, enslaved by the Entente and German capital, continues to slave away, driving down wages internationally, so that German capitalists can flood the world market with German goods at giveaway prices, in order to pay the tribute demanded by the Versailles Treaty.<sup>6</sup>

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6 The Versailles Peace Treaty was signed 28 June 1919 between the Entente powers and Germany. Among its many provisions, the Treaty transferred 10 per cent of Germany's territory to France, Belgium, Denmark, and Poland, and established that Germany would pay \$33 billion (\$461 billion in 2016 dollars) in reparations to the Entente powers. It also restricted Germany's

Unemployment will grow if the capitalist world imposes subjugation and slavery on Soviet Russia, requiring it to accept continued famine or to defend itself arms in hand. Therefore, join in struggle for repudiation of the war debts, for ending the strangulation of Germany, for recognition of Soviet Russia and its reconstruction based on conditions expressing the interests of the international proletariat.

And the proletariat is harmed not only by unemployment. It is threatened by the anarchy of production, by the fact that the capitalists produce and export whatever they want. This impoverished world needs planned distribution of raw materials, planned utilisation, and control of prices. All of that is impossible unless the working class achieves control of production, unless bodies elected by the workers are able to monitor those who are disorganising production. The struggle for control of production is in the interests not only of the proletariat but of broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie, which suffers from the anarchy of prices.

All workers – whether Communists or Social Democrats, whether syndicalist or Christian or Liberal trade unionists – have an interest in preventing capitalist diplomacy from igniting a new world conflagration, and in taking on the task of struggling against capitalist armaments and intrigues.

### **Prepare the United Front in the Workplace**

The Communist International calls on Communist workers, on all upstanding workers around the world, to come together in the workplace, in meeting rooms, as a family of working people who will respond to all the distress of our time by standing together against capital. Create a firm spirit of proletarian unity against which every attempt to divide proletarians will break down, no matter where it originates. Only if you proletarians come together in this way, in the workplace and the economy, will all parties based on the proletariat and seeking to win a hearing from it find that joining together in a common defensive struggle against capitalism is necessary. Only then will they find it necessary to break their alliances with the capitalist parties.

If the proletariat unites, however, it will be capable of utilising the meagre rights granted by capitalism's sham democracy to pursue the struggle to improve the lot of the proletariat and to consolidate its acquisitions. We say to

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military and provided for occupation of German territory west of the Rhine by Entente armies for fifteen years, beginning in 1920.

you that the proletarian giant cannot stretch its limbs within the confines of a bourgeois chicken coop, where it cannot rise to its full stature. When you move into struggle, you will see that you need the sword of dictatorship to win victory. But we know that this dictatorship is possible only when the great majority of the proletariat is convinced by their own experience to support it. Therefore, the Communist International and the Communist parties will patiently and fraternally march together with all other proletarians, even when they remain in the framework of capitalist democracy.

We know that when you unite, when the entire proletariat joins together, it will learn how great are its forces. You will see how small by comparison is the bourgeoisie, which, as it stands over the ruins, feels itself to be lord of the world.

We are firmly convinced that you will take the path marked out in blood by your best representatives, by the hundreds of thousands of Russian workers, by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches, and hundreds of other fighters, known and unknown; by the tens of thousands who languish in prison in the firm awareness that the fighting proletariat will have to take the path of communism. We call out to you, proletarians of every country: unite!

Long live the common fighting front of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie!

For a counterattack against the capitalist offensive; for a struggle to control production!

For workers' control of production!

Down with capitalist armaments and intrigues!

Get rid of the shackles that bind the working people of Germany!

Hands off Soviet Russia! Bread and machines for the Russian proletariat!

Long live proletarian solidarity in every country and around the world!

Moscow, 1 January 1922

Executive Committee of the Communist International

Executive Committee of the Red International of Labour Unions

## Organisation of Meeting; National Reports

*Election of Presidium. Report of Credentials Commission. Agenda. Rules of order.*

*Commissions. Report of the Communist Party of Germany.*

*Speakers: Zinoviev, Rákosi, Brandler, Thalheimer, Zetkin.*

Following words of greeting from Comrade Zinoviev, the election of the Presidium took place. Those elected were Zinoviev (Russia), Clara Zetkin (Germany), Cachin (France), MacManus (Britain), Roberto (Italy), Walecki (Poland), Kolarov (Bulgaria), Štunc (Czechoslovakia), Sen Katayama (Japan), Friis (Norway).

### Report of Credentials Commission

**Mátyás Rákosi:** The following 36 delegations submitted reports to the Credentials Commission: Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Norway, Britain, USA, Spain, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Canada, Japan, China, Lithuania, Iran, Estonia, India, South Africa, Iceland, Armenia, Georgia, Denmark, Australia, Java, Argentina.

Also taking part are delegations of the Communist Youth International, the International Women's Secretariat, the Cooperative Section, and the Red Sports Associations – in all, 105 delegates. The only mandate not accepted was that from Palestine.

The report was received.

### Agenda

The following agenda was adopted:

1. Report of the Communist Party of Germany.
2. Report of the Communist Party of France.
3. Report of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.
4. Report of the Communist Party of Italy.
5. Report of the Communist Party of Britain.

6. Report of the Communist Party of the United States.
7. Report of the Communist Party of Poland.
8. Report of the Communist Party of the Balkans.
9. Report of the Executive Committee and Presidium.
10. United front.
11. Struggle against new imperialist wars.
12. Trade-union movement.
13. New Economic Policy of Soviet Russia.
14. Famine and economic assistance for Soviet Russia.
15. Workers' movement in France.
16. Communist press.
17. Economic demands of youth.
18. Hungarian question.
19. Internal issues in the Comintern.
20. Preparation of the Fourth World Congress.
21. Election of the Presidium and Secretariat.

### Rules of Order

**Henrich Brandler** distributed the rules of order. It was decided that countries would receive voting rights as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Germany, Russia, France, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Youth Executive, and Red International of Labour Unions: four votes each.

Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Norway, Britain, USA, Spain, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Japan: two votes each.

China, Lithuania, Iran, Estonia, South Africa, Iceland, Armenia, Georgia, Denmark, Java, Australia, Women's Secretariat, cooperatives, sports division: consultative vote.

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning at the Second Congress and carrying over to subsequent congresses and leadership meetings, a weighted voting system was adopted by the Comintern that allocated votes to delegations on the basis both of the size of a party's membership as well as the weight of the country and its working class in world politics.

## Commissions

Commissions were established to handle individual questions:

*French question:* Zetkin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Humbert-Droz, Walecki, Ambroggi, and Kolarov, plus the French delegation.

*British question:* Humbert-Droz, Borodin, Friis, Cachin, Terracini, plus British delegates.

*Youth question:* Bell, Sellier, Brandler, Kreibich, Béla Kun.

*Hungarian question:* Ker (France), Clara Zetkin (Germany), Stalin or Radek (Russia), Kuusinen (Finland), and a Czech delegate.

**Comrade Zinoviev** reported as follows regarding the Hungarian question:

A commission was previously established on the request of Comrade Béla Kun, consisting of Comrades Lunacharsky, Bukharin, Pyatakov, and Sokolnikov, to look into the charges against him. As was generally expected, the commission rejected the accusations against Comrade Kun. Then a number of comrades of the opposition arrived, and Comrade Kun asked that the commission question the newly arrived comrades regarding the personal accusations. This commission will conclude its work within one week at the most.

The commission just chosen by the Enlarged Executive Committee will take up not only the personal issues but also questions of party policy and organisation regarding our Hungarian sister party. As you know, the Hungarian party experienced a split, to the delight of the Second and Two-and-a-Half International gentlemen. The Hungarian party is in a very difficult situation, and this has international implications.<sup>2</sup>

A commission was established to draw up press and radio reports on the activity of the Enlarged Executive Committee, consisting of Comrades Walecki (Poland), Renoult (France), and Thalheimer (Germany).

## The Communist Party of Germany

**August Thalheimer:** Comrade Zetkin will report on the recent railway workers' strike. Germany's economic situation varied during the period from the Third Congress to the railwaymen's strike. In August and September there was something of a depression, resulting mainly from the overall global crisis. Then came the catastrophic fall of the mark, caused by reparations payments.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For the report and resolution on the Béla Kun affair, see pp. 167–8.

<sup>3</sup> For Germany's hyperinflation crisis, see Introduction, p. 38.

At that point a fictitious boom began. Unemployment disappeared. From the point of view of individual capitalists, that was of course a favourable period, but for the economy as a whole it signified further impoverishment. Despite reduced unemployment and increased demand for skilled workers, the living conditions of factory and office workers worsened, since mounting inflation kept pace with the fall of the mark.

Before the fictitious boom, the employers carried out the same policies as the capitalists of Britain, the United States, and the rest: they reduced wages and cut back production. The fall of the mark automatically reduced wage levels, and the employers then focused on lengthening the hours of work, restricting the right to strike, and taking over the last great component of the means of production still in the hands of the state – the railways.

At the Third Congress a forecast was made that the economy would continue, in general, in a downwards direction, with great fluctuations.<sup>4</sup> This proved accurate in Germany. It was merely masked by the fictitious boom. That was enough to induce the SPD [Social-Democratic Party] and USPD [Independent Social-Democratic Party] to direct their efforts toward rebuilding capitalism, while we, by contrast, directed our efforts toward hastening the crisis of capitalism.

The Communist Party's Jena Congress revealed that the party, in its majority, wanted to carry through the Third Congress line.<sup>5</sup> Only with regard to tax policy and the confiscation of gold and real values was there an evident disinclination to take a path that seemed to lead to an intermediate state-capitalist stage.

When Erzberger was murdered and a mass movement sprang up,<sup>6</sup> the USPD and SPD utilised this to isolate us from the masses. Nonetheless, in quite a number of centres, we were able to break through this isolation. The enormous mass

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4 The 'Theses on the World Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International' adopted by the Comintern's Third Congress, and Trotsky's report on it, can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 901–20 and 102–33. The resolution's forecast of the downward direction of the world capitalist economy is on p. 905.

5 The German Communist Party [KPD] congress in Jena was held 22–26 August 1921. The congress raised a number of immediate, democratic, and transitional demands of the type suggested by the Third Congress. Among these were an increase in wages and unemployment benefits, nationalisation of the coal industry, confiscation of the property of former dynasties, and shifting the burden of taxes onto the capitalist class.

6 On 26 August 1921 Matthias Erzberger, a Reichstag deputy for the Catholic Centre Party, was murdered by right-wing extremists. The KPD actively participated in a campaign of united protests, with demonstrations in a number of cities.

mobilisation after Erzberger's murder resulted in a turnabout by the German People's Party, which represents heavy industry. It now declared that it accepted the republic. The Social Democracy responded with its Görlitz Congress, which abandoned its previous programme and resolved to form a coalition with the People's Party.<sup>7</sup> This decision provoked opposition in the SPD, which was particularly strong in locations where the party is most strongly proletarian in character. Nonetheless, this decision was carried out in Prussia, where both the Social Democrats and the People's Party took part in the state government.

In Saxony and Thuringia, the Communist Party faced the question of a workers' government, and the party decided to lend support to it. It also took a clear position on the taxation issue, when the November plenum of the Central Committee adopted the demand for seizure of gold and material assets. Similarly, on the workers' government question, the party decided that, under certain conditions, it would be prepared to join such a regime.<sup>8</sup>

A hunger strike by prisoners in Lichtenburg gave rise to a powerful workers' movement, which strongly supported the hunger strikers, and to countless delegations encompassing all workers' parties, where representatives were sent to the government demanding release of the prisoners.<sup>9</sup> The movement went further, raising the demand for an assembly of factory committees across the country to deal with the most urgent tax and economic issues. It is indicative of the character of this movement that the trade-union leadership, although declining to take up this demand, felt compelled to respond. Previously, it had not even deigned to answer such appeals.

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7 The SPD congress in Görlitz was held 18–24 September 1921. The German People's Party, viewed as representing large-scale capitalists, was a right-liberal party, the successor of the National Liberal Party.

8 In Saxony and Thuringia in 1920 and 1921 the three workers' parties (SPD, USPD, KPD) together obtained majorities in the Landtags, the state legislatures. In both cases the KPD agreed to support a workers' coalition government of the SPD and USPD, although it itself did not join. The KPD's 'Resolution on the Political Situation and the Policies of the KPD', adopted at the Zentrale's meeting of 16–17 November 1921, stated: 'The party's stance toward the governments formed in Saxony and Thuringia flowed from its assessment that the formation of a socialist government expressed the will of the working class to build a unified front against the bourgeoisie.'

9 In November 1921 one hundred and thirty political prisoners at the Lichtenburg prison began a hunger strike. The hunger strike lasted for more than a week, with political prisoners in other jails following suit. The action sparked working-class protests throughout Germany calling for the release of all political prisoners, with demonstrations, mass meetings, and delegations to the Reichstag.

A proposal was placed before the party leaderships of the KPD, USPD, and SPD and the unions to establish a common platform of struggle. The unions and the SPD, after a series of manoeuvres, rejected such discussions. The USPD, however, was compelled to give way to the pressure. The SPD and the USPD foresaw dangers and began the *Vorwärts* revelations.<sup>10</sup> The working class understood the real intent of this manoeuvre to be the destruction of the incipient united front against the bourgeoisie. The revelations would not have caused any great disruption had it not become evident that this campaign had open allies in the Communist Working Group (KAG) led by Paul Levi, and that the KAG once again had cells in the party [KPD] itself.

Here we must take a moment to outline the role of the KAG and its positions. After Jena, we followed the advice of Comrade Lenin, as much as possible, and ignored the KAG.<sup>11</sup> Given what has happened, we may now question whether this advice was correct. We left the KAG free to develop from a current into a party. But with one small exception, the opposite happened. The KAG, reinforced by a certain current led by Friesland and some members of our trade-union department,<sup>12</sup> advanced a number of demands that amounted essentially to liquidating the Communist Party as such, the Communist Inter-

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10 On 25 November 1921, *Vorwärts*, the central SPD organ, began publication of Communist Party documents that German police had seized from Clara Zetkin as she was heading to Moscow to attend the Comintern's Third Congress. Much of the material concerned provocative KPD behaviour before and during the March Action earlier in the year.

11 The Communist Working Group (KAG) was formed in November 1921 by Paul Levi and his supporters, who had split from the KPD following the March Action. Levi's public criticisms of that action had led to his expulsion from the party for violation of discipline, a sanction that Lenin felt was merited. Nevertheless, Lenin recognised that many of Levi's criticisms were correct, and sought to draw him back into the party and its leadership.

After Levi had made clear that he was definitively breaking with Bolshevism, however, Lenin wrote: 'I would advise the German comrades to prohibit all controversy with Levi and his magazine in the columns of the daily party press. He must not be given publicity. He must not be allowed to divert the fighting party's attention from important matters to unimportant ones. In cases of extreme necessity, the controversy could be conducted in weekly or monthly magazines, or in pamphlets, and as far as possible care must be taken not to afford the KAP-ists and Paul Levi the pleasure they feel when they are mentioned by name; reference should simply be made to "certain not very clever critics who at all costs want to regard themselves as Communists."' From 'A Letter to the German Communists' in *LCW*, 32, pp. 518–19.

12 Friesland (Ernst Reuter) had been KPD general secretary after Paul Levi's departure earlier in 1921. During the fall of 1921, however, he moved toward Levi's positions and was expelled from the KPD in January 1921.

national, and the Red International of Labour Unions, and forming what Levi called a 'social-revolutionary' mass party.

The party grasped very quickly what was at stake here. It decided, however, first to clarify the question politically among the party's membership. After the local and district groups had been able to become well acquainted with the programme and practical policies of the KAG, it became clear that the KAG did not enjoy the support of significant numbers and was, in fact, just a small group of leaders. Correspondingly, it was decided by an overwhelming majority to expel those who had signed a declaration against the party. As best we can make out, this affects at most a few hundred people who will go with the KAG. This small group of leaders and functionaries will probably unite with the USPD.<sup>13</sup>

The KAG issue was significant only in the parliamentary fraction, where we now have 11 deputies, while the KAG has 15.

As for the state of the organisation, during the period up to the rail strike the party was gradually growing. On the basis of precise information, the membership total is now about 300,000. The party has grown particularly in the Rhineland, in Berlin and Munich, along the coast, in Silesia, and in Central Germany.

Work in the trade unions is quite vigorous. On average, Communists take part in 70 to 100 trade-union meetings a day, intervening with the line of the Red International of Labour Unions.

As for financial performance, a member of the Communist Party pays about three times as much as a member of the SPD or the USPD. Organisational consolidation, formation of children's groups, agitation among the peasants, in the trade unions, and in cooperatives – all this is going well, and the party has special publications appearing once or twice monthly on these issues.

The party has 43 daily newspapers, of which 23 are independent publications and 20 are supplements. We are in the process of uniting groups of districts that belong to a common economic region into super-districts, while some other districts have been divided into sub-districts.

We were unquestionably experiencing a degree of stagnation before the rail workers' strike. But the strike swept that away, and a gust of fresh air revived the movement, creating a new basis for our organisational and political work.

**Clara Zetkin** *reported on the railway strike in Germany.*<sup>14</sup> This strike, which was quite unexpected, was marked by many contradictions, which can be explained

13 The KAG joined the USPD on 22 February 1922 – the day following this report.

14 On 1 February 1922 a nationwide railway strike began in Germany, lasting for seven days. The strike was called to fight proposed layoffs and to demand wage increases and main-

by an underlying historical contradiction: the objective conditions for proletarian revolution in Germany are ripe – even overripe – but the subjective driving force, the understanding and determination of the broad masses underlying the revolutionary movement, lags behind. The immaturity of the broad working masses in advancing their most basic needs in a sharp class struggle found expression in their attitude to the strike, as in that of their trade unions.

The strike concerned setting wage scales, defending the eight-hour day, and preventing the workday from being extended though so-called work readiness.<sup>15</sup> Although begun around economic issues, the strike quickly assumed a political character. The national government itself gave it this character from the start by describing it as a political confrontation, a revolt against the bourgeois state. The measures taken by the police chief of Berlin and president of the republic, both Social Democrats, gave the strike an additional political coloration, since from that point on it was conducted to defend the right of civil servants to strike – that is, for a political right.

If the strike leadership had been up to the task, it would have drawn the necessary conclusions and followed the urgings of the working masses, who – impelled instinctively by urgent need – were pressing for support of the strike and for struggle. Such a broadening of the struggle would have been possible only if the central leaderships and above all the trade-union federation (ADGB) had helped out. But they rejected the strike and stabbed the strikers in the back, so it was clearly impossible for the strike to develop from the outset into a general strike capable of overcoming all resistance.

The fact that the strike nevertheless broadened out so powerfully shows the degree to which the economic and political situation in Germany is ripe for struggle. It is significant that even as the leaders of the unions and Majority Socialists<sup>16</sup> renounced the class struggle in the name of the democratic state, a new social layer – the civil servants – entered into the class struggle. Previously this layer had rejected this struggle, but it was now compelled by capitalist exploitation to undertake it.

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tenance of the eight-hour day. Friedrich Ebert, German president and a long-time SPD leader, decreed that railroad workers, as state employees, had no right to strike. Police raided union headquarters, arrested union leaders, and confiscated union funds. As Zetkin describes in her report, the strike began extending to other government employees, with the KPD playing an active part in the struggle.

15 Under the system of *Dienstbereitschaft*, railway workers' time spent waiting to perform work did not count toward one's maximum workday, effectively nullifying the eight-hour day.

16 The term 'Majority Socialists' refers to the Social-Democratic Party (SPD).

The rail strike broadened beyond the civil servants to embrace both salaried and wage workers, organised in the German Federation of Railway Workers (DEV). The national executive of this organisation disapproved of the union's action, saying it was 'inconsistent with union principles'. The postal workers' union began to prepare for a strike. In many localities, other categories of workers walked out. The most significant of these local strikes was that of the municipal workers and employees in Berlin. It was in part a solidarity strike, but it also advanced its own demands. Thus the number of those in struggle expanded beyond the 200,000 railway civil servants, and is said to have approached 800,000.

The government intervened most energetically on behalf of the employers' brutal positions. It received aid from the top trade-union leadership and the Social Democrats, who issued an appeal strongly condemning the strike. They talked of how the strike was greatly worsening Germany's situation vis-à-vis foreign powers and decreed the ending of the strike. Yet the proletarian masses maintained the strike. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that it could end only in defeat.

The Communist Party, by contrast, tried from the outset to bring the top leaderships together at least for a consultation, in order at a minimum to push through the cancellation of the strike ban and secure the civil servants' right to strike. The Majority Socialists and the trade-union bosses did not deign to respond, while the USPD, consistent with its nature, gave an evasive reply. Under these conditions it was not possible for the strike to fully deploy its potential power and to consolidate as a formidable political struggle. On the contrary, this made it possible for the national government to act against the strikers with great brutality and malice. These go-betweens did manage to prevent mass dismissals or mass reprimands, but even that was only on paper, since the strike leaders were dismissed from their posts by means of 'disciplinary procedures'. The speech of railway minister Groener, that 'miserable dog', indicates that 700 disciplinary procedures were started up right away. As for determining the railway workers' salary rates and hours of work, that was left for subsequent negotiations.

The national government and the Social-Democratic union leaders justified their stand by the bold theory that this strike was in no sense a conflict of capital and labour. 'The state cannot afford to be defeated in this struggle', *Vorwärts* wrote. Under such circumstances, it was possible for Chancellor Wirth to speak of a revolt by the civil servants, of their uprising, of a rebellion, and challenge their right to strike.

The Majority Socialists immediately surrendered the right to strike. The USPD sharply attacked the decision to strike at the very outset. When they

brought themselves to speak out against the emergency measures decree, they still criticised only the government's actions in this particular instance. As for the KAG, consistent with its lack of roots, it gave no sign of life during the strike, which did not prevent it from making a sharp attack on the KPD's conduct after the fact and offering a great deal of advice on how it might have done better.

The KPD was the only party that sided with the strikers from the very beginning with great energy and in every possible way. It made the masses aware that the strike was deeply rooted in the disintegration of the bourgeois state's capitalist economy and that a struggle was needed against the government and the state itself. We pointed out that the right to strike could be secured only in a struggle against the government, through its overthrow and the establishment of a workers' government.

We underlined and emphasised that a proletarian united front was a precondition for success in this struggle. We made contact with the awakening layers of civil servants and took practical steps to stay in touch. The strike achieved broad support in every layer of the civil servants. Even the police organisation gave the strikers 121,000 marks. The conduct of the police toward the strikers is an indication that the capitalist economy is not the only thing that is disintegrating in Germany; the state itself is shaken.

The railway strike was the first of its type, but all evidence indicates that it will not be the last. It may well be followed by strike movements that are larger and very far reaching. Our party must therefore strive to arouse the masses, drive them forward, lead them politically in short order in a revolutionary manner. The task is to further break up the bourgeois state apparatus and make it unusable in the task of maintaining the exploitation and oppression of working people. The situation in Germany is overburdened with explosive material. No one knows what spark will suddenly ignite another movement this powerful. The defeated strike has generated enormous bitterness among countless thousands. Many of them have been transformed from pillars of the bourgeois state into its enemies, who will in the future overthrow this state. Under the blows of economic deprivation, the broad proletarian masses' will to struggle will soon flare up once again.

Our party's conduct during the strike was met with very broad sympathy among the working masses. During the strike the circulation of *Rote Fahne* was doubled. We will not be able to fully maintain this gain, but nonetheless our ongoing readership has been significantly broadened. Our organisation has won many new members. By contrast, in many localities entire groups of strikers tore up their Social-Democratic membership cards and left that party. Many also quit the trade unions.

We carried out the struggle under the slogan of the united front. And the power of this slogan increased qualitatively. It is more and more becoming a reality. And because of this fact, resistance to the proletarian united front among the Majority Socialists and the trade-union leaders is growing. They know well that this is for them a question of political life and death. Thanks to the pressure of the masses, this resistance is sure to collapse.

We are convinced that in the near future we will see great struggles in which the German proletariat will finally rise again in revolutionary struggle. The great moment will come when the Communist Party is deployed with a scope that is fully equal to its historical task.

*(Following the translation of Comrade Zetkin's speech, Comrade Kolarov was elected to the Hungarian Commission, replacing Comrade Kreibich, whose selection had aroused protests from the Hungarian opposition.)*

*(The session is adjourned at 4:30 p.m.)*

## National Reports (Continued)

*The Communist Party of France. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.*

*Chair: Clara Zetkin.*

*Speakers: Cachin, Burian, Kreibich.*

### The Communist Party of France

**Marcel Cachin:**<sup>1</sup> Given that the problems of the French workers' movement constitute a separate point on the agenda, we will limit ourselves here to a few essential details. The fourteen months that have passed since the Tours Congress<sup>2</sup> have been devoted mainly to propaganda and organisation. We have succeeded in uniting in the party 130,000 of the 170,000 members of the old organisation [the French SP]. At the same time, the class-conscious proletariat passed over from the Jouhaux unions to the Unitary CGT.<sup>3</sup>

The party publishes five daily newspapers and more than forty weeklies. Its central organ, *L'Humanité*, has a circulation of 180,000. The paper of the Dissidents,<sup>4</sup> by contrast, sells only 1,000 copies in Paris. Whenever there is an action, our readership grows – reaching 300,000 during the rail strike, for example. *L'Humanité* generates significant profits, which are used to support *L'Internationale*, our evening newspaper, as well as our outlying newspapers.

During the past year we have successfully carried out several electoral campaigns. The widely acclaimed election of Marty and Badina considerably increased the party's prestige.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Translated from the French proceedings.

2 The Tours Congress of the French Socialist Party (25–30 December 1920) voted by a 75 per cent majority to affiliate to the Communist International, giving birth to the Communist Party of France.

3 The French General Confederation of Labour (CGT) definitively split in December 1921, as the right-wing leaders under Léon Jouhaux expelled unions under left-wing leadership. The expelled unions formed the Unitary CGT (CGTU).

4 A reference to the French Socialist Party. The term 'Dissidents' was commonly used to describe the French SP minority that opposed the majority decision to affiliate to the Comintern in 1920 and rename itself the Communist Party. After the split, this minority retained the old party name. Their central organ was *Le Populaire*.

5 André Marty and Louis Badina, members of the French CP imprisoned for participating in a

The party collected 1.25 million francs<sup>6</sup> for famine relief in the Volga region, mainly through *L'Humanité*.

When the class of 1919 was called up, we carried out an implacable campaign against militarism, which contributed greatly to the fact that after a few weeks the government was compelled to send the class back home again.<sup>7</sup> We are also carrying out a strong campaign against the withholding of taxes from workers' wages<sup>8</sup> and against attempts to abolish the eight-hour day. At the beginning of November we organised a day of Communist propaganda. We have a special publication for peasants, whose circulation is 6,000–7,000.<sup>9</sup>

We are also taking steps to launch an Arabic-language daily for the indigenous peoples of North Africa. The newspaper suffered from every form of repression but continued to appear until the moment when the authorities succeeded in suppressing it by applying some old laws from the old Empire against freedom of the press in Tunisia and Algeria.<sup>10</sup>

The struggle against Poincaré and his politics gave new energy to our activity, which, after the initial enthusiasm brought about by our foundation, had suffered somewhat from a lack of spiritual nourishment. We summed up the workers' specific demands – defend the eight-hour day; defend wage levels; against tax withholding; against militarism; for recognition of the Soviet Union – and presented them in hundreds of assemblies of the broad masses.

Our parliamentary fraction has only fifteen members, and this restricts its activity. Nonetheless it is doing good work, particularly through anti-militarist propaganda.

The party has elected members in hundreds of municipal councils. A committee has been established to lead their activity.

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1919 mutiny by French sailors sent to assist White armies in the Russian Civil War, were elected to the Paris municipal council respectively in October and November 1921.

6 The equivalent of US\$103,000 in 1922.

7 On 3 May 1921 the French government called up the conscription class of 1919 – some 200,000 men who had reached draft age that year – to meet its manpower needs for occupying the Ruhr Valley, with the goal of forcing Germany to pay war reparations.

8 In 1917 the French government enacted a law authorising the withholding of taxes on wages and income. During the war, the French government largely refrained from going after workers' wages, to avoid arousing proletarian discontent. In 1921, however, it threw this restraint aside. As a result, in December 1921 the CGTU and CP decided to undertake an agitational campaign against the withholding tax, which included demonstrations and strikes.

9 A reference to *La Voix paysanne*.

10 Presumably a reference to the Communist daily *L'Avenir social*, published in French and Arabic.

The youth organisation also receives strong support. Its activity includes organising the war orphans.

The party is fully aware of its persisting weaknesses and is making every effort to correct past mistakes.

### The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

**Edmund Burian:** In keeping with the decisions of the Third World Congress, we carried out the unification of Czech, Polish, Slovakian, Ruthenian, Hungarian, and German workers.<sup>11</sup> Our main task is to structure this unification so firmly that it can withstand the severe burdens that arise from the national peculiarities of the population.

With the help of the ECCI, the unification congress solved the array of organisational challenges arising from these circumstances. The Third World Congress expressed a desire that the right wing move somewhat to the left, and that the left wing move to the right – both of which actually took place at the congress.<sup>12</sup>

There was another question that gave rise to a vigorous discussion: that of party policy during Karl's coup.<sup>13</sup> In this situation, the Czechoslovak republic began military preparations to block a Hapsburg restoration. In an initial discussion the comrades agreed that we had to take a stand against every war, including this one. But when we were confronted with the specific situation, we could not rest content with a purely negative point of view. We were in a situation similar to that of the German Communists at the time of the Kapp Putsch and we resolved to take a stand against this reactionary venture.<sup>14</sup> To provide

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11 Prior to the Comintern's Third Congress, the Czechoslovak Communist movement had still not united all its national units into a centralised organisation. The Third Congress 'Theses on Tactics and Strategy' stated, 'The congress instructs the Czechoslovak and the German-Bohemian Communist parties to fuse their organisations into a unified party within a period of time to be set by the Executive.' In line with this, a congress uniting all national Communist units inside Czechoslovakia into a single party was held 30 October–4 November 1921. See Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, p. 933.

12 For a discussion of the factional divisions in the Czechoslovak Communist Party, see Session 2 of the Second Enlarged Plenum, found on pp. 296–301 of this volume.

13 A reference to two failed attempts by the deposed Hapsburg monarch Karl I (Charles I of Austria, Charles IV of Hungary) to reclaim the Hungarian throne in March and October 1921. The Czech and Slovak lands had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until its disintegration in 1918.

14 On 13 March 1920, Wolfgang Kapp and Walther von Lüttwitz led a military coup in Ger-

security against our own bourgeoisie, we demanded, of course, not only the abrogation of every form of emergency powers in Czechoslovakia, but also the arming of the Austrian and Hungarian workers. At the point when the urgent danger of restoration had passed and our bourgeoisie moved to launch a war that would be purely capitalist in content, we immediately hardened our position and set about to transform the situation from a reactionary venture into a revolutionary uprising. The government took fright as workers in Prague and Brunn [Brno] demonstrated at government buildings, raised the red flag, and demanded weapons.

Trade-union issues have required the greatest part of our attention recently. Although we surely have the support of a majority of Czechoslovak workers, we won only 40 per cent of votes at the trade-union congress that took place at the end of January.<sup>15</sup> In the elections that took place in the trade unions following this congress, supporters of the Moscow trade-union International were everywhere victorious. We also defeated the Social Democrats in the most significant consumer cooperatives.

As for the united front, in Czechoslovakia this was advanced first in the region where the Communists had won their first decisive victory over the Social Democrats and the national socialists,<sup>16</sup> in Brunn [Brno]. The Brunn comrades fought alone in the December 1920 strike<sup>17</sup> and had to absorb all the losses on their own. Based on this experience, when the miners' strike

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many against the republican government led by the SPD. While the SPD itself offered little resistance, officials of the SPD-led trade-union federation called a general strike that was observed by twelve million workers, virtually the entire proletariat. In the face of the general strike and developing armed workers' resistance, the coup collapsed by 17 March.

15 The Seventh Congress of the Czechoslovak Trade Union Association was held in Prague 22–26 January 1922. That congress, which decided to affiliate to the Amsterdam International rather than the RILU, was the scene of a sharp struggle between the right-wing official leadership and a growing left wing. The developing split in the union federation would be carried through by the end of 1922.

16 'National socialists' here refers to the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, a left bourgeois-nationalist party that advocated measures for nationalisation and social reform.

17 On 9 December 1920 the government of Czechoslovakia seized the People's House in Prague, headquarters of the Left Socialist (future Communist) Party and its newspaper, *Rudé právo*. A general strike was called in response, observed by one million industrial and agricultural workers, which called for the resignation of the government and issued a series of revolutionary demands. In a number of places workers' councils were set up, as industrial workers seized factories and agricultural workers occupied large estates. The government responded by declaring a state of emergency, and workers were fired upon in several centres. After a week the strike was broken.

broke out, there was strong pressure to unify all proletarian forces.<sup>18</sup> The same development took place in the Reichenberg [Liberec] region. The united-front slogan was then adopted by the party's Central Committee; it has already addressed a letter to the trade unions demanding establishment of a common front of struggle.

With regard to revolutionary prospects in Czechoslovakia, the situation is almost the opposite of what we see in Germany. The objective conditions are not yet as ripe in our country, and this is reflected in the value of the Czechoslovak currency. On the other hand, the subjective conditions for revolution are more fully developed, a fact that is shown by the size of the Communist Party.

**Karl Kreibich** (Czechoslovakia): As for the international position of Czechoslovakia, it is the most important country in the Little Entente.<sup>19</sup> The reason for this is that Czechoslovakia not only contained 70 per cent of the industry of prewar Austria, but also the richest agricultural regions and natural resources. In geographical size it is second only to France, but its strategic position is so unfavourable that it cannot maintain itself militarily without the aid of a strong ally. These factors turn the young republic toward France.

Economically, Czechoslovakia was closely tied to Germany and prewar Austria. The bourgeoisie's economic policy thus aimed at freeing itself from these countries. Meanwhile, the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie sought to strengthen its position by launching a general offensive against wages and the eight-hour day, which sharpened the class conflict between bourgeoisie and proletariat. The struggle is complicated by the existence alongside the proletariat of pronounced national differences, which frustrate the plans of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie would like to be able to rely on the power of a strong and centralised state as a defence against national disunity. It therefore created a fiction: the unified Czechoslovak nation.<sup>20</sup> However, the Slovaks have had a separate economic and political existence for hundreds of years, as a result of which they are culturally and linguistically distinct from the Czechs. Unification with them could result only from a lengthy and gradual process within a

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18 The Czechoslovak coal miners' strike began on 3 February 1922 and involved up to 150,000 miners.

19 The Little Entente was a mutual defence arrangement formed in 1920–1 involving Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania.

20 Czechoslovakia was established 28 October 1918 out of a portion of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire.

common state framework. The bourgeoisie, however, requires a strong national state and a unified nation right away, and they are therefore using force to carry out the unification.

The employment of force has alienated the Slovaks, driving them into the camp of the autonomists.<sup>21</sup> Because of nationalist considerations, the Czech bourgeoisie is unable at present to collaborate with the German-speaking or Hungarian bourgeoisie. As a result, the only form that a government can possibly take under these circumstances is a coalition of the Czech bourgeoisie with the Czech Social Democrats. The Communist Party carries out a struggle simultaneously against the national irredentists and against the state power in Prague under the slogan of revolutionary unity of the proletariat without distinctions of language.

During the Karl putsch, the CP was in a difficult position because it had not yet carried out its unification. Proposals were made that required a more ambitious political assessment of this situation, which amounted to calling on the party to broaden the crisis and transform it into a revolutionary movement. This concept ran into resistance. There was a degree of timidity, a shrinking back from launching a big movement; there were also pacifist objections. Analogies were made with the situation in 1914. Under these circumstances, the bolder conception could not be carried through.

As for the trade-union question, it should also be noted that the Communist trade-union council began to function only in November and was, of course, unable to emerge victorious in the unions by January. We already have three large unions: construction, chemical, and wood – whose leaderships came to us through the split. We have also won the agricultural workers' union, which however allowed itself to be driven out of the union federation through various manoeuvres and thus was not able to support us in the vote.

As for the cooperatives, we have won their leadership in Prague, Reichenberg, and a number of other cities.

As for organising the party, we still face major tasks, especially in Slovakia where earlier the party organisation hardly existed. Without any doubt the Communist Party enjoys the sympathy of a majority of working people in Czechoslovakia, but the task of organising these sympathisers still has to be carried out. This work is hindered by the limited theoretical understanding of the Czechoslovak workers' movement. Thus we lack Czech translations of the most important Communist and socialist writings. We have too few theoreti-

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21 Presumably a reference to the Slovak People's Party, a right-wing nationalist formation that advocated Slovak autonomy.

cians. We therefore founded a special publication, *Míchačka* [Agitator], which provides source material for reports. In addition, we have a theoretical journal, *Komunismus*, plus *Proletkult*, in order to offer what is essential in this field of party work.

Despite the many difficulties, our work is proceeding well and we are making good progress all along the line.

*(The session is adjourned at 10:30 p.m.)*

## National Reports (Continued)

*The situation in Britain. The situation in Italy. The situation in the United States of North America. Salute to the Red Army.*

*Speakers: MacManus, Terracini, Marshall, Cachin.*

### The Situation in Britain

**Arthur MacManus:** When the war broke out, the workers' movement in Britain felt it had been betrayed by its leaders, and for this reason it was entirely crippled for an extended period. A revival came only with the Irish Easter Rebellion<sup>1</sup> and, even more, with the Russian Revolution. A convergence took place between what was left of the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, and the Socialist Federation. Over a period of time these groups came together organisationally, and eighteen months ago they joined with some other revolutionary groups in founding the Communist Party of Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> This process was hastened by the Communist International's Second Congress, in which a number of delegates from different organisations took part. On their return, they did everything possible to overcome the disagreements that still remained.

No sooner was the party formed, than the question arose of joining the Labour Party. There was strong opposition to this, but the party conducted itself in a disciplined manner.<sup>3</sup> Our definitive unification took place in January 1921. When the party was four months old, the great miners' strike broke

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<sup>1</sup> The Easter Rising in Ireland began on 24 April 1916. Under the leadership of James Connolly and Patrick Pearse, some 200 members of the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army seized several central locations in Dublin. The rebellion was suppressed by British troops within several days, and sixteen leaders and participants were executed. Despite its failure, the rising served as inspiration for Irish toilers, and helped spark the Irish war of independence that began in January 1919.

<sup>2</sup> On 31 July–1 August 1920 a Communist Unity Convention in London united the British Socialist Party, 22 Communist Unity groups, and more than 20 other small organisations. A second convention in Leeds on 29–30 January 1921 completed the unification process, bringing in the Workers' Socialist Federation, Communist Labour Party, and other organisations. Pro-Communist forces in the Independent Labour Party joined in April 1921.

<sup>3</sup> At the 1920 Communist Unity Convention, delegates approved the perspective of request-

out.<sup>4</sup> Although the party had not yet been able to completely consolidate its forces and organise its membership structure, it nevertheless did its duty in this struggle and committed all its forces to the battle.

As a result, 130 members of the Communist Party, including its general secretary,<sup>5</sup> were arrested. Its main headquarters was attacked, but the newly formed party nonetheless continued to function. Its executive was driven underground, but the party itself retained its legality and continued to publish its newspapers and leaflets. The government used every means possible to pressure the printing shops, newspaper sales outlets, and so on, in order to prevent our newspapers from being printed and distributed. But the party bravely stood its ground and always found ways and means of taking its propaganda material to the masses.

During the strike the party systematically and doggedly pursued the goal of extending the strike to the 'Triple Alliance' of the miners', transport workers' and rail workers' unions. At the same time, it did not fail to warn the workers in advance of the inevitable betrayal by the union leaders, and this betrayal followed rapidly on the notorious Black Friday.<sup>6</sup>

Through its conduct during the strike and its struggle against the government, the party won the support of broad masses. This was most clearly expressed through the circulation of the party's newspaper. Before the strike, *The Call* had a circulation of 3,000 copies. Four to five months later, after the strike, its successor, *The Communist*, reached a circulation of 45,000.

In an interesting episode of the great strike, Mr. Thomas, the traitorous leader of the railway workers' union, sued our newspaper and our chairman

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ing affiliation to the Labour Party by a margin of 100 to 85. The question was debated subsequently at the Comintern's Second Congress, which also approved this perspective by a vote of 58 to 24 with 2 abstentions.

4 A reference to the British miners' strike of 1921, which began when coal owners locked out miners following expiration of a temporary wage agreement on 31 March. Some 1.2 million miners turned the lockout into a strike to protest the owners' planned wage cuts and extended working hours. Authorities responded by declaring a state of emergency, moving police and the army into the coalfields. The strike lasted until 29 June.

5 A reference to Albert Inkpin, the CP's national secretary, who was arrested on 7 May 1921 for circulating pro-Soviet propaganda, thereby 'doing, or attempting to do acts calculated to cause sedition and disaffection among the civilian population'. He was sentenced to six months in prison.

6 Leaders of the transport and rail workers' unions – which together with the miners constituted the 'Triple Alliance' – had promised solidarity strikes. But in a move widely seen as a betrayal of the miners, on 15 April 1921 ('Black Friday') the leaders of these unions called off the scheduled solidarity strike, leaving the miners in the lurch.

for slander. The government imposed a fine of £2,000 on us.<sup>7</sup> We were successful in compelling the government, if it really wants to enforce this fine, to take the money from the publishing fund of the Independent Labour Party, which is its accomplice. As for Mr. Thomas, we have not merely exposed him, we discredited him and made him look ridiculous.

As for the party's structures, since the miners' strike we have organised 220 local groups, with a membership of 7,000–8,000. The party has 320 educators and speakers at its disposal. We hold more than 1,000 meetings every month.

One of the party's major tasks is organising the unemployed, whose number reached five million during the great strike and since then has remained around two million. Our vigorous efforts have transformed this unorganised mass into organised fighters. We developed a national structure for them, publishing a weekly paper with a circulation of 40,000. Through this organisation, the jobless have won a weekly payment of two to four pounds. To be sure, this support to the unemployed has undercut the ferment among the masses. But in the long run the bourgeoisie is not able to maintain this degree of support, and it must set about reducing the jobless payments. That will sharpen the situation and lead to renewed struggles.

Our relationship to the Labour Party stands as a measure of our strength. As you know, the Communists were expelled from the Labour Party.<sup>8</sup> In many local groups, however, this decision was not carried out, and nineteen of our local groups are part of the Labour Party. At present the bourgeoisie itself is discontented with Lloyd George, given that he is unable to resolve the immense economic crisis. With the approach of the elections, the Labour Party will be compelled to put the inclusion of the Communist Party back on the agenda. It is forced to seek an agreement with the Communists because they have great influence among the masses, especially among the jobless. But on the other hand, it fears that this will push away Conservative voters who don't want to have anything to do with Bolshevism.

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7 In April 1921 a libel suit was filed by J.H. Thomas against the editors, printers, and publishers of *The Communist*, the weekly journal of the British CP, based on its account of Thomas's treachery on Black Friday. In December 1921 a judge ruled against the Communists and awarded Thomas £2,000 for damages. See Klugman 1968, pp. 214–15.

8 Following the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain in August 1920 the party immediately sought affiliation to the Labour Party, and many CP members joined as individuals. The request for affiliation was rejected and the party was excluded by the Labour Party's National Executive Committee on the grounds that the CP's stance was inconsistent with Labour's goal of 'the achievement of the political, social and economic emancipation of the people by means of Parliamentary Democracy'.

The Labour Party posed four questions to us:

1. If there were a unification, would the Communist Party submit to the Labour Party's statutes?
2. Is the Communist Party willing to seek the liberation of workers through legal means alone?
3. Does it favour a proletarian democratic constitution, as opposed to the council system?
4. Would Communist deputies submit to the discipline of the Labour Party parliamentary caucus?

Our executive is now in the process of formulating a reply to these questions. It should be noted that the two largest Labour Party organisations, those in London and Glasgow, have taken a stand for our admission.

Comrades who are accustomed to broad mass parties could be misled by the small size of our membership or of our papers' circulation into underestimating our strength. Our strength should be measured in comparison with that of the other existing workers' parties in Britain, and our uniqueness should be taken into consideration. The Labour Party's organisation is far looser than ours. It does not have its own press. By contrast, we are a rising and real force with a firm structure and our own press. We are consolidating our influence more and more and will surely be equal to the tasks that will be posed by the developing situation in Britain.

### The Situation in Italy

**Umberto Terracini:** In recent months, the economic crisis in Italy has become even more acute. It has been expressed most vividly in the collapse of the Banca di Sconto, the financial institution of heavy industry.<sup>9</sup> During the war, Italian capitalism was raised up artificially without any material foundation. Its outlook is far more hopeless than that of other countries which are well-placed in terms of the foundations of industry.

An attempt was made to blame the crisis on the revolutionary spirit of the workers. Fascism was organised, which systematically struck down the flower of the working class, destroying its labour halls and structures.<sup>10</sup> This created

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9 The Banca Italiana di Sconto (BIS), formed in 1914, declared bankruptcy in December 1921.

10 The labour hall (*camera del lavoro*) was a local union centre that played a large and mil-

difficult conditions for the newly formed Communist Party. Nonetheless, with the aid of its outstanding underground organisation it was able to stand its ground. Its numbers are growing slowly but steadily. It is more and more achieving the leadership of the workers' movement in Italy and, above all, the leadership of the fight against fascism. This is best shown by the bourgeois press, which initially tried to kill our party through silence, but has now been forced to deal with us more and more. It now recognises the Communist Party of Italy as the real driving force of the Italian workers' movement. The party has 50,000 members, and there are 30,000 in the youth organisation. It has three daily papers with a circulation of 80,000. We are in the process of publishing the Communist writings that are so lacking in Italy.

The criticism was raised that the party made an error with regard to the Arditi del Popolo.<sup>11</sup> It was assumed that this movement was a spontaneous proletarian uprising. However, it was called into existence by Nitti, a leader of a bourgeois party. It is headed by a bourgeois adventurer. Its programme is one of bourgeois pacifism, seeking to affirm the authority of the state. It offers us no possibility of winning the sympathy of the broader masses.

We have also been criticised regarding our approach to the anarchists and syndicalists. A current among them, led by Borghi and Malatesta, are carrying out a campaign of systematic slander against Soviet Russia. We oppose that energetically, even at the risk of losing the sympathy of these forces.

Our approach to the Socialist Party has altered only to the extent that we support its left wing, which spoke out for unity with Moscow.

The fact that we have correctly applied the decisions of the Third Congress is shown by the appeal to the proletariat that we issued a few weeks after our return from Moscow.<sup>12</sup> In it, we proposed to the proletariat and the trade unions to join as a united force in struggle for the most urgent specific demands of the Italian proletariat. The trade unions at first ignored this proposal, but after three months of systematic agitation we won almost half the organisation over

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itant role in the Italian labour movement, going back to the 1890s. These centres became a major target for fascist attacks. Between January and May 1921, 243 labour halls were attacked by fascist squads, with 202 workers killed and over a thousand wounded.

11 The Arditi del Popolo was a united anti-fascist workers' defence organisation that arose independently of the workers' parties in June 1921, growing into a national organisation with some 20,000 members. The Communist and Socialist parties both responded to the Arditi with hostility, with the CP barring its members from joining on pain of expulsion, although some leaders such as Gramsci urged support for the movement.

12 Presumably a reference to the Italian CP manifesto, 'Contro l'offensiva della reazione', published 28 September 1921.

to our side, and they were forced to convene their national council. Through this agitation we greatly increased our influence in all the trade unions.

We carried out another initiative for the unification of proletarian forces through fusion of different unions organised in separate federations. This work is also finding a response among the masses and thereby increasing our influence.

In the syndicalist trade unions, the party is working together with Comrade Vecchi for affiliation to the Red International of Labour Unions.

We attempted to build the [Russian] Famine Relief Campaign as a unified proletarian effort, but were not successful. On the other hand, together with all proletarian organisations, we are forming aid committees to support prisoners across the entire country. In order to gauge the importance of this campaign, you must know that more than 10,000 Communists are now held in prison, and that in Turin alone, during the year 1921, the labour halls led by Communists contributed 500,000 lire for aid to prisoners.

We have established a foothold in the cooperatives, gaining the leadership of the two largest ones. We are working to unite hundreds of smaller cooperatives through a special central committee.

Although our parliamentary fraction has only fifteen members, they cause great difficulties for the government, as shown in the Misiano affair.<sup>13</sup>

Only recently our efforts to establish proletarian unity in struggle achieved a signal victory. On our initiative, a meeting of all trade union and syndicalist organisations took place a few weeks ago; the Socialist Party was also represented. The Communist Party did not send a delegate, but it gave written assurance that it would support the common struggle by every means possible.<sup>14</sup> We hope that in this way we have made clear to the working masses of Italy that only the Communist Party provides them with an opportunity to defeat capitalism.

### **The Situation in the United States of North America**

**Marshall** [Max Bedacht]: The Communist Party of America is contending with a capitalism that has become much stronger and much more organised in recent years. In addition, conditions specific to the US before the war hindered

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13 Francesco Misiano, a Communist deputy in parliament, was attacked by some thirty fascist deputies on the floor of parliament on 13 June 1921. Misiano was beaten and thrown into the street.

14 See comments on this episode by Zinoviev on pp. 115–6, and by Lunacharsky on p. 134.

the emergence of a genuinely revolutionary workers' movement, given that diligent workers found it possible to set themselves up on their own as farmers. Democratic illusions, which had been cleverly awakened, were an ideological obstacle to the use of revolutionary methods. What is more, during the war the capitalists were able to satisfy leading sectors of the working class by passing on fragments of their enormous war profits, and thus dull the cutting edge of energetic class struggle.

Before the war, the political expression of the workers' movement was with a few exceptions petty-bourgeois in character. Its position on the war was petty-bourgeois and pacifist in character, which served only to further conceal its petty-bourgeois nature. The economic boom forced the capitalists to avoid strikes; thus they responded to wage disputes by establishing mediation committees. This contributed to maintaining the masses' democratic illusions.

When the war ended, the situation was suddenly transformed. The boom ended. War-armaments contracts were cancelled. The army demobilised. Unemployment spread as never before, amid an unprecedented economic crisis. Capitalists moved ruthlessly against the workers, and every act of workers' resistance was beaten down through the brutal use of the democratic state's entire apparatus of power.

The sharp turn caused by this crisis found ideological expression, of course, in the workers' thinking. They lost their illusions in the democratic state. They learned to view the state as a tool of the capitalists.

It was only after the war that the basis was created for building a revolutionary workers' movement. One of the greatest barriers to successful struggle is the diversity of craft unions and trade organisations, which make it almost impossible under present conditions to carry out an all-inclusive struggle. However, the workers see more and more how untenable this situation is, and a big movement has grown up for the fusion of different organisations. In addition, we note a big change within the unions: the radical unions are coming together more and more to demand of Gompers a more energetic defence of workers' interests. A general strike of coal workers is expected early this year, and this can have an immense impact.

There are problems specific to the United States: the approaching war with Japan and the Negro question. This latter issue is very important for Communists, since 13 million Negroes live in the country, and almost all of them are wage slaves. They are persecuted in every way possible, systematically denied schooling, terrorised by lynching, and persecuted by race hatred. This poses a very serious and major task that the Communist Party must carry out.

### Salute to the Red Army

Cachin spoke in memory of the Red Army on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of its creation. He recalled its heroic sacrifices, which saved the revolution. He spoke of the French sailors who refused to combat the Russian Revolution and had the courage, at the risk of their own lives, to defy the counterrevolution's orders.<sup>15</sup>

*(It was resolved to send a delegation of the Enlarged Executive Committee to the parade the next morning. The following appeal to the Red Army was unanimously adopted:)*

The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International conveys its heartiest congratulations to the Red Army of Soviet Russia on the fourth anniversary of its creation. The revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat of all countries regards with pride the glorious heroic deeds that the Red Army carried out under unspeakably difficult conditions.

For the first time in history, the working masses can regard the victory of an army as their own victory. The Red Army struck down, one after another, the internal enemies of Soviet Russia. It achieved the miracle of teaching a lesson, through a series of mighty blows, to the technically and numerically far superior imperialist powers of Europe and America – namely, that Russia is a bulwark of world revolution that cannot be conquered by weapons.

However, this unprecedented chain of victories over the power of world imperialism was not achieved through rifles and lances alone. Behind the columns of the Red Army marched invisible millions of workers and peasants of Russia and millions of workers of other countries. The alliance of the international proletariat's revolutionary vanguard with the international army of Soviet Russia is a fact with immense real meaning – it is not only a political but a military factor of the first order. It is this alliance that has knocked the sword out of the hands of the financial and industrial monarchs of France and the United States.

The world revolution works its way forward, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly; sometimes tunnelling almost invisibly. It advances by a thousand paths, always without rest and unstoppable. It counts on the Red Army, its revolutionary spirit, its steadfastness, and its unshakable firmness.

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15 In April 1919, sailors of the French Black Sea Fleet, which had been dispatched to support France's war efforts against the Soviet republic, mutinied and raised the red flag. The fleet was quickly sent home, the sailors repressed, and their leaders jailed.

The delegates of the Communist International sections present at the enlarged plenum of its Executive Committee vow to exert all their strength in order to give expanded and more solid expression to the alliance of the revolutionary vanguard of the world proletariat and the Red Army, so that the day may come when the Red Army of Soviet Russia joins with the Red Army of the future European soviet republic!

Long live the Red Army!

*Burian* (CP of Czechoslovakia); *Thalheimer* (CP of Germany); *Cachin* (CP of France); *Kolarov* (CP of Bulgaria); *Roberto* (CP of Italy); *Pogány* (CP of Hungary); *Wertheim* (CP of Austria); *Herzog* (CP of Switzerland); *Olschewisch* (CP of Poland); *MacManus* (CP of Britain); *Jansen* (CP of the Netherlands).

*(The session is adjourned at 4:30 p.m.)*

## National Reports (Continued)

*Activity of the Communist Party of the United States. The situation in Poland.*

*Report from Balkan Federation. New commissions.*

*Chair: Kolarov.*

*Speakers: Carr, Antonowicz, Kolarov.*

### Activity of the Communist Party of the United States

**Carr** [Ludwig Katterfeld]: The Communist Party in America was born from the old Socialist Party, whose left wing won the majority in 1919. The reformist sector of the Socialist Party began thereupon to drive out of the party entire organisations, mainly those using foreign languages. These groups continued independently and then unified, over time, into two Communist parties. In January 1921 a white terror broke out that made it absolutely necessary for the Communist groups to unify. This took place in May, forming the present Communist Party of North America.<sup>1</sup>

The main difficulty was organisational, because in our efforts to maintain absolute centralism we had to take the development of the autonomous foreign-language organisations into account. No sooner was this question resolved than another one arose. The party had to do everything possible to achieve a legal opportunity to win broader masses.<sup>2</sup> Some of the comrades, including three of the ten Central Committee members, made every effort to block the founding of a legal organisation. They went so far as to call for a split in the party, which then took place in November 1921. As a result of this dispute, 2,000

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1 In 1919 the US Socialist Party leadership expelled the pro-Communist majority, which proceeded to form two rival parties, the Communist Party of America and the Communist Labor Party. After several realignments, the two main components of the US Communist movement held a unity convention in May 1921.

2 In 1919 the US Communist movement was driven underground by government repression. By late 1921, following easing of the 'Red scare' and moves toward unification of the movement, the majority of the US leadership took steps to found a legal 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 legal party was founded in December.

members left the party. We referred the disputed question to the Communist International, which decided unanimously for the majority point of view, creating the hope that the best forces among those who left will come back again to the party.<sup>3</sup>

Our party is completely underground. It is comprised of 1,700 groups, none of which has more than ten members. Our organisations function in 23 different languages, and our publications and leaflets must appear in just as many languages, which poses a big challenge. We have 8 daily papers in the various languages, plus 15 to 17 weeklies and a number of monthly publications. Our leaflets have a circulation of one million and are distributed by our underground organisation. True, the party has only 10,000 members, but each one is an active collaborator. The Socialist Party, by contrast, has only 5,000–6,000 members, mostly petty bourgeois, and lacks any influence among the masses. We, however, are firmly rooted in the masses and are in the process of establishing a foothold not only in the industrial proletariat but among the agricultural workers and small farmers. During this activity we do not forget that we are dealing with the most powerful bourgeoisie of the world, and that the world revolution will not have won out until it has triumphed on the battlefields of America.

### The Situation in Poland

**Antonowicz** [Julian Brun]: The war devastated not only Polish industry but also the Polish proletariat. Not only machines but workers as well were evacuated to Russia or Germany. Industry is recovering slowly, mainly in the form of armaments production. Overall, it has not yet reached 25 per cent of its prewar production level.

The Polish republic, a vassal state of France, is the strongest buttress of world reaction against Soviet Russia. Its internal policies toward the workers' movement are in line with that state of things. The governments, following quickly one after another, ruthlessly repress the Communist movement while tolerating the reformist, patriotic, or purely trade-union organisations. The Polish Socialist Party, long led by Pilsudski, is well known in this regard. It is not

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3 A reference to a self-proclaimed 'Left Opposition' led by George Ashkenudzie, John J. Ballam, and Charles Dirba that opposed efforts to legalise the Communist movement in the United States. After hearing both sides, the ECCI reprimanded those who had split and called for them to rejoin the party, which some did. See Zumoff 2014, pp. 62–5.

merely tolerated; it works hand in glove with the political police against the Communist Party. This nationalist workers' party unites the politically backward masses of workers and thereby maintains control of the Polish Ministry of Labour, along with inspection of job sites and other administrative posts. Jewish workers have significant organisations, mostly working in small-scale industry. The largest of these is the Bund, which has recently been forced underground, because Communists won significant influence in its ranks. There are large Communist fractions in the Bund, and it is now on the verge of a split.

The Communist Party is completely illegal and is not able to operate anywhere under its own name. Nonetheless, there are few countries in Europe where Communists have such a strong foothold in the unions as in Poland. A large number of national unions are completely under our control. Only in the largest branches of industry, such as mining, textile, and the railways, have we been unable to gain control of the apparatus, even though the masses are with us. This is because the social patriots are determined to dominate these organisations no matter what the cost, and they dissolve local groups in which the Communists have won the upper hand, often with the aid of the police. Every time a group is dissolved in this way, the work is begun anew, and we are in the process of driving the social patriots out of these organisations as well. It is of course impossible under such circumstances to maintain a legal Communist press. All our publications are circulated underground. We have scored victories in a number of medical insurance associations and municipal elections. This greatly frightens the bourgeoisie, who respond with draft emergency laws against the Communists, drawn up on the well-known Yugoslav model.<sup>4</sup>

The party's activity also extends into the newly acquired territories of Posen, Galicia, and the East.<sup>5</sup> It is strengthened by groups that are continually breaking away from the Polish Socialist Party and the Jewish socialist groups. We are

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4 A wave of repression in Yugoslavia began in December 1920, when the Communist Party was banned under the pretext that it was preparing a coup d'état during a massive strike wave. The party's offices and printing plants were seized and several thousand members were arrested or fired from their jobs. Also closed down were 2,500 trade unions affiliated to the Central Workers' Trade Union Council, as well as consumer cooperatives, workers' centres, and reading rooms.

5 Posen had been transferred from Germany to the newly established country of Poland by the Versailles Treaty of 1919. Western Galicia, formerly part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, also became part of Poland following the empire's dissolution after the war. During 1918–21, Eastern Galicia and portions of present-day Belarus and Lithuania were also annexed.

extending our influence among the radicalising petty-bourgeois masses, who are enraged by the agrarian reform.<sup>6</sup>

We will utilise the united-front policy in Poland as well, and we hope to provide conclusive proof that the reformist parties are incapable of defending the most elementary interests of the working class.

### Report from Balkan Federation<sup>7</sup>

**Vasil Kolarov:** The confederation includes Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, and part of the former Turkey in Europe, with a population of 37 million. From the Balkan War up until the present there has actually been no end to war.<sup>8</sup> Even today the borders are not finalised, and the whole region is a hotbed of contention among rival British, French, and Italian capitalists. The entire Balkans is a military encampment of counterrevolution, where remnants of Wrangel's army are warehoused for future adventures.<sup>9</sup>

In every Balkan country the peasants make up the immense majority of the population, and as a result there is everywhere an urgent agrarian problem. The need to resolve this issue is a giant headache for every government.

Industry, which before the war was quite weakly developed, is now almost in ruins. Transport routes are completely destroyed, and even the Danube, the natural route of water transport, hardly carries out that function any more. Regular shipping has broken down entirely.

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6 The Polish agrarian reform law of 15 July 1920 called for parcelling out estates greater than 180 hectares, but it was never fully implemented.

7 The Balkan Communist Federation was a continuator of the Balkan Revolutionary Social-Democratic Federation, which had been formed in July 1915 by Socialist parties in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Serbia, on a platform of internationalist opposition to World War I and support for a new, revolutionary International. This alliance was renamed Balkan Communist Federation at a January 1920 conference in Sofia, Bulgaria, which called for a federation of Balkan socialist republics.

8 The first Balkan War, from October to December 1912, was waged by Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro against the Ottoman Empire. Under the terms of a May 1913 peace treaty, the Ottoman Empire lost almost all of its remaining European territory. A second Balkan War was waged from June to August 1913 with Serbia and Greece defeating Bulgaria over division of the conquered Ottoman Empire territory in Macedonia. During 1919–22, Greece was at war with Turkey.

9 A reference to defeated White troops from the Russian Civil War commanded by Pyotr N. Wrangel, who had evacuated Russia in November 1920. Most of his troops went to the Balkan states of Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary.

All the Balkan countries have a trade deficit, with imports three or four times greater than exports. That results in an ongoing decline in their currencies, creating much speculation and a concentration of wealth in the hands of new financial institutions dominated by Western European and American capitalists.

In *Yugoslavia*, the government, supported by French capital, insists on strict centralisation of the state apparatus, while the new provinces (Croatia, Bosnia, etc.) strive for autonomy. The Yugoslav government conducts this conflict with brutal methods, indeed even worse than those of the previous Austrian regime. The battle with Communists is waged with even more ruthless methods. They are declared to be beyond protection by any laws. The prisons of Belgrade alone have held more than 14,000 prisoners accused of Communist crimes.

In *Romania* the picture is pretty much the same. Many parts of the country have been under a state of siege for ten years. Here too terrorist means are employed against the Communist Party.

In *Greece* two bourgeois parties – the supporters of Venizelos and of the king – are locked in struggle. Venizelos was a servant of British imperialism, and in this role dragged the people into the Asia Minor escapade.<sup>10</sup> The people, weary of war, rejected this policy and recalled the king – but he too pursued the war. This produced mass discontent, which enabled the Communist Party to conduct intensive revolutionary propaganda. The government responded with white terror.

In *Bulgaria* at first the social patriots ruled together with the Agrarian Party, which represents the peasants. The social patriots became fully discredited, and the Agrarian Party too is now, after two years in government, at the end of its rope. It is the Communists who constitute the truly popular mass party in Bulgaria, and if the international situation were more favourable, it would carry out its historical role. But at the present time, it has been forced onto the defensive.

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10 A reference to the Greek-Turkish war. In May 1919 the Greek army, with support from France and Britain, occupied the region around İzmir (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 Greek forces continued to advance. In January 1921 the Greek army launched an offensive into central Anatolia, seeking to overthrow the revolutionary-nationalist regime 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 İzmir (September 1922).

The two Greek parties referred to were the Liberal Party and the People's Party.

In *Greece* the Communist Party has only 1,500 members, but still it enjoys great influence among 50,000 to 60,000 workers who are organised in trade unions. The reformist Socialist Party, by comparison, is quite uninfluential. The Communist Party has a daily newspaper and several weeklies.

In *Yugoslavia*, before the onset of the white terror, we had a mighty Communist movement, which held the leadership of the quarter-million unionised workers. You are aware of the unprecedented persecution and emergency laws that have victimised our Yugoslav sister party, and also of the disgraceful deeds of the social traitors, who have surfaced as agents of the police in persecution. The party was forced completely underground and now, after the bourgeoisie's attempts to destroy it have failed, it is on the eve of a new upswing.

In *Romania* the government arrested an entire party convention, which had declared for the Communist International. Almost all Communists and trade-union leaders were thrown in jail, paralysing the entire workers' movement for six months.<sup>11</sup> Last October the government was forced to permit the trade unions to function again. The Communist Party is gradually re-establishing itself. It has a daily paper, which carries out good propaganda across the whole country, holds large mass meetings in Bucharest and Ploesti and is well placed to grow rapidly.

In *Bulgaria* the situation is different. The Communist Party here, which dates back twenty years,<sup>12</sup> has completely defeated the social patriots and leads the entire union movement. It has 40,000 members and has a trade-union movement of 60,000 workers. Its daily official organ has a circulation of 28,000 and is thus the largest newspaper of the country. In addition, it has newspapers in outlying regions along with publications for peasants; for Turkish, Armenian, and Jewish workers; and for women, youth, and prisoners of war. Its theoretical journal, which has appeared for twenty-three years, has a circulation of 6,000. Of the 228 parliamentary deputies, 54 belong to the Communist fraction, and they function in disciplined fashion under the leadership of the Central Committee. The Communist Party has a majority in a number of city councils.

The famine-relief campaign, carried through with great vigour, collected more than four million German marks. The international recruitment week was carefully prepared and carried through successfully.

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11 The Romanian Socialist Party's congress of 8–12 May 1921 had just voted to join the Comintern and change the party's name to Communist Party when police surrounded the building and arrested the delegates.

12 A reference to the Tesniaki, the majority wing of the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party that split from the opportunist wing of the party in 1903. It renamed itself Communist Party in May 1919.

As you see, the revolutionary workers' movement is growing in every Balkan country. The biggest obstacle it faces is the involvement of French and British imperialism. The struggle of French and British workers against their capitalists could greatly ease the situation of revolutionary workers in the Balkans.

### **New Commissions**

On the proposal of Comrade Zinoviev, a commission on the Polish question was established, consisting of Comrades Radek, Kreibich, Ker, Thalheimer, and Safarov, along with the Polish delegation.

A commission was also established on the Eastern question, composed of Comrades Cachin, Thalheimer, Bell, Terracini, Ramsay, Kolarov, Safarov, Carr, Roy, and Radek.

*(The session is adjourned at 11:10 p.m.)*

## Executive Committee Report

*Chair: Cachin.*

*Speakers: Zinoviev, Radek, Kollontai.*

*Report of the Executive Committee and Presidium. Report on negotiations with representatives of the Two-and-a-Half International. Report on activity of the International Women's Secretariat.*

### Report of the Executive Committee and Presidium

**Grigorii Zinoviev:** Since the Third Congress and up to 15 February, there were 18 meetings of the Executive Committee and 37 of the Presidium. The latter body is charged with carrying out all the preparatory work and therefore works more intensively. The most important political issues were thoroughly discussed and resolved in the Executive Committee's 18 meetings. As for the composition of the Presidium, during its first years it was composed of Russian comrades only, but it has developed increasingly into an international body. Since the Third Congress it has included Russian, German, French, Italian, and Hungarian comrades.<sup>1</sup>

During the last six months we received 971 letters and reports from 36 countries and sent off 1,035 letters and circulars to 34 countries. As these figures indicate, the relationship with the sections is quite close. In keeping with the Third Congress decisions, we made efforts to structure international intellectual relations. We created *International Press Correspondence*, which is expanding in scope month by month.<sup>2</sup>

The International Control Commission is not yet functioning on an entirely regular basis.<sup>3</sup> On the Executive Committee's initiative, a conference was held

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1 On 13 July 1921, immediately following the Third Congress, the ECCI elected the following Presidium (then known as the Small Bureau): Zinoviev, Radek, and Bukharin from Russia; Gennari from Italy; Kun and Rákosi from Hungary; Heckert from Germany; Souvarine from France; Humbert-Droz from Switzerland; and Kuusinen from Finland.

2 See report on *International Press Correspondence (Inprecorr)* in Session 15, on p. 207 of this volume.

3 The Comintern's Third Congress had voted to establish a provisional International Control

on the reparations question, and it had great political importance.<sup>4</sup> We organised international discussions, sent representatives to almost every convention of our sections, and, when severe problems arose in sections, arranged for special delegations to come here in order to work through the problems together with us. We created new departments for the Near and Far East, the Arabian Ocean, Latin America, and the colonial countries.

We have newly affiliated Communist parties in Canada, Ireland, and Fiume.<sup>5</sup> The Communist parties of Czechoslovakia, Spain, Belgium, Australia, and South Africa have unified. The parties in Iran, Korea, and Turkey have reorganised. We have newly established departments for cooperatives and for the International Federation of Red Sports and Gymnastics.

The activity of the Red International of Labour Unions has encountered such a pile of difficulties that it has aroused doubts among many comrades as to whether we have functioned correctly in this arena. Well, it is true that the Amsterdam International has proven to be stronger than we thought it was. And so too the bourgeoisie has turned out to be stronger than we thought. But that shows only that we need to carry out our work in this field with even greater energy.

The Youth International has been conducting its work in Moscow since the Third Congress.<sup>6</sup> The concerns that the long distances would harm its work have proven invalid. It has had to overcome some crises in its sections, which have been resolved in close collaboration with the ECCI.

Now let us consider the International's strongest sections, beginning with the German. We have had closer ties with the German party, which sent comrades to Moscow to deal with every question as it arose. The various expressions of the workers' movement are present in Germany in what we can call a classical form, which means that Germany provides the most accurate reflection of the Third International's policies. It was often said that the line of the Third

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Commission 'for the Executive's activity and especially its initiatives with parties abroad and their work'. See Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 877–8.

4 The ECCI organised a conference of the French and German Communist parties on the reparations question in Berlin 10–15 January 1922, to which the Belgian and Luxembourg parties were invited. The conference manifesto was published in *Inprekorr* 28 January 1922.

5 Fiume was a tiny independent state just east of Italy, comprising 28 square kilometres. The country was formed in 1920 and a Communist Party was founded there in November 1921. In 1924 Fiume was incorporated into Yugoslavia; it is presently known as the city of Rijeka in Croatia.

6 The Moscow session of the Communist Youth International's Second Congress of July 1921 – held alongside the Comintern Third Congress – had voted to transfer the CYI's headquarters from Berlin to Moscow.

Congress represented a turn to the right, but in Germany we see split-offs not only to the left but to the right.

On the left, the Communist Workers' Party (KAPD) split away, with its anarchist forces.<sup>7</sup> It thus repeated the evolution of similar groups in other countries. Its best forces have understood the slower pace of the revolution and the enormous difficulties it must overcome, and they are gradually moving toward communism. Another segment did not grasp that, saw our policies as a betrayal, and has swerved so far to the left that it is supporting bourgeois reaction almost everywhere. Just consider the KAPD's attitude to the famine-relief campaign.<sup>8</sup>

The split of the Communist Working Group (KAG) signifies the loss of a layer of intellectuals who provided the International for a time with a following on the right.<sup>9</sup> We have been criticised for demonstrating too much forbearance toward this current. However, we had to leave no stone unturned in order to be certain who was with us and who had gone over to our enemies. Now we observe that most of the KAG is evolving directly into the enemy camp. Clearly, we have carried through our own line against not only the half-anarchist but also against the pacifist and petty-bourgeois Social-Democratic forces.

Now let me say something of the 'revelations'.<sup>10</sup> Our enemies seek by every means to discredit the Communist International and its sections. And many of our comrades do in fact somewhat lose their bearings after such revelations. However, we know from experience that revelations tend to be made when our enemies have tried everything else, when they are in greater danger; in a word, when the class struggle is more vigorous.

The 'revelations' are a symptom and a side effect of the more vigorous struggles taking place. That is evident, for example, in *Austria*, where the Social Democrats are now conducting a campaign against the Communist Party.

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7 The ultraleft KAPD had been admitted to the Communist International as a sympathising organisation by the Second Congress in 1920. A resolution of the Third Congress stated, 'The KAPD was admitted as a sympathising party in order to test whether its future development would bring it closer to the Communist International. The elapsed waiting period has been sufficient. Now we must demand of the KAPD that it affiliate to the VKPD [KPD] in a set time, failing which it will be expelled as a sympathising party of the Communist International.' The KAPD formally rejected the Comintern's conditions at the party's September 1921 congress, and its relationship with the Comintern was terminated.

8 In July 1921 the KAPD rejected a KPD proposal for a joint campaign in Germany for relief of the famine in Soviet Russia.

9 For the split from the Communist Party leading to the formation of the KAG, see p. 66, n. 11.

10 For the *Vorwärts* 'revelations' of Communist Party documents, see p. 66, n. 10.

Our policy toward the Socialist Party of *Italy* has not always won the approval of our Italian comrades themselves. But now everyone must surely agree that we acted correctly in this regard. Through our stance, we won over the delegates that Serrati sent to the Third Congress, and they are now working sincerely within the Socialist Party for the Communist International. We sent a delegation to the Socialist Party congress, thus demonstrating that we will bend every effort to win the workers.<sup>11</sup> We have also reached the point where Serrati is forced even today to seek in various ways to pretend that he is not an enemy of the Communist International. The Socialist Party is divided into three well-defined currents, and the open reformists always get the upper hand. The party is steadily losing members and influence. By contrast, the Communist Party, at first only a small group, is growing more and more, and it is winning through difficult struggles the sympathy of the Italian working class, showing that the Communist International followed a correct policy here, as well, both before and after the Third Congress.

As for our *French* sister party, we were aware from the outset that a party that was not Communist yesterday and comes to us today will experience difficulties and will evolve only slowly. We did everything possible in order to make things easier for our French friends. Nonetheless, there were issues where we had to demand that they take a clear position. One of these was the collaboration of leading comrades in newspapers that are not under the party's control.

When we read an article of Comrade Frossard saying that the party was undergoing a crisis, we sent a comrade to France right away to gather information. It is our impression that many leading comrades are quite sincerely prepared to carry out the line of the Communist International. However, practical implementation runs up against major barriers and traditions of the old Social-

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11 The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) was a founding member-party of the Communist International in 1919. The party was divided into three main currents, however: a reformist right wing led by Filippo Turati, a centrist majority led by G.M. Serrati, and a left wing led by Amadeo Bordiga. At the PSI's Livorno Congress in January 1921, the Communist minority split off to found the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

Nevertheless, the Serrati-led majority still professed adherence to the Comintern, with thousands of worker members behind it. In light of this fact, the Comintern's Third Congress, which had invited a PSI delegation to attend, held the door open to this party. The Comintern's support for a fusion of the PCI and the revolutionary forces within the PSI encountered not only opposition from forces within the PSI, however, but also resistance from the PCI majority, which for the next two years obstructed the unity moves.

The PSI's Eighteenth Congress was held in Milan 10–15 October 1921. The Comintern was represented there by Henryk Walecki.

ist Party, which we must deal with. We must study the situation in France much more closely. It is likely that France will be at the centre of our attention in the coming period.

Our *Czechoslovak* party has loyally carried out the decisions of the Third Congress, is in close touch with working people, and is a people's party in the best sense of the word. But it has not paid the necessary attention to the trade-union movement and has therefore suffered a setback.

As for the *British* party, we can say that the time is past when it was a *quantité négligeable*. It has become a political force that can be best described through its negotiations with the Labour Party. The Labour Party is a curious phenomenon, half trade union and half party. First of all it expelled the Communists, and now it has to negotiate their re-entry. With regard to the uniqueness of the British situation, we have recommended to the comrades there that in case of elections they should adopt something resembling an electoral alliance, on the condition that they retain full freedom in their agitation.

For the Communist Party of *North America*, the main question was establishment of a legal workers' party, given that the bourgeoisie had previously been able to drive them underground and bar them from having legal access to the masses.<sup>12</sup> We were of the opinion that if it is possible in the United States to develop a radical workers' movement that leans on an already constituted and firm Communist nucleus, utilising slogans such as 'for a workers' republic' or something vague of that nature, we should certainly do so. A segment of the party, particularly the Russian and Ukrainian émigré organisations, was against this proposal. They contain many good forces, and we must convince them that our policy is correct.

We have 42 sections; we have discussed five in which the policies of the International found expression. We must also mention the Conference of the Toilers of the Far East.<sup>13</sup> Given that the situation in Ireland, India, and Egypt now takes such revolutionary forms, we must attempt to organise the forces of the Chinese and Korean peasantry and bring them under the leadership of the international proletariat. Their bodies too are victimised by the blessings of international capitalism. We see them as a great reserve from which new blood and new forces will come to us.

What is more, in *Japan* we have established the first direct ties with the workers of that country. There are 3.5 million industrial workers in Japan, of which

<sup>12</sup> For the formation of the legal Workers Party of America, see p. 88, n. 2.

<sup>13</sup> The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East was held in Moscow and Petrograd, 21 January–2 February 1922. For the proceedings, see Comintern 1970 [1922].

500,000 belong to trade unions, plus a small and persecuted Communist Party and also a body of Marxist and revolutionary literature that is wholly new for us. The integration of this new and powerful proletariat into the Communist International will surely be of world-historical significance.

During recent months, we often received word of crises breaking out in our parties. However, all our parties came out of the old Social Democracy. In Russia we recruited from among the peasants. We carry with us the prejudices and weaknesses of the old Social Democracy and the inadequacies of the peasantry. And we are developing through struggles and many small crises into a genuine Communist Party.

Following the war, we would have defeated the capitalists had we possessed Communist parties. Since we did not have them, we were forced to go through a phase in which Communist parties formed and grew during great struggles. This is a difficult task, but it must be achieved. The first proletarian republic had to endure much greater difficulties and assert itself, at first, without the backing and assistance of an International. Soviet Russia was compelled to grant concessions.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, it provides an immense revolutionary hinterland for proletarian uprisings in other countries and eases the struggles attending their development.

You have heard reports from eight countries, and as you see, we stand today – half a year after the Third Congress – firm and clear as never before. Our cause is advancing. We are on the correct path.

### **Report on Negotiations with Representatives of the Two-and-a-Half International**

**Karl Radek:** Let me provide a brief report on the negotiations that have taken place between us and representatives of the Two-and-a-Half International.<sup>15</sup> The negotiations were not binding, and the decision is in the hands of the

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14 'Concessions' here refers to Soviet Russia's willingness, under the New Economic Policy, to permit limited foreign investment projects, subject to government control.

15 On 15 January 1922 the Bureau of the Vienna Union (Two-and-a-Half International) issued a declaration addressed 'To the Working-Class Parties of All Countries.' It stated, 'The establishment of working-class unity is the need of the day', and called for a general world conference of the three Internationals.

The ECCI responded positively to the proposal and Radek, while on a trip to Berlin, held preliminary talks about this with leaders of the Vienna Union (Adler, Crispin, and Ledebour) on 28 January and 13 February 1922. See Sukiennicki 1973, pp. 221–2.

Enlarged Executive Committee. Their representatives proposed a conference that would not consider the questions that divide us. The conference is to take place without participation of the two trade-union Internationals. There was also talk of a committee containing two representatives of each International that would take in hand the technical preparations. The discussions are to take place in a city of a victor country, possibly Milan.

### Report on Activity of the International Women's Secretariat

**Alexandra Kollontai:** Since the Third Congress, the activity of the Women's Secretariat has grown in every respect.<sup>16</sup> A conference of women acting as corresponding secretaries in different countries was convened in Berlin. We held a conference in Tiflis to organise women in the East,<sup>17</sup> and we have established ties with women of the Far East. We have also initiated work in the colonies. On March 8 we organised International Women's Day events in every country. We also played a very active role in the famine-relief campaign.

### Summary

**Zinoviev:** Let me answer some questions. The famine-relief campaign was an overall success. The recruitment week was not carried through with sufficient energy and was less successful. This teaches us that we must carry out international campaigns much more strictly and energetically than in the past. We took a position on the Washington Conference and drafted theses, but, despite their great importance for our propaganda they were inadequately utilised.<sup>18</sup>

16 In August 1920 the ECCI established the International Communist Women's Secretariat as a section of the Comintern, with Clara Zetkin as its secretary. This secretariat was sometimes referred to as the Communist Women's Movement. The Communist Women's Secretariat published a journal, *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale* (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.

17 The conference in Tiflis (Tbilisi) convened on 10 December 1921, attended by 100 delegates from Turkey, Iran, Soviet Russia, and the Caucasus. The Berlin conference of women correspondents was held in January 1922.

18 The ECCI's theses on the Washington Conference was issued on 15 August 1921. It was published in English in *Bulletin of the Executive Committee of the Communist International*, no. 2, 20 September 1921; and *Inprecorr*, 1 October 1921. It can also be found in Degras 1971, vol. 1, pp. 287–92. For the Washington Conference itself, see p. 55, n. 2.

As for my comment that the Second International is strong only because the bourgeoisie is strong, I must note that the opposite is also true. It is not just that the Social Democrats and Amsterdam people draw new strength from the bourgeoisie, but that the bourgeoisie, for its part, draws its strength from organisations that still mislead a segment of our class brothers and stand in the service of the bourgeoisie.

*(The session is adjourned at 4:15 p.m.)*

## United Front – Report

*Chair: Carr.*

*Speaker: Zinoviev.*

### Report on United-Front Policy

**Zinoviev:** The first question we face in discussion of the united front – and it has played a major role in France and in other countries – is this: Does the policy proposed by the Executive Committee have some kind of relationship to the present situation of the Russian Revolution and the New [Economic] Policy of the Soviet state? Our enemies pose this question with a certain undertone of *schadenfreude* [pleasure derived from another's misfortune], but it has come up in many sister parties as well.

The Communist International's course of action is directed toward world revolution. It is the course of action of proletarian Communist parties around the world, which are preparing the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Russia, the workers' party has triumphed, and Russia makes up one-sixth of the world's land mass. For that reason alone, the Russian Revolution plays a very great role in the world revolution – indeed, it is a component part of this revolution. The international Communist Party cannot be indifferent to the state of the proletarian revolution in the land where it has triumphed.

For example, if the Red Army of Soviet Russia had taken Warsaw in 1920, the course of the Communist International would be different than what it is today.<sup>1</sup> But that did not happen. After the defeat in war came a political setback of the entire workers' movement. The Russian proletarian party was compelled to make considerable economic concessions to the peasantry and, in part, to the bourgeoisie.

That slowed the tempo of the proletarian revolution, but the opposite was also true: the setback suffered by the proletarians of Western European countries between 1919 and 1921, in turn, influenced the policies of the first prolet-

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<sup>1</sup> In April 1920 Polish troops launched an offensive in Soviet Ukraine. The Red Army pushed them back into Polish territory and then continued its advance toward Warsaw, where it was stopped. Soviet troops were then forced to retreat. An armistice ending the war was signed in October.

arian state and slowed the tempo in Russia. So it is a two-sided process. The difficulties experienced by the Russian Soviet government have consequences for all the other parties; the overall liberation struggle of the working class influences all other aspects of politics.

In this sense, the positions of the Third Congress and the theses on the united front<sup>2</sup> have a relationship to the situation of Soviet Russia. But that does not in any way imply that the Russian party, which holds the leadership of the Comintern, wishes to misuse it for any egoistic goals of its country. Anyone who claims this is insulting the Comintern itself. It is impossible for the interests of a proletarian government in the world not to coincide with those of the proletariat as a whole.

The new situation is therefore influenced by the state of the Russian Revolution, just as it is by the struggles of the German, British, and French workers. Indeed the impact of the Russian Revolution has been greater, because in recent years the struggles of the Russian proletariat have been more significant than those in other countries. But that does not imply any misuse of the Comintern for the egoistic purposes of the first workers' government. Anyone claiming this is accepting the viewpoint of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, which do not understand that the deeper historical interests of the first victorious proletarian state are identical with those of the working class of the entire world.

We can supply examples from our writings showing that the united-front policy – or, better said, this policy, since the term *united front* had not yet been coined – was already advanced in earlier times. Take what Lenin wrote in his pamphlet on the infantile disorders of communism, which appeared in 1920. With the full agreement of the entire Communist International and the Russian party, it recommended to the British Communists this very policy. At that time, we did not stand on the eve of a Genoa Conference.<sup>3</sup> It was quite another situation, yet nonetheless Lenin then recommended this policy to our British friends. Here is what Lenin wrote:

It is true that the Hendersons, the Clyneses, the MacDonalds and the Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary. It is equally true that they want

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2 For the text of the ECCI theses on the united front, adopted 18 December 1921, see pp. 254–64 of this volume.

3 The conference in Genoa, Italy, scheduled to begin in April, had been convened to discuss economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe. The results of the Genoa Conference are discussed at the Second Enlarged ECCI Plenum.

to assume power (though they would prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to 'rule' along the old bourgeois lines, and that when they are in power they will certainly behave like the Scheidemanns and Noskes.

Yet Lenin nonetheless recommended supporting these people.

On the contrary, the fact that most British workers still follow the lead of the British Kerenskys or Scheidemanns and have not yet had experience of a government composed of these people – an experience which was necessary in Russia and Germany so as to secure the mass transition of the workers to communism – undoubtedly indicates that the British Communists *should* participate in parliamentary action, that they should, from *within* parliament, help the masses of the workers see the results of a Henderson and Snowden government in practice, and that they should help the Hendersons and Snowdens defeat the united forces of Lloyd George and Churchill.

And then he continues:

I will put it more concretely. In my opinion, the British Communists should unite their four parties and groups (all very weak, and some of them very, very weak) –

It was four parties at that time.

– into a single Communist Party on the basis of the principles of the Third International and of *obligatory* participation in parliament. The Communist Party should propose the following 'compromise' election agreement to the Hendersons and Snowdens: let us jointly fight against the alliance between Lloyd George and the Conservatives; let us share parliamentary seats in proportion to the number of workers' votes polled for the Labour Party and for the Communist Party (not in elections, but in a special ballot), and let us retain *complete freedom* of agitation, propaganda, and political activity.

And he continues:

At present, British Communists very often find it hard even to approach the masses, and even to get a hearing from them. If I come out as a

Communist and call upon them to vote for Henderson and against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I shall be able to explain in a popular manner, not only why the Soviets are better than a parliament and why the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill (disguised with the signboard of bourgeois 'democracy'), but also that, with my vote, I want to support Henderson in the same way as the rope supports a hanged man.<sup>4</sup>

In these passages we find the entire policy of the united front, adapted to British conditions.

This was then an entirely abstract question that had no relationship with Russian politics but was of importance to Britain and thus internationally. And here the same thing was said that we are now proposing, just as openly as we do now. I have been criticised for the fact that in my speech of 5 December I said that we were dealing by and large here with a tactical manoeuvre aimed at exposing the leaders and drawing the masses to us.<sup>5</sup> But does not Lenin say that you should support Henderson and Macdonald as the rope supports a hanged man? And that was read by opportunists of the entire world.

We find ourselves in a somewhat difficult situation with regard to this question. To the degree that it concerns leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, we are actually dealing with class enemies who have gotten a foothold within our own class. In speaking of this policy to these people, it would surely be preferable not to take this decision on the united front. But we must speak of things the way they are.

When Lenin wrote that pamphlet in 1919–20, the situation of the Soviet government was much more difficult. That was the time when Denikin and Kolchak were still very strong and Russia was threatened by belligerent powers. And then too, just as today, we considered the general question of the international movement's course of action from the viewpoint of the basic interests of the international movement, not those of the Soviet republic. Why did we not speak then of a united front?

In 1919 we were all full of hope that we would conquer the bourgeoisie within a very few years. That did not take place, above all because the subjective factor was lacking. Conditions were ripe or, as Comrade Zetkin put it, overripe, but the working class lacked the necessary organisation. The Social

4 "Left wing" *Communism – an Infantile Disorder*, LCW, 31, pp. 84–8.

5 Zinoviev's speech to the ECCI on the united front can be found in *Bulletin communiste*, 12 January 1922, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 31–3. BC gives the date of the speech as 4 December 1921.

Democracy was a negative factor, because at the decisive moment it fought on the side of the bourgeoisie. We did not see this immediately, and we continued to speak and write during the entire next year as if the goal were very close.

In the present stage of building the Communist parties, entirely new and interesting developments in the depths of the working class are coming into view. The masses long for rest and for bread. For us, as conscious revolutionaries, it is not always pleasant that the working masses, whom we so often glorify and idealise, are not always crowding up to the barricades. Yet after four years of hunger and breakdown, the working class has need for a respite and does not want to plunge into new dangers. That was the mood of the masses, and to some extent it still is. As Communists, we foresaw the war, the economic collapse, and the crisis. But we could not foresee this mood.

Given this situation, reformism has begun to flourish, to some degree, among the broad masses of the working class. This is not the reformism of a Bernstein, not a movement that is clear and purposeful, but rather a mood that opens new paths for reformism. This phenomenon was perceptible in 1920 and throughout almost all of 1921. That is the source of the muffled displeasure against Communists who were calling for struggle and did not understand this need for a respite. These are consequences of the imperialist World War and of how it was ended.

This development could have been very dangerous, were capitalism anything other than capitalism. As capitalism observed this need in the working class and saw that reformism was once again winning a portion of the backward workers, it began its offensive. There were also underlying economic factors at work here. The capitalist offensive started everywhere in the form of lengthening the working day, reducing real wages, and so on. This brought about a new turn in the workers' movement, a new mood in the working class: initially as a muffled mistrust of the reformists. The ordinary worker now sees again that he will not achieve any respite unless he struggles. All the promises of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals remain unfulfilled, and the living conditions of the working class are deteriorating.

The working masses that previously were striving for a respite now begin to comprehend that there is no way forward without struggle. But to win in this struggle, they must act in unity. When ordinary workers seek to explain the basis for the betrayal during the war, they come to a simple conclusion: *It was because the working class was not united*, because the Social Democracy split the working class. And now they want unity.

Comrades who now oppose our course of action cannot deny this reality. The workers seek unity; they want to struggle together against the bourgeoisie.

If Communists do not take this mood into account, they will become sectarians, that is, they will be serving the interests of the Social Democracy.

During the Third Congress we did not fully understand this. The Third Congress was generally aware that a turn had taken place, but we were not yet fully alert to the strong spontaneous impulse for unity. Now it is necessary to take a further step. We must state that the Communist parties have the role of unifying the working class and leading it forward. The party is not the class; it is the head of the class. We will never enter into forming a united party with the Social Democrats. That would be equivalent to betrayal. We must not forget that the party's role consists in pointing the way forward for the class.

We must never give way to this mood among the masses. To the degree that this mood arises from the muddled idea of uniting with everybody and becoming one single party, to that extent it is incorrect and reactionary. But in this mood there is nonetheless something else that is essentially healthy, and that is the striving to go forward together against the bourgeoisie. This factor may well be decisive for the entire future course of the revolution. If we succeed now in utilising this mood in a correct fashion, we will achieve not only clarity in the Communist Party but also a great mass movement.

Only now have we achieved the two great preconditions for the struggle. In 1920 the mass movement was perhaps bigger, but the party was lacking. Then we began to build up the party, but the pressure from the masses was lacking. Now we are entering a period where both factors are present and where we must succeed in combining them. From this it flows that we must keep our focus on the united front not only with the Social Democrats, the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, but also with the anarchists, syndicalists, non-party workers, and Christian workers.<sup>6</sup>

This last point is often misunderstood. The French comrades were of the opinion that an alliance with Christian workers would be a betrayal of the Communist International. Yet of course we must unite with Christian workers against the capitalists. It will be a great victory for the Communist International when we are able for the first time since the war to take a stand shoulder to shoulder with the workers in economic struggles against the bourgeoisie, and later in political struggles as well.

Comrade Zetkin provided a classic example of this in what she reported regarding the recent railway strike. The masses did not want to hear anything

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6 'Christian workers' here presumably refers to workers affiliated to the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, organisations that existed in a number of countries and embraced the class-peace teachings of the Catholic Church hierarchy.

about politics, and yet what they themselves carried out was a political strike. Certainly the Christian workers did not want to hear any mention of communism. But when they supported the strike, they were engaging in Communist politics without knowing it. We must seek to reach all the workers. Conditions are such that every strike can and must become political in character. That is what makes conditions so favourable, and we must support these struggles.

Then we have also the danger of new imperialist wars. The reason the gentlemen in Washington talk so much about peace is because they are expecting war. That is why the Amsterdammers too have adopted special resolutions and sworn an oath to proclaim a general strike if there is another imperialist war.<sup>7</sup> But we do not believe in these promises of general strikes. We say: join with us right now in the railway workers' strike. Don't betray the British miners. Join with us in the small everyday struggles. We do not need your resolutions on a general strike. Rather, we propose that you join in fighting shoulder to shoulder with us for immediate daily demands.

That is what is new, what we did not have until now. The comrades who are resisting the united-front policy do not realise that to a certain extent we have actually already won the campaign in real life. It is no longer possible to present Communists as professional splitters, and that is an enormous initial gain. They used to describe us as professional splitters, and objective conditions made it easier for these people to do so. Between 1914 and 1921 we carried out about a dozen splits, and this engendered a certain annoyance in the working class. But we had to split the old traitorous Social Democracy in order to safeguard the workers' interests. We had to create a Communist Party, and it had to have elbow room. That's how it happened that, because of Social Democracy, we were presented as professional splitters. Capitalism tried during these years to build up ill-feeling against splits and make this a factor working against communism. We must now succeed in overcoming this ill-feeling in an appropriate way, showing that we split the working class in order to unite it against the bourgeoisie.

The irritation of the working class regarding splits is only too understandable. The aspiration for unity is very often – indeed, almost always – a revolutionary factor. The power of the working class consists in the fact that it embraces millions. It is a power arising from numbers. Its opposition to splits

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7 In early 1922, the Amsterdam trade-union International had floated the idea of calling a general strike in response to imperialist war moves and threats of French intervention in Germany.

is an entirely understandable and justified sentiment. But we cannot always give way to this sentiment, because the Social Democracy has utilised it in the interests of the bourgeoisie. We had to split. But now we have to reverse roles: It is now the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals – not us – that will stand before the working class as splitters.

We are now approaching a new rise of the working class. Many comrades misunderstand the united-front slogan, thinking it arises from despair at the failure of the Russian Revolution. The opposite is true. Without this new rise of the workers' movement, the entire united front would have no foundation. As we wrote in our theses about this new rise, even in Germany our best comrades said that this new rise, for the present, is only perceptible in Moscow and not elsewhere. But consider the wave of strikes that we see everywhere. We have now become accustomed to strikes that embrace a million and a half workers. The united front is not a policy of despair; on the contrary, it is a policy for a new rise, which begins around economic issues but will move onto the political terrain.

Indisputably, this policy has dangers. We referred to that in our initial theses. Our policies often entail dangers. Do you think that there are no dangers in parliamentary participation? Nonetheless, we accept them. The united-front policy entails considerable dangers, and only serious Communist parties can accept them. But no one will be able to show that this policy is dreamed up out of thin air, or that some other feeling is dominant among the masses.

I must now discuss the French party in some detail. First of all, we are rather pleasantly surprised that the French are now talking from a 'leftist' point of view. It is precisely from the party marked by opportunist survivals that a struggle against the united front has arisen – a purely *verbal* assault on opportunism.

That is not to say that the French party's opposition to the united front is entirely unhealthy. That would be incorrect. To some extent it reflects a healthy sentiment of revolutionary workers fed up with parliamentarism, illusions in unity, and the like. Lenin said as much in his pamphlet on infantile disorders, where he explained that anti-parliamentarism is a reflection of healthy instincts among revolutionary workers who have often been swindled and do not want to be swindled again. Then we have, secondly, a feeling that the party is still too weak and might be endangered. Third, there is uncertainty and a lack of information. Fourth, however, is something quite different: namely, an attempt by conscious and unconscious centrists to utilise the present situation in order to mobilise the French party against the Communist International. Right now, the united front provides a pretext for that; tomorrow it will be something else.

Comrades from Czechoslovakia also told me that when the united-front policy was made known there, resistance was perceptible among the best factory workers. They were saying, 'What? We're now supposed to join together with these people in the Social Democracy? Never again! We want to fight against the bourgeoisie.' That reaction was similar to what we saw in France, and it is a healthy reaction. Our Czechoslovak comrades succeeded in explaining the matter to the workers, telling them, 'You're right; we want to mobilise the broad masses of workers against the bourgeoisie. Go into the factories and tell the non-party workers that if they want us to struggle, if they don't want to be trampled underfoot, they should march with us in a united front.' If the leaders of our party had not explained the matter to Czech workers in these terms, we might well have sentiment against the united front in Czechoslovakia at the present time as well.

In France, instead of enlightening the workers, the leaders left them in the dark about what was at issue. This is clear in their publications. Victor Méric, who is said to have spent his entire life in the movement's extreme left wing, writes as follows:

Do we want to establish a united front with Briand? After all, Briand is nothing more than an exemplary Dissident, indeed the archetype of this category, but nonetheless he is a member of the Great Family.

Victor Méric also writes:

Now would you like me to tell you what everyone is saying about this in a very low voice? That this amounts to a joke. ... Why exactly did we carry out the split at Tours?<sup>8</sup>

A member of the Central Committee is saying, 'Why did we carry out the split at Tours?' The same thing is being said by a large number of comrades, such as Comrade Soutif, and – and this is very important – by Comrade Frossard.

Agreed, we must test out whether the party is capable of manoeuvring. But Frossard does not stop there. He presents twenty other arguments that are false and opportunistic. He introduces the example of Hungary against the united front, although he should know that the party in Hungary dissolved.<sup>9</sup> We have never proposed this to anyone and will always oppose that notion.

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<sup>8</sup> Victor Méric, 'Sur le front unique', in *L'Humanité*, 21 January 1922.

<sup>9</sup> On 21 March 1919, at the beginning of the Hungarian soviet republic, the Socialist and Com-

Frossard also says that the united-front policy would set the entire revolutionary workers' movement against us, that it would empty our sections of members. Frossard seeks in this way to demonstrate that the proposed policy is not revolutionary.

And that's without even speaking of Fabre. He publishes a paper, *Journal du peuple*, with the subhead, 'A free tribune for all free people.' Fabre says quite openly, 'Why can't we get together with the Social Democrats?' Comrade Verfeuil and Comrade Frossard say the same thing. Instead of explaining what is at stake here, Frossard writes an article, 'For an International Communist Front', which says the following:

As regards an international Communist front, we say this: The bridges have been demolished. We will never rebuild them. What is more, we are never going to present rebuilding them as desirable.<sup>10</sup>

In *L'Humanité* of 28 January, there is an article by Comrade Morizet, entitled 'The Light of the North', which sets out to save the French working class from betrayal by the Communist International. He writes:

We know of Radicals who turn to the working class, and who even call themselves Radical-Socialists in order better to fool us.

Morizet feels that we are proposing a 'marriage' with the independent bourgeois republicans, and he warns against such a *mésalliance*. Rappaport, who is otherwise in favour of a united front, warns that we are inviting them to an assignation with a seductive lady.

Morizet then continues, with a straight face:

Uniting with the Radicals and the left Radicals? We've seen that in the past. It's called the Bloc, and we already passed judgment on that seventeen years ago, at Amsterdam. ...<sup>11</sup>

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munist parties merged into the Socialist Party of Hungary, which later changed its name to Hungarian Party of Socialist-Communist Workers. The article by Frossard that Zinoviev is referring to, 'La tactique du front unique', appeared in *L'Humanité*, 23 January 1922.

10 Frossard's article, 'Pour le front communiste international', appeared in *L'Humanité*, 29 January 1922.

11 The Left Bloc was an electoral coalition between the bourgeois Radical Party and a wing of the French Socialist movement.

The 1904 Amsterdam Congress of the Second International condemned such govern-

It's being proposed that we unite with the left bourgeois republicans. ...

We do not propose to go back on our word or to hedge on our pledge with qualifications. ...

It's up to the comrades of the Executive Committee to understand our situation and to recognise that their demands for unity, formulated to serve very distant and abstract political goals, amount to a demand that we deal ourselves a death blow and make ourselves totally ridiculous.<sup>12</sup>

In my opinion, comrades, for Comrade Morizet to write in our party's official newspaper that our proposal is a 'marriage' with bourgeois republicans is really a bit much. Certainly it is gratifying that our party's newspaper has a circulation of 200,000, but if that's the kind of things it's telling French workers, it is a poor service indeed to the French and the international movement.

We can reassure Comrade Morizet: We are not proposing any kind of 'marriage' with bourgeois forces or with Longuet, as many French comrades perhaps would have liked to read into our statement. We are proposing a struggle that will politically bury Longuet and his ilk for all time. Let me stress that I mean 'politically'. Otherwise in France it will be taken in a personal sense. I had trouble with that at the Tours Congress, when I said that we had to 'put a pistol to Longuet's breast' and ask him whether or not he supports the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>13</sup>

I'd also like to read you the following from an article of Méric, a member of the [French CP] executive committee.

Certainly it is very easy to see the reasons why our Russian comrades praise this policy, but still our reasons for rejecting it must be given a hearing. A year after Tours and the split that was imposed on us, it is impossible

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mental alliances. A resolution adopted by that congress stated, 'The Social Democracy ... cannot *aim at* participating in governmental power within capitalist society. The Congress furthermore condemns any attempt to disguise existing class conflicts in order to facilitate support of bourgeois parties.'

12 André Morizet, 'La Lumière du Nord', in *L'Humanité*, 28 January 1922.

13 In November 1920, while engaged in negotiations with centrist leaders of the French SP over joining the Comintern, Zinoviev stated, 'With a pistol at their throat, you must insist on an answer from Longuet and his followers ... on whether or not they accept the Communist International's theses and conditions in good faith and agree to apply them wholeheartedly.' Quoted in Wohl 1966, p. 194.

to appeal to the French proletariat to 'unite with splitters and agents of the bourgeoisie'. Such a manoeuvre would signify ruining the present Communist Party of France.<sup>14</sup>

When I told you that many of these 'leftists' would be quite pleased to enter into a 'marriage' with Longuet, I was quite right. What kind of party is this where a member of its executive body has the nerve to say that they were *forced* into a split? And how can our policy be interpreted as meaning that we would go to the workers and tell them to embrace the social traitors? We must sharply protest against such agitation, which goes on week after week, and is reprinted with malicious joy by all bourgeois and half-bourgeois newspapers.

If the Central Committee were really convinced that we were proposing fraternisation with the social patriots, it would be justified in sounding the alarm and calling a congress. But not in distorting things in this manner, in big newspapers with a circulation of 200,000. It will take months for us to put that right.

This is all the more regrettable because our opponents in France have understood very well what is going on here. Longuet writes in an article called 'United Front' that our policy is, to quote a line from Racine, 'I embrace my opponent, the better to suffocate him.'<sup>15</sup>

So too the USPD in Germany. Rudolf Hilferding says in *Freiheit*, in an article titled 'Deceitful Unity':

Everywhere you are declaring that unity is a deceit. So it is. But you should not put it in such a way; that is fundamentally wrong. There is no task more noble for a political leader than establishing the unity of the working class.<sup>16</sup>

The USPD leader is against the united front because he knows that it will bury his party. But he is telling his people that they should not write against it in such a frontal manner. The same approach is taken in a *Vorwärts* article, 'The Socialist Conference of Five Countries'.<sup>17</sup>

Our opponents are well aware what is at stake here. Certainly the entire policy is intended to go over the heads of the leaders. Recently, the only thing the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals could find to throw at us was to

14 Méric, 'Sur le front unique', in *L'Humanité*, 21 January 1922.

15 Jean Longuet, 'L'"Unité de Front"', in *Le Populaire*, 21 January 1922. In this article Longuet cites the indicated quote from Jean Racine's seventeenth-century tragedy, *Britannicus*.

16 Hilferding, 'Einigungs-fimmel', in *Freiheit*, 31 January 1922.

17 'Die Sozialistischen Fünfländer-Konferenz', in *Vorwärts*, 28 February 1922.

present us as splitters. When we reach the point where we can compel these people to say whether they, for example, are willing to support a railway strike or something like that *now* – and not just ten months from now – at such a moment they are lost. That is why we have the duty of putting them before the working class; of talking to them in order to then really finish them off in the eyes of the masses.

The only thing we lack is clarity in the minds of the working masses. So it is a play on words for our French comrades to tell us they would favour a united front if it were directed against the leaders. Comrade Cachin informed us that the French party had drawn up an action programme of immediate demands that it proposes to place before the masses. That is the prelude to a united front. It seems that you have a majority [of the working class]. But what kind of majority? The majority of newspaper readers? But that is truly insufficient. Our party has now organisational influence in the revolutionary trade unions. Frossard states in an article, 'The united front entails a break with the revolutionary working class.'<sup>18</sup> Not at all! The *Unitary CGT* has taken that name because it knows that there is a yearning for unity in the working class. The revolutionary syndicalists fought for many months with the reformist syndicalists over who was responsible for the split. *L'Humanité* of 18 February carries an appeal of the CGTU to Jouhaux and the entire reformist CGT, presenting a common platform.<sup>19</sup> That is the united-front policy.

Our party must go to the masses and unite them in struggle against the bourgeoisie. The French comrades say they have the majority in France. Even if that is true, it is not an *international* majority. But it is not true *nationally* either. It is not possible for the national interests of a party to contradict the international interests of the working class. You do not enjoy the support of the working-class majority; the syndicalists do. You must have the masses in the factories, the masses who will carry out strikes by the millions. And you will achieve that only through the united front.

Now as to our friends in *Italy*. Without being aware of the fact, the PCI was our first party to apply in practice the united-front policy. On 14 August the trade-union federation that works closely with the party leadership sent a letter to all unions proposing a policy of unity. But when the first significant meeting

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18 A reference to a speech by Frossard on the united front to a conference of CP federal secretaries on 22 January 1922, reported the next day in *L'Humanité*. Frossard's exact words were '*La tactique du front unique dresserait contre nous tout le mouvement ouvrier révolutionnaire.*' (The united-front tactic would arouse against us the entire revolutionary workers' movement.)

19 The CGTU's manifesto was actually published in the 17 February 1922 issue of *L'Humanité*.

to apply this policy was held, the party was not present but rather sent a letter.<sup>20</sup> Nothing could be more illogical. Our comrades cling to the position that we are for the united front in the trade-union movement but not in a political framework. Bordiga sent the following telegram to his delegation in Moscow:

We confirm our instructions to oppose the proposal regarding the Vienna International's invitation to a general conference. Stick by our formulation regarding convening all trade-union organisations of every shade, and also include in it that every trade-union federation should grant proportional representation to all its political factions. We are making this proposal on behalf of Italy. Its acceptance would enable the Comintern to open up an independent field of work for the united front. If the proposal is rejected, the Socialists will be responsible.

So the parties should not come, but rather the political factions in the trade unions. This can't be taken seriously. This is a game of hide and seek, as if our comrades felt that we were committing a sin. The Italian party is now poised with one foot in the united front and the other in the air. I hope that the second foot will come down not in the camp of the united front's enemies, but on the platform of the united front.

Serrati is furious with us regarding the proposed policy. He senses that it involves burying the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. Two years ago, it was not possible to advance this policy. But there has been a major change in the mood of the working masses. The bourgeoisie has moved onto the offensive; the reformists have reached rock bottom, the masses are now coming together and recognising that they are constantly losing because they are divided and have not fought back. This has created a new situation. Our French comrades have the impression that until a year ago we were fighting with pistols and now suddenly we appear sweetly plucking a harp. Well, I offer a Russian proverb, which says, 'Every vegetable has its season.' We must know how to function with pistols, and also with the united front.

In the theses there is a section on experiences in Russia. We utilised a united-front policy against the Mensheviks for a period of time. Why has Martov become so enraged over the united-front policy? Because he senses that in this way we will be done with the people around Martov. The policy is immoral because we seek to take the masses away from them. The masses are not yet Communist, but they want to struggle for better living conditions. We want to

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20 For Terracini's account of this meeting, see p. 84.

fight with the masses for every penny. We will never forget that our goal is the dictatorship of the proletariat. And we will do everything we can to expose the Social Democrats as agents of the bourgeoisie.

Show us alternative paths to those we are proposing to you. Our policy strikes the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals in the heart. Will the world conference [of labour] take place? I do not know. As you are aware, it is the Second International that sabotages it.

It's not just a matter of the united front. What's at stake is the *unity of the working masses themselves*, and for that we may have to struggle for months, perhaps years. And when this becomes a reality, then the social revolution will have begun. It will not be achieved in a month, but it is the only correct path to get to our goal. Our conference must take a clear position on this question. And if a few party comrades have not yet overcome their infantile disorders, they will be healthy again within a few months. We must make it clear to the masses why we split: to achieve freedom for propaganda and agitation. But now we are calling on you to unite against the bourgeoisie. And by taking this path, victory becomes absolutely certain.

*(The session is adjourned at 9:30 p.m.)*

## United Front – Counter-Reports

*Counter-reports on the united front. Italy and the united front.*

*Chair: Walecki.*

*Speakers: Renoult, Roberto, Terracini.*

### Counter-Reports on United-Front Policy

**Daniel Renoult** (France): Comrades, at a moment when the French Communist Party is making a firm defence of its viewpoint on the important issue of the united front, it wishes to affirm to you its strict adherence to discipline and its full solidarity with the Third International. Comrade Zinoviev felt it necessary to stress certain statements by members of the French Communist Party that he regards as the beginning of a campaign against the Communist International. We have already sought to convince Comrade Zinoviev and the Executive Committee as a whole that the French Communist Party is a particularly disciplined unit of the Third International. However, it wishes to make use of the right of free discussion in the framework of the Third International, particularly regarding the united front, a very significant and momentous issue that has been placed before the Communists of the entire world for discussion.

It has been said that the Third Congress already took a position on the united front, in passing, by adopting the call 'To the masses'.<sup>1</sup> We regard this as a mutilation of the text. In adopting the theses making the call 'to the masses', the Third Congress certainly did not indicate the details of its implementation, that is, the practical details now laid before us in the theses on the united front.

The French party, together with all delegates to the Third Congress, made great efforts to translate the congress decisions into reality. We tried to appeal to the broadest masses of the proletariat and present them with precise goals for action. We can thus affirm that we are very happy with the decisions of the Third Comintern Congress.

We have just been told that application of the Third Congress decisions means summoning the masses to precisely defined actions, advancing immediate demands, and explaining to even the most uninformed workers what their

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<sup>1</sup> 'To the masses' was the watchword and central theme of the Comintern's Third Congress.

duty is to the class. And then we are told that at some point in the future we will be concluding partial and temporary agreements with the discredited leaders of Social Democracy or the reformist syndicalists. Comrade Zinoviev says that drawing this distinction between appeals to the masses and agreements with the Social-Democratic and reformist syndicalist leaders does not constitute a weighty argument. For our part, we consider this agreement to be the most difficult aspect of the problem. I am expressing here not my personal opinion, but that of French Communists; it is the possibility of such an agreement that has generated so great an uproar.

That sums up the position of the Communist Party of France in a few words. The party is introducing minority theses on the united front, theses that reject the Executive Committee's proposals. However, the party finds it appropriate to make a distinction that seems to us to be absolutely essential. Comrade Zinoviev spoke of the fact that some misgivings of the French working class have found expression here. Nonetheless, the French comrades believe it essential to establish some guarantees that the party's overall course of action is not endangered by certain changes. What impressed revolutionary workers in France above all was the Third International's programme of revolutionary rejection of compromise. And our comrades certainly harbour the desire to prevent actions for immediate and partial demands from diminishing in any way our propaganda and overall action.

Let me give an example. One of the most vigorous actions undertaken by our party in order to carry out in life the theses of the Third Congress was our campaign against the withholding of taxes from workers' wages.<sup>2</sup> It was the Communists who took the initiative for this campaign not only in their press but also among the working masses. As this agitation reached a peak of effectiveness, bourgeois representatives in various districts were hard hit. Just before we left Paris, we learned that the bourgeois deputies of the Radical Party in Aube department intended to take a stand in parliament for a reduction in these taxes. True, it can be said that is the proper extension of agitation, a way of using the parliamentary platform to influence public opinion. We do not deny that. However, you must understand that during the discussions that will take place in parliament on this matter, our deputies will have a *double* responsibility. They must simultaneously defend the workers' real interests and, in the process, avoid taking any steps that could be interpreted as an attempt at collaboration to achieve tangible results.

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2 For the campaign against the withholding of taxes on wages in France, see p. 73, n. 8.

With this reservation, the French party is absolutely determined to carry out the policy adopted by the Third Congress of appealing to the masses. If you tell us that united-front policy means calling for the eight-hour day and struggling against withholding taxes from wages, then we are in complete agreement with the united front and recognise that the French Communist Party called for it long ago. In this sense, we most decidedly support the united front and have been applying it for a considerable time. In France, we call this a *revolutionary bloc*. Whenever favourable circumstances arise, we take pains to achieve this revolutionary bloc with the anarchists, the revolutionary syndicalists, and the non-party workers, to the degree that they are open to our appeals. For example, when the danger of war was pressing, when the occupation of the Ruhr was on the agenda,<sup>3</sup> we formed action committees with the revolutionary syndicalists and the anarchists and were able to carry out mass agitation that surely did not fail to exert an influence on the decision taken by the government.

We did the same, although with less success, in getting the ball rolling for the campaign on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti.<sup>4</sup>

Comrade Zinoviev has acknowledged the correctness of some arguments raised by Frossard and criticised others. I have an important duty to carry out here, namely to declare our complete and full support for the general secretary of our party. In speaking of the united front, our general secretary was expressing not his personal viewpoint but the opinion of the party as a whole.

The united-front question aroused deep feelings within the party, resulting in an immediate halt to recruitment to its ranks. In the federations of the Seine, Nord, and Seine et Oise – the largest ones in the party – we noted significant discontent. There are comrades who are refusing to pay their party

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3 The first French occupation of the Ruhr Valley occurred in March 1921, when the French army, with 130,000 troops, occupied the Rhineland cities of Düsseldorf, Duisburg, and Ruhrort, after Germany failed to meet an ultimatum on reparations payments. They withdrew in September. The Ruhr was reoccupied by French troops in January 1923.

4 In 1920, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Italian immigrants and anarchists, were framed up in Massachusetts on charges of murder. Convicted in 1921, primarily on the basis of their radical beliefs, Sacco and Vanzetti were sentenced to death. The Communist International fought to make this case an international proletarian cause. A 22 November 1921 public appeal by the ECCI stated: 'The Communist International calls upon the workers of the world, Communists, Socialists, Anarchists, Syndicalists, and ordinary workers organised in the trade-unions, to act firmly and unanimously for the saving of Sacco and Vanzetti.' Published in *Inprecorr*, 29 November 1921. Despite a massive international defence campaign, Sacco and Vanzetti were executed in 1927.

dues for 1922, saying that they will take out their party card for this year only if we give a satisfactory answer regarding the united front.

In taking up the responses of the French party, Comrade Zinoviev distinguishes between two types of objections: first, a healthy opposition arising from the instinctive revolutionary feelings of the French working masses and, second, an unhealthy opposition flowing from a deceitful desire to combat the Communist International.

Well, comrades, the facts show that there were strong feelings in the healthiest layers of the French Communist Party, just as Comrade Zinoviev noted, and that our party – and the Communist International too – must take necessary precautionary measures in order to give comrades the satisfaction they desire.

The present situation in France is quite unusual. The Dissident party [SP] has no capacity to carry out mass agitation. It is thus similar to the Levi group [KAG] in Germany. Under these conditions, if you want to carry out agitation in any conceivable framework it is absolutely useless to turn to these people. In France, the united front in this form would be more or less incomprehensible and an absolutely unachievable goal. Our party has no need whatsoever to appeal to these people.

Comrade Zinoviev has conceded that one of Comrade Frossard's arguments has particular value. Frossard said: Our party is still very new in terms of purely Communist education. It is not yet sufficiently sure of itself to be able to undertake strategic manoeuvres, which bring with them the risk of disorientation.

True, in a new party like this, formed of a great many comrades who came to revolutionary ideas only after the war, theoretical understanding of communism is still inadequate. There is no doubt that we still have a great deal to do to fully develop our forces. That is what Comrade Frossard tried to say. And there is no doubt that when we undertake such difficult and complicated strategic manoeuvres, we expose ourselves to genuine dangers. From the point of view of France, to the degree that applying the united front entails a rapprochement with the leaders of the Social-Democratic organisation, it seems to us to be useless. We would not achieve anything in this way. We have to take this particular situation into account.

Comrades, matters are still more difficult in the field of trade-union action. On the insistence of the CGT's majority leadership, of Jouhaux and his gang, workers' organisations were expelled because of differences of opinion.<sup>5</sup> The

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5 The split in the French CGT, which had been developing throughout 1921, was consummated in December 1921, when the CGT's National Confederal Committee voted to expel rebellious unions.

trade unions that had expressed support for the Red International of Labour Unions were expelled or threatened with expulsion. The revolutionary syndicalists felt that it was impossible to allow the revolutionary trade unions to be forced out of the federation bit by bit by Jouhaux and his people. Only then did they address an appeal to all trade unions in France and call a broad congress, which they called a Unity Congress.<sup>6</sup> This congress created the Unitary CGT. In the final year before the split, the CGT embraced about 500,000 members. According to recent information, the CGTU now contains 300,000 workers. In this regard, the results achieved are really outstanding.

If the present rate of recruitment to the Unitary CGT continues, we will soon have the same situation in the trade unions as on the party level.<sup>7</sup> Jouhaux's CGT will then stand loyally alongside Renaudel's Socialist Party, that is, it will become a general staff without troops. The French revolutionary syndicalists of the Unitary CGT have followed a course of action very similar to the outlook of the Communist International.

Please inform us how and to what degree the new policy will be applied in forms that are acceptable for us. I guarantee that it is impossible in France at this time to even conceive of partial agreements between the Socialist Party leaders and the majority Socialists [the CP].

Comrades, given that the French party is asking that its specific conditions of struggle be taken into account, it naturally has the responsibility of exercising reserve in addressing problems from an international point of view. We believe that the application of the united front, which entails everywhere a rapprochement and an agreement with the reformist leaders, entails dangers not only for France but, in a general sense, for all sections of the International and the International itself. We do not believe it to be possible to turn directly to the leadership.

Let me take the example of the strike of German railway workers, supported by the municipal workers, which was discussed by Comrade Zetkin. What happened here? The Communist Party of Germany indisputably grew from this experience. It carried out an outstanding overall policy. But how did it do this? By showing the masses, clearly and vividly, how the party always remains true to the working class. This raised the stature of the KPD in the eyes of the masses. As for direct appeals to the leaders, I do not think that this contributed anything to clarifying the situation.

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6 The CGTU's Unity Congress was held 22–24 December 1921, involving over 1,500 unions. The CGTU's first formal congress would be held at Saint-Étienne in June–July 1922.

7 That is, the CGTU would be larger than the CGT, just as the CP was larger than the SP.

Without seeking to formulate any particular law, I must repeat that the Communist Party of France anticipates electoral results and parliamentary consequences that will flow from certain interpretations of the united front. I would like to add that, on the international level, our party was very pained to learn of the truly insulting conditions that the leaders of the British Labour Party put to the British Communists.

We propose that the united-front question be held over to the Fourth Congress for a final decision. During this time, the question should be discussed thoroughly in the national sections.

Now as to the proposed international conference that Radek told us about yesterday, this project affects every section of the Communist International. We in the French party believe that the international proletariat will not understand this rapprochement between the Communist International's leaders and the Russian Revolution, on the one hand, and the people who have most vigorously combated communism and the Soviet republic on the other. What will this conference achieve? Comrade Radek said that a preparatory conference needs to take place in order to set up the agenda of the conference itself. We believe that the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals will gladly utilise the opportunity offered them to proclaim all the slanders of international Menshevism, to which the representatives of the Third International will surely energetically respond. We doubt that such a discussion will be a useful preparation to the conference at Genoa.

On the other hand, what will the practical results be? Perhaps it will be decided to carry out an international action. However, we do not believe that people who serve the interests of the bourgeoisie will be able to make the slightest contribution to an action that truly serves the workers' cause or combats imperialism. Of course, we must maintain the concept of an international demonstration. When the bourgeoisie holds their meeting in Genoa, it's necessary for the proletariat to exert itself to demonstrate its power. The demonstrations will be more powerful in countries where the working class is better organised. In some countries this can be, perhaps, a one-day strike; in others it will be merely popular assemblies. We in France will certainly do our part in such an action. On the other hand, I am totally convinced that, if we maintain the concept of an international conference with the general staff of the enemy Internationals, the Unitary CGT will refuse to participate. Would we really take part in such a conference with representatives of Jouhaux's CGT, with people like Merrheim?

Of course, we could declare that after our return to France we will carry out the theses proposed for us here absolutely and without reservation. But if things are taken too far, we will be simply unable to carry out our task.

But we prefer to take another approach. Standing on the basis of our past experiences and fully conscious of our responsibilities, the Communist Party of France asks the Executive Committee to bear in mind the objections made here, which arise not from a spirit of denial and opposition but from knowledge of the situation, from certainty that special conditions are present there. We ask that these special conditions be taken into account, and we entertain the hope that it will be possible to come to agreement on all the issues discussed here.

### Italy and the United Front

**Riccardo Roberto** [Italy]: When I was asked a few days ago to state whether the Executive Committee's theses were in contradiction with those from Italy,<sup>8</sup> I said that this was not the case. I must now state openly that I could not have given the same answer if I had been asked this question *after* Zinoviev's speech. We agree entirely with the Executive Committee regarding world economic and political conditions. It is evident that the capitalist world is undergoing a crisis that capitalism believes it can overcome through an offensive against the proletariat. But we know that the bourgeoisie is defending itself illegally, and in Italy the White Guard has found its most pronounced form in fascism. There is therefore a difference between the way this question is understood by the PCI and the other Communist parties, and, in contrast, by the Social Democrats. The latter say: We must remain within the law and strive to carry out our task through the means available in a bourgeois parliament. The Communist parties, on the other hand, emphasise that it is essential to go beyond the framework of law, to struggle *illegally*, and to use force.

The Second Congress provided a foundation of the Twenty-One Points that distinguish us so sharply from the opportunists of the Social Democracy.<sup>9</sup> The Turatis and Serratis and the like were unable – or, better, unwilling – to adopt the Twenty-One Points, which provided for the use of force and for dictatorship. We have applied these theses, emphasising that this is necessary in order to bring conscious and intelligent men together in so-called elite cells, to stand

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8 The 'Theses on the United Front' submitted by the Italian delegation to this enlarged plenum and rejected by it, can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/159/66.

9 The 'Theses on the Conditions for Admission' to the Communist International approved by the Second Congress – referred to commonly as the Twenty-One Conditions or Twenty-One Points – can be found in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, pp. 765–71.

by the masses, and to lead them in storming capitalism's last bulwarks. There were also traitors in this struggle, namely the Social-Democratic leaders, who stabbed the working class in the back.

At the Third Congress we went even further, saying that Communist groups must come to agreement with the masses and establish ties with them. I assure you that we in Italy set about this task immediately with trust and discipline and without holding back. The best proof of this is the fact that only two weeks after the return of our comrades from the Third Congress, the struggle for the united front began. Indeed it is quite possible that the slogan originated in Italy, because we were the first to project it into the masses. We created cells in the trade unions. At first this was done by only a few comrades. But once these cells had developed and grown, they gained a hearing, and they forthrightly advanced the CP's demand, that is, for a united front. True, we compelled the Social Democrats to convene the Verona Congress, at which we suffered a setback only through deception in the elections.<sup>10</sup>

I concede that I found the speech of Comrade Zinoviev somewhat disconcerting. It gave me the impression that everything decided at the Second and Third Congresses was to be overturned. I must, however, express my respect for the frankness with which Comrade Zinoviev has spoken of the united front. He stated sincerely that this must be done for Russia, because the Russian Revolution is not just a Russian question but one of international significance. However, I was expecting something quite different from Zinoviev's speech, especially since I and my comrades had binding instructions with regard to the questions to be discussed here. This should at least be taken into consideration, because we are certainly not puppets that simply jump to attention.

Frankly, I was somewhat confused when Comrade Zinoviev took the floor, because I was afraid of being overwhelmed by cogent arguments. But my fears

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10 A reference to the National Council of the CGL union federation, which met in Verona, Italy, on 5–8 November 1921. The meeting, which had the character of a congress and was attended by 200 delegates, was called on the demand of the Communist Trade-Union Committee in order to discuss urgent united-front measures needed to confront the capitalist and fascist offensive in Italy. Sixty of the delegates came from the Communist opposition, although protests were made that Communist representation had been reduced by unfair election procedures.

The measures proposed by the Communists included defence of the eight-hour day, recognition of existing wage rates, assistance to the unemployed, workers' control, and freedom of organisation. As opposed to this course, the conference voted to merely demand that the Italian government establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate industrial conditions and establish whether the capitalists' demands for wage reductions were justified.

in this regard proved to be groundless; Comrade Zinoviev only reinforced my convictions. Zinoviev says that we respect principles because we are Marxists, but we are not doctrinaire theoreticians with their heads in the clouds and their eyes directed toward heaven. Rather, we always keep our eyes turned toward the pulsating life of the masses.

In addition, he said that we have given proper weight to the feelings of the working masses as a whole regarding the need to establish a united front and want to utilise this in the interests of the revolution. I would answer that this is quite true. But you also say, in support of your theses, that everything has changed, that all economic and political conditions have been transformed, and that henceforth everything must be considered from an entirely different point of view. And then you quote Lenin. I would respond by saying that such quotes come from our pre-history and are not at all appropriate as a basis for your argument.

The masses' sentiments do not spring up like Minerva from the head of Zeus. Rather we are the ones who called it into being, created it, and cared for it every day with motherly care and brotherly love, after we had broken away from the Social Democrats and exposed them as traitors.

Comrade Zinoviev says, 'What is the meaning of your proposal to struggle in unity with the trade unions but not with the political parties? You are making a distinction here between the political and economic situation.' Comrade Zinoviev, you could have omitted this lesson. We have always known that the economic situation is political.

Comrade Zinoviev also says, 'So you are thus standing with one leg on the ground and another in the air.' Honesty calls for honesty, Comrade Zinoviev. What you say here is simply stupid. I have the opposite impression, that Comrade Zinoviev does not have even one foot on the ground and is hanging with both feet in the air.

Comrade Zinoviev says that we need the united-front policy in order to go with the masses and not in order to expose the leaders. But that alone will not do. In my opinion, we must add to this something that Comrade Zinoviev does not mention. We must do more than merely strive to expose the leaders; we must also give assistance to the masses. We must assist the proletariat, which today does not see anything other than the economic questions.

Here I must ask a question: Do we perhaps think that the Social-Democratic leaders are a gang of complete fools? Do we think that the Social-Democratic leaders will look on gaping while we expose them? Of course not. We're dealing here with people who are alert and know how to defend themselves. It is too simple to announce this in advance and then struggle with the means proposed by Comrade Zinoviev.

Comrade Zinoviev gives us the example of Serrati. I must reply that he is not speaking of today's Serrati, who is no longer furious. Let me cite Serrati's journal *Comunismo*, which calls itself a journal of the Third International. It carries the Executive Committee's appeal on its first page and then Serrati's commentary.

Comrade Zinoviev then said we are not making a compromise with the leaders, but going over their heads to the masses. I have the impression that this is nothing but fine words, however. Even the Socialists say that they are bypassing the law in order to achieve socialism.

In addition, it has been said that in 1919 we had neither a party nor the masses, while today we have the party but not yet the masses, and it is necessary to have both. In our opinion, we have a party and are well on the way to winning the masses as well, in accord with the decisions of the Second and Third Congresses.

As for the telegram sent to us from Rome, Comrade Zinoviev simply did not try to understand it.<sup>11</sup> The telegram states that we apply the united front in the trade unions. However, after the CP suffered a defeat in Verona because of the voting system, we demanded the right to put forward our theses and our decisions in proportion to our strength in the unions. Our dear comrade Zinoviev responds that we succeeded in forming an alliance in Rome and then did not participate in it.<sup>12</sup> But if we had gone, it would have been said that now we are working hand-in-hand, even though we previously said that one should not act together with the Republicans.<sup>13</sup>

After the war we had a Giolitti government in Italy. The whole world assumed that this man, who had been so hostile to the war and to the war profiteers, would compel the bourgeoisie to pay the war debts. We, who were then in a common party with the Social Democrats, found ourselves in a peculiar situation. Should we vote in parliament for a draft law that stated that war profiteers must give up 100 per cent of their profits and, through this act, openly accept collaboration with the [bourgeois] democracy? We were compelled to make a statement that we would vote for the law although we did not have confidence it would be effective. We sought to demonstrate that the democratic government always serves the interests of the bourgeoisie and not those of the proletariat. And are you certain, German comrades, that you will not be toyed with, just as we were, and that you will not be compromised just like us?

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11 For Bordiga's telegram from Rome, see p. 116.

12 For Zinoviev's comments on this, see pp. 115–6.

13 A reference to the Italian Republican Party.

Renoult says that it is impossible to establish a united front in France because there is insufficient unity there, in contrast to the situation in Italy, for example. This confirms what I said. We Italian Communists say that this unity does exist in our country, that it grows stronger day by day, and that the united front can be established without approaching the leaders, whom we accused of betrayal and whom we are combating every day. How is this to be done? Through the organisations? We have these organisations. Communist groups and cells are raising their voices in both the trade unions and the labour halls, demanding the united front, and forcing the Social Democrats to expose themselves. We must loudly declare that every Communist Party has the duty to establish a united front not with the leaders but with the masses organised in trade unions, who will carry the Social Democrats and the leaders along with them and expose them. That is our position.

**Walecki:** The Italian comrades have divided their report. It is being given, in addition to Comrade Roberto, by Comrade Terracini.

**Terracini:** During the last few days here in Moscow we drafted our theses, which had been discussed for several months in Italy. I'd like to comment on them briefly here.

The question now before us is posed as follows: Should we, in order to win the masses, abandon precisely the principles that have enabled us to acquire strength? In our view, the methods proposed to us by the Executive Committee may indeed enable us to win the masses, but we will then no longer be Communist parties, but rather the spitting image of Social-Democratic parties.

This is no longer an academic question, given the talk of a united front and of common action. I question that the proletarian masses have any desire for *formal unity*, while they would eagerly welcome common and united *action*.

Workers are well aware that a united, generalised, and international capitalist offensive is taking shape in every country. They also know that it is not just one lumber baron or one steel tycoon that is attacking his workers; rather the bourgeoisie of all countries is conducting a general offensive against the working class. Just as Germany has its Stinnes, there are men in other countries who pursue the same goal, although their names are less well-known. These experiences have convinced workers that the proletariat cannot just organise in individual localities and undertake partial actions. It is simply impossible to struggle today against wage-cutting, tomorrow against violation of the eight-hour day, and the following day for freedom of association. Rather we must conduct an overall struggle against the insolence of capitalism, which leads either to victory all across the board or to definitive defeat.

Not everyday struggles. Not only do these fail to provide any solution, but, on the contrary, they are dangerous for the proletariat, which must one day come to a final decision regarding its fate. The Communist Party understands fully that the task is to unite all workers of each and every category, in other words the entire proletariat of a nation, by raising the slogan of common, general action. Whenever the Social-Democratic leaders take initiatives to inspire a partial action around a specific issue, we oppose this and remind them of the need to pose the question in a more general form.

How is it possible to organise general action by the proletariat? Could a situation ever arise where political parties, which have an established programme that is not open for discussion, will come together in struggle for common goals? And is it conceivable that these parties will be prepared to use the same methods to achieve these goals? What is at stake here is not so much the goals as the course of action and the methods used. Suppose we ask, 'Comrades of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, what forms of struggle will we use in our common struggle?' In my opinion, we will not find any common framework here. They will reply that illegal means must be avoided, while we call for using all available means.

Let me take as an example the Social-Democratic Party of Austria. It belongs to the Two-and-a-Half International. Nonetheless, there is an agreement between the Social Democrats and the Communists of Austria against wage reductions. But what will happen if there is a general strike? Surely it is all but certain that the Austrian government and state, which are ruled by the Social Democrats, will declare the strikers to be rebels and take corresponding measures. That is what happened in Germany. There's no other possible outcome. Unity in action can be realised only if the Social Democrats delete part of their programme or the Communists give up theirs. The response of the Labour Party to the Communist Party of Britain makes it clear that the Social Democrats will not concede anything.

The one thing we do know is that the moment the Italian CGL issues a call for struggle, the workers immediately respond, while very few workers respond when a call comes from the Italian Socialists for a slogan contrary to that of the CGL. The Second Congress grasped this fact in its decision: for a split on the political-party level but unity in the trade unions. We are pleased that we have carried out these trade-union theses of the Second Congress, and one wishes that every party had done the same.<sup>14</sup> Here a small reproach must be directed

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14 A reference to the 'Theses on the Trade Union Movement, Factory Committees, and the Communist International' adopted by the Second Comintern Congress. In Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, pp. 625–34.

at the French comrades. In France today we have a Unitary CGT, but it is a syndicalist federation, not a Communist one. By contrast, in countries where the CP has succeeded in creating Communist cells [in the unions], the unions are available as an instrument that can be used to issue a call for generalised action and to unify the majority of workers to support this. Comrade Zetkin showed you how, in Germany, the masses, who were not particularly concerned by the death of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, are now feeling the pressure of the economic situation; they are regaining their fighting spirit.

Comrade Zinoviev spoke of an agreement with the parties and explained that it was necessary both to make such agreements with the leaders and simultaneously to combat these leaders. He added that we must negotiate with the leaders even as we speak directly to the masses. In a gathering like this one, we don't just speak to the parties affiliated to the Communist International in generalities. We must say frankly what is to be done. Moreover, specific boundaries must be laid down, within which negotiations will take place.

In our theses we lay out the following guiding principle: Every party must set down a number of issues suitable for engaging all workers, issues relating to the economic situation and to political and military reaction. This proposal is to be directed solely to the national trade unions and not to the political parties. Moreover, when possible it should be sent not by the Communist Party but through the Central Committee of each trade-union organisation. It should also be sent to a committee established by the trade unions in a special assembly. The party pledges to commit all its organised forces to carry out the action led by this committee. The other parties should do the same.

When we raised this question for the first time, the trade unions did not respond. They did so, however, after the Communist cells in the trade unions had gotten to work and had won a majority on this question in all the assemblies. This will come much more easily when Communist groups raise the same question day after day in all the trade-union assemblies. This will lead slowly but very surely to the exposure of the leaders.

When we speak of 'leaders', we are not referring only to the Serratis, Levis, Renaudels, and Scheidemanns. The parties as a whole are responsible for the workers' defeats, and it is therefore not right to always counterpose the leaders of the Social-Democratic parties to their adherents. The Social-Democratic leaders are strong only because thousands of supporters have stayed in these parties. With regard to Germany, specifically, Communists there are supposed to join with the Social Democrats in forming a common government in order to resolve the reparations question in a manner acceptable to the working class.

Are you sure that the Social-Democratic leaders will accept your proposal? There is no country in which the Social Democrats will ever conclude such an

agreement, because they know only too well that they will never be in a position to abide by its stipulations. They are experienced enough to know that it is not diplomatically appropriate to accept something publicly today and then be forced tomorrow to reject it.

However clearly and precisely the united-front question was formulated within the Executive Committee, it unleashed great confusion in the local sections. We had to go to the sections and explain there that it is not proposed to make agreements with our enemies of yesterday and to abandon our irreconcilable stance. Rather, the goal is to create a basis for future work. It has often been noted, for example in municipal elections, that the moment Communists and Social Democrats conclude an electoral agreement, petty-bourgeois layers withdraw their support from this bloc. The same thing happens in the trade unions. When Social Democrats and Communists propose a joint slate, the non-party workers immediately propose their own candidates. The result of a policy of agreements at the political-parliamentary level is that many supporters fall away from united action. The agreement may win us a hundred thousand workers, but in the process we will lose at least a thousand Communists. I would prefer to have this thousand stay with us.

Another reason for rejecting a united front at the parliamentary level is that the Communist Party has been built as an opposition against every form of bourgeois power. From the German comrades' Open Letter to the proposal for a joint government with the SPD and the USPD, each step has been rejected.<sup>15</sup> This shows clearly the fate that every proposal of this sort will meet. The comrades from Saxony and Thuringia will not be able to contradict me here. The

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15 The KPD's Open Letter, published 8 January 1921 in *Die Rote Fahne* was addressed to other German workers' organisations, calling for united action around the immediate demands of the workers' movement, including defence of workers' living standards, self-defence against rightist attacks, freedom for political prisoners, and renewal of trade relations with the Soviet Union. For the text of the Open Letter, see Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 1061–3.

The proposal for a 'joint government with the SPD and USPD' was first made in the midst of the resistance to the Kapp Putsch of 1920, when the KPD had declared its support for the formation of a workers' government led by the SPD and USPD. It stated, 'The Party declares that its work will retain the character of a loyal opposition as long as the government does not infringe the guarantees which ensure the freedom of political activity of the working class, resists the bourgeois counter-revolution by all possible means, and does not obstruct the strengthening of the social organisation of the working class.' Quoted in Broué 2005, p. 369.

Swedish comrades too will not be in a position to show that their support of the Branting government has benefited the common struggle of the proletariat in any way.<sup>16</sup>

Now a word on the question as it is presented internationally. Can we go together with Amsterdam and with Vienna? This would be a horrendous error. I am convinced that the theses proposed by the Italian delegation are being rejected because we have not been afforded an opportunity to convince you. So the theses on the united front will be approved, but they will not be carried out in a single country – not because of indiscipline but because of their inherent nature. We will witness the ridiculous spectacle that this question will be decided for the big organisations, that is, on a vast scale, while its implementation within narrower limits is simply impossible.

The Two-and-a-Half International today represents not just a workers' organisation but also a bourgeois state: Austria. The Second International represents the petty-bourgeois government of Germany. The Third International represents the Russian workers' state. While the big reactionary imperialist states are gathering in conference in Rome, Genoa, or wherever it may be, the workers' organisations, if they come together, will not achieve anything more than the collapse of every attempt at agreement and even more bitter mutual struggle.

Let us go with the masses, through unified general action, and not with the betrayers' parties, through formal and fruitless unity. We ask only that the question be posed clearly and precisely without demagoguery and without efforts to make a good impression.

*(The session is adjourned at 4:00 p.m.)*

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16 The reference to Sweden refers to the government of Social-Democratic Party leader Hjalmar Branting, who was elected to power in the general election of 1921. The December 1921 ECCI theses on the united front stated, 'The Executive Committee 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).' See p. 259 of this volume.

## United Front – Discussion

*Discussion on united-front policy.*

*Chair: Friis.*

*Speakers: Lunacharsky, Radek, MacManus, Thalheimer, Burian.*

**Anatoly V. Lunacharsky** (Russia): Comrades, you recall how Comrade Roberto saluted Comrade Zinoviev's sincerity in daring to concede to this gathering that the united-front policy had been dictated by the difficult circumstances in Soviet Russia. What did Comrade Zinoviev say? He said that some charlatans and political adventurers are claiming that the united-front policy was dictated by a desire to improve conditions in Soviet Russia. He then added: If this were the case, that would not in itself be reprehensible, because the Russian government is the most effective instrument in the hands of the Third International. However, Comrade Zinoviev continued – and this is the part that Comrade Roberto appears not to have understood – that this is not at all the case. The policy flows entirely from the overall situation. I trust that what we have here is a misunderstanding, and not an attempt to twist what Comrade Zinoviev said in the fashion of Serrati.

To take up another point, Comrade Roberto holds it against us that we did not come to these conclusions immediately after the defeat near Warsaw. This runs counter to fact. In reality the reorientation took place immediately after the defeat.

Comrade Roberto also said that before Comrade Zinoviev's speech, he feared having his convictions collapse like a house of cards, blown away by the powerful words of this Bolshevik speaker. But after the speech he was seized by a different fear, namely that the speech's content took aim against the political foundations laid down at the First Congress. Where does he get that idea?

Terracini said that the Second Congress called for the organisation of a general staff, and the Third Congress then asked that we supply this general staff with an army – using means, however, that will lead to the destruction of the general staff and the degeneration of the Communist parties. But how is it possible, after the very clear speech of Comrade Zinoviev, to talk of a secret policy among the leaders and to counterpose this to the open and undisguised policy presented to the masses?

Terracini assumes that we will allow him to unmask Giacini only within the latter's cabinet, in confidential conversations with curtains drawn.<sup>1</sup> Not at all. We say that a broad minimalist revolutionary workers' movement must be created. Minimalist, so that the goals and slogans will be understood by even the last old woman working in a textile factory; revolutionary, because we do not limit ourselves to words and promises. And if you are successful in calling this broad movement into being, it will pull along all the 'betrayers', or else leave them behind the revolutionary movement as deserters and stragglers.

Comrade Terracini explained that the Italian comrades contributed to convening a meeting in Rome.<sup>2</sup> They did not go themselves, because the Italian Socialists were attending. This calls to mind the Old Orthodox Russians who regarded it as a deadly sin to eat at the same table as an unbeliever.

Terracini says that we should not speak of a 'united front' but rather of 'unified action'. This statement is not so bad at all. We certainly do not want a mishmash of all political parties and trade unions. What we want is simply that the Communist Party emerge from a series of struggles, after other parties have been gradually eliminated, as the only party recognised by the masses as their devoted leader. Comrade Terracini then unexpectedly portrays this simple notion of a call for 'unified action' as something monstrous and even dangerous when he asserts that we must not fritter away our forces in local and partial struggles but instead unify them, at one time and in one spot, in a single blow, in the final struggle. Such a course of action is highly dangerous and stands in contradiction to the decisions of the Third Congress.

Only through a great number of struggles – small, medium, and large – will we be able to train our forces, increase their strength, and win their trust. We will go to the masses and ask, 'Do you want to undertake a serious campaign to defend the eight-hour day?' The masses will respond with a thunderous 'yes'. Then they will turn to the social traitors and ask, 'Do you intend to disrupt this unity of the proletariat?'

The answer will probably be, 'No, but we want to specify in advance that no illegal means will be employed.'

Suppose you ask, 'Are you prepared, if necessary, to continue the struggle by other means, such as through a general strike?' If they answer 'yes', you can then draw them along from struggle to struggle. If they say 'no', this gives you

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1 It is unclear who is being referred to here. 'Giacini' may be a transcription error for Italian prime minister Giovanni Giolitti.

2 For Terracini's remarks on this, see p. 84.

an exceptionally favourable opening for propaganda. After you have presented two or three such popular proposals to the broad masses, you will surely succeed in shaking their confidence in the traitorous leaders.

Our poet Gogol has one of his characters, a 'madman', say that the moon rises only in Hamburg.<sup>3</sup> Well, you tell us that the united front was invented in Moscow. Comrade Terracini also charges Comrade Zinoviev with having expressed this policy in a manner that is insufficiently specific. But that is simply not necessary; it is enough to present the main points of the argument. Nor do I think that it's necessary to twist anyone's arm, as Comrade Roberto suggested. Rather we will yet convince you, and we will emerge from the discussion more united and stronger than ever.

**Radek:** The speeches of Comrade Renoult and the two Italian comrades represent two different ways of attacking the united front. Renoult talks of a very exceptional situation in his country. The stand of the French comrades is based on the concept that they cannot trust their workers to advance together with the Longuet current from which they split. But if you listen carefully, you sense that many comrades feel they are so close to the Longuet forces that if they act together with them, there would be no way to distinguish the Communists. The second type of attack was made by Comrade Terracini. His point of view is a somewhat watered-down version of the theory of the offensive.<sup>4</sup> He tries to align his view with that of the Third Congress theses. I would like to read a passage from these theses.

As the conditions of the working masses become more and more unbearable, the Communist parties must do everything necessary to bring the working masses into a struggle for their interests.

In Western Europe and the United States, where the working masses are organised in trade unions and political parties, spontaneous movements are therefore for the time being quite infrequent. Given that fact, Communist parties are obliged to attempt, by mustering their strength in the trade unions and increasing their pressure on other parties based

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3 The reference is to 'Diary of a Madman' by Nikolai Gogol.

4 The 'theory of the offensive' was advanced by architects of the 1921 March Action in Germany, to justify their policies in launching the action and their proposal that such policies continue. The theory, which called on Communists to radicalise their slogans and initiate minority actions that could spark the hesitant workers into action, was rejected by the Comintern's Third Congress.

on the working masses, to enable the proletariat's struggle for its immediate interests to unfold on a unified basis. If the non-Communist parties are forced to join the struggle, the Communists have the task of preparing the working masses from the start for the possibility of betrayal by these parties in a subsequent stage of struggle. Communists should seek to intensify the conflict and drive it forward. The VKPD's Open Letter can serve as a model of a starting point for campaigns. If pressure by the Communist Party in the trade unions and the press is not enough to achieve a unified front in the struggle, the Communist Party is duty-bound to seek to lead large sectors of the working masses on its own.<sup>5</sup>

The only new aspect of our present discussion is the question of a conference [with leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals]. I hope that Terracini is not an internationalist of the type who says that a conference in my country, with my Socialists, is permissible, but not an international conference. I believe he would rather meet with Scheidemann than with Serrati. In general, what we have is a rebirth of the errors against which we struggled at the Third Congress.

There is an aversion to this course of action in other sections as well. What is the difference between the present situation and that of 1919? Then the masses were in revolt, in Austria, in Hungary, in Germany. We were carrying on a struggle for power; the question was [proletarian] dictatorship or so-called democracy. This initial period of direct struggle is over, for now. The fact is that the initial onslaught was defeated by the capitalists, and workers in every country are engaged in struggles for partial demands. Here is what is at stake today in these struggles: The eight-hour day – yes or no? Higher wages – yes or no? So we as the Communist International have the task of showing the masses how in these practical struggles, we differ from all the other forces. We want to struggle and the others do not – not even for reforms. Our friends fear that this course of action would lead to a rapprochement with the Social Democrats. Let me remind you how the SPD and USPD reacted when we applied this policy in Germany in 1921. They yowled, because they knew we would unmask them before the masses.<sup>6</sup>

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5 The quotation is from the Third Congress 'Theses on Tactics and Strategy', in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 939–40.

6 An example of the SPD's reaction to the KPD's Open Letter was an editorial in the 11 January 1921 issue of the SPD's *Chemnitz Volksstimme*, entitled 'Optimists Beware'. The editorial warned of the Open Letter's 'sham sanctity', calling it a 'swindle' and portraying it as a manoeuvre for 'capturing members'. The USPD's central organ *Freiheit* wrote along similar lines,

Some of the comrades put it this way: The united front can be created only through struggle. That is their first argument. The second is that we want to unite the masses and drive away the leaders. Terracini wants to unite with the masses and Zinoviev wants to unite with Scheidemann and Renaudel. Granted, it is certainly a contradiction if I unite with Scheidemann today and then write tomorrow in the press that Scheidemann is a traitor. Well, we will resolve this contradiction at the expense of the Scheidemann people through actions in which their betrayal is made clear to the masses as well.

Terracini says that at the outset you must unite without the leaders. But in that case, Serrati's supporters among the workers will be against you. If, however, it becomes clear during discussions with Serrati that he does not want to struggle together with us, Terracini can tell the workers, 'Come and unite with us against your leaders.' Then there is the argument that the united front can come into being only through struggle. Well, obviously. But the question is what promotes this struggle and what obstructs it.

Comrades, the questions are so simple that to make them complicated is like a hen inside a circle that does not dare step beyond it. The difference is simply that the hen did not draw the circle around itself; Terracini, however, helped to craft the formula that he cannot get beyond. The Italian comrades are against the united front because they are a minority; the French, because they are a majority.

The French comrades are suffering from an optical illusion. They confuse the proletariat with the old French Socialist Party, of which we now hold a majority. But the Socialist Party is not the French proletariat. In 1919, there was not a push for unity among the masses. At that time, the masses divided over the question of dictatorship or democracy. Now the capitalist offensive is creating the push for unity among the masses. Anyone who lacks a feel for that has no feel for what is taking place in the working class.

Let's now take up the international conference that may be called in conjunction with the one in Genoa. If the French party sabotages that conference, it will be doing a great favour for Poincaré. Who is a more formidable opponent, Poincaré or Longuet? Consider the politics of your country and the international situation. New, difficult struggles will arise, and in those taking place among the bourgeoisies of different countries there are two important things at stake: Soviet Russia and the skin of the German proletariat. How could we

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calling the Open Letter a 'diversionary manoeuvre' aimed at concealing the CP's 'total bankruptcy'. The Communists were 'wretched slanderers' trying to 'divert the broad masses from their own bankruptcy'. Quoted in Reisberg 1971, pp. 58–9.

stand by, how could we not try to do the minimum that unifies the workers in struggle against the international bourgeoisie? We will follow our path of struggle through to the end, despite the conference, and even if we have to go through another ten conferences with the social patriots. We want to show the capitalists the proletariat's fist. The Social Democrats want to transform this fist into a velvet paw, but the millions of workers who stand behind them want to struggle.

The fact is that Jouhaux's supporters in France struggle shoulder to shoulder with our comrades throughout the textile region of the north.

The French comrades tell us in friendly fashion that they do not know what these people have at their disposal, but certainly it is worthless. In any case, it will be disagreeable. ...<sup>7</sup> The opposite is true. I told everyone that if you want struggle you will certainly get it, and then the workers will have to decide whether or not they are for acts of violence carried out in defence of the workers' and peasants' republic or for acts of violence in defence of capitalism.

As to the scope of the decision. The so-called new course of action can certainly not be decided conclusively here. That is why we are not calling on you to adopt new theses; we are asking that you take a practical decision for or against the [international] conference. Many say, as Kolarov does, that the Social Democracy does not exist as a party in our country,<sup>8</sup> so why should we set up a united front? Our reply is that of course you cannot artificially establish parties just so you can unify with them. But that situation is not universal. For example, my friends in the Polish party tell me: We agree about Scheidemann, but the Polish Socialist Party and Daszyński – these are such wretched scoundrels; they throw us out of the trade unions; we cannot unite with them. I must reply that there is something not right about this argument. It reminds me of the viewpoint of my friend, Comrade Brand, and of Terracini. I am not going to decide which Social Democrat is the worst, but the worse that any one of them is, the more grounds there are for the united-front policy.

Beyond any doubt, the situation differs from one country to another. The International never gave you a gramophone record [that always plays the same song]. The feasibility of a policy depends on the national situation. Comrades are too concerned with abstract propaganda and agitation. They are too concerned about their virtue. As Heine said, 'Girls who are concerned only with their virtue do not have any other qualities.' Comrades may have every kind of

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<sup>7</sup> The German and French texts are both garbled at this point.

<sup>8</sup> An apparent reference to Kolarov's remarks in Session 4 (see p. 93).

virtue, but they should not hide them behind the locks and bolts of a chastity belt. They should show in struggle that they are made of a different metal than the non-Communist parties.

**MacManus:** Comrades, I would like to summarise how the united-front policy can influence the general situation in Great Britain. It seems to me to be of exceptional value. We have an unusual situation in Great Britain. The Labour Party, which encompasses the trade-union confederation, belongs to the Second International. Linked to it is the Independent Labour Party, which belongs to the Vienna Two-and-a-Half International. The trade-union congress belongs to the Amsterdam International, which was the first organisation to declare its opposition to the united front. Arthur Henderson, on the other hand, who is secretary of the British Labour Party and president of the Second International, states that the Second International is prepared to join a movement for unification of the international proletariat. If the Labour Party decides along with the Second International to support the united front, the trade-union confederation will also have to approve this policy. But to do so it must take this up with the Amsterdam International, which has taken a stand against this policy.

The first step toward the united front will therefore be an apple of discord among the leaders of the British Labour Party. But that's not the end of it. The Independent Labour Party forms part of the British Labour Party. If the Vienna International comes out against the united front, the ILP will have to take up the struggle within the Labour Party. The united front will thus show the leaders' real position on unity of the working class. What position will the Labour Party take here? By forcing it to commit to a united-front policy, we compel it to take a clear position regarding Austria, Africa, Ireland, and so on. The more we keep after them about this, the more we force the Labour Party to favour the right to self-determination. In this regard, the united front is the most important policy that the Communist Party could follow.

Following this policy is not simply a national issue. In 1915, Henderson was a member of the cabinet responsible for the deportation of many workers from the Clydeside. Henderson alone could have saved Connolly from execution.<sup>9</sup> Recently, when there was a threat of war, Henderson and MacDonald, leaders of the Second International, and Williams, leader of the international transport

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9 Five leaders of the Clyde Workers' Committee were deported from Glasgow to Edinburgh for their role in a 1916 strike.

James Connolly was a leading Irish revolutionary socialist. He was executed on 12 May 1916 for his role in leading the Easter Rising of 1916 (see p. 79, n. 1).

workers, came out for a united front in order to prevent a war. When there was a threat of war against Russia last year, the British Labour Party took responsibility for a conference where it was decided to struggle against this war by every means: legal or illegal, constitutional or unconstitutional.<sup>10</sup> In our opinion, the united-front policy can win for the Communist movement the position that it deserves.

**Thalheimer:** Comrades, it could well seem that the united-front policy was conjured up out of thin air and that the form to apply it is quite nebulous. The German party, however, is able to give a number of indications and comments as to the nature of this policy, its form, and its application. All the objections raised by delegates from France and Italy are long familiar to those from Germany.

In Germany we made the first practical efforts to achieve a united front long before it was formulated as a policy. During the revolution's initial period, from the end of 1918 into 1919, we had the workers' councils as a vehicle for united action.<sup>11</sup> By the middle of 1919 the workers' councils had been repulsed; either they dissolved or they maintained only a shadow existence. That period, in which the trade unions and the SPD regained strength in Germany, was marked by the beginning of a new policy that has now been distilled as the united front.

The first attempt – which we entered into with hesitations – was the Kapp Putsch of March 1920. The objective situation forced us to go forward together with the USPD and the SPD. But our hesitation here was not to our advantage. We rapidly corrected this error. In Berlin we formed a joint strike leadership with the USPD and ultimately also with the trade-union federation (ADGB) and the SPD.<sup>12</sup>

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10 This may be a reference to the 13 August 1920 national conference of over a thousand delegates in London during the Polish-Soviet War. Labour Party national and local leaders played a prominent role in that gathering, which was called to oppose the threat of British military intervention on the side of Poland. See Klugman 1968, pp. 84–5.

11 Workers' councils [*Arbeiterräte*], containing representatives of all working-class parties, developed throughout the country during the German Revolution of November 1918. Their power was such that the Social-Democratic government was forced to legally recognise their existence in an effort to co-opt these bodies.

12 For the 1920 Kapp Putsch in Germany and the working-class response to it, see pp. 74–5, n. 14. The KPD leadership initially refused to support the working-class resistance to the putsch, on the grounds that the SPD regime was itself a bourgeois repressive government. The party rapidly changed this position and actively participated in the struggle.

Then we encountered a second situation where the wave of struggle rose once again and we considered it advantageous and useful to do something similar. That was when the Russian army advanced toward Warsaw in June 1920.<sup>13</sup> At that time we joined with the ADGB, the SPD, and the USPD in making an appeal to block transport of munitions into Poland as well as against all military action against Russia carried out through Germany. Even among our comrades there were many who did not understand this policy, but it was correct. Alongside the united appeal, we also published our own call. The ADGB used this as an excuse to blow apart the united committee. Nonetheless we advised our comrades to stay in the local committees.

Our next experience was in the fall of 1920, just before the unification congress.<sup>14</sup> The Stuttgart metalworkers – among whom we were the majority, including in their leadership – presented a number of economic demands for which they carried out agitation over several weeks.<sup>15</sup> Then came the founding document of the united front, the ‘Open Letter’. The SPD rejected our proposal for unity as a malicious manoeuvre. The USPD did the same. The KAPD too said no, raising almost exactly the same arguments as those now advanced by our French and Italian comrades.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps you would be interested in the fate of the KAPD. They stood aside. The main thing they said was, ‘We want the revolution.’ They said wage struggles were beneath them. And so it transpired that they provided services as strikebreakers in wage struggles. And today the condition of the KAPD is such that I must ask the Russian comrades to reserve a nature conservation park for them, where they can be preserved for the attention of future generations.

Our mistake lay in overestimating the capacity of our own party. After the congress, an action started up around inflation and tax policy. We had experiences here that may be useful pointers for our Italian comrades. The KAG showed us where the border on the right is staked out: it called not for an alliance for action but organisational unification with sectors of the SPD and

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13 For the Polish-Soviet War, see p. 103, n. 1.

14 A reference to the unification of the USPD majority and the KPD that occurred following the USPD's congress in Halle on 12–17 October 1920, at which the USPD voted for fusion with the Communist Party. The minority opposing the fusion split off and formed a separate left social-democratic party that retained the USPD name.

15 A reference to the November 1920 campaign by Stuttgart metalworkers for united working-class action and to fight for the proletariat's economic and political interests. For more information on this, see Riddell 2011.

16 The KAPD attacked the Open Letter for being ‘opportunistic and demagogic’. For the response of the SPD and USPD, see p. 136–7, n. 6.

USPD. I understand that many comrades feared that the party's structure was not firm enough to go through such an experiment. But there's no escaping from such a danger. I must also explain a point misunderstood by Terracini. He mentioned Saxony and Thuringia, saying that the governments there combated the strike just as fiercely as the SPD and the trade unions. Actually, they were not called upon to do so, since railways are under federal jurisdiction.

The French comrades too have reservations regarding support of the socialist governments in Saxony, Thuringia, and Sweden.<sup>17</sup> The situation is that in Saxony and probably also in Thuringia, the Majority Socialists [SPD] were quite pleased to join in a bourgeois coalition government, and our support of an SPD-USPD government was the restraint that held them back.

There are two preconditions for the policy that we've carried out in Germany and that is formulated in the united front. The first is that there are still large masses of workers under the influence of the SPD, the USPD, and the trade unions. The second is that we in Germany are not directly engaged in a struggle for power, even though the situation in Germany is probably more revolutionary than in any other country. Our French comrades referred to 300,000 members of the Unitary CGT. But our French comrades cannot say today that this confederation is an organisation that would be under their leadership in a really major struggle.

As for our Italian comrades, they do not contest the fact that they still lack the support of the majority of the working class. In the opinion of the Italian comrades there are only two paths: either that of a putsch, that is, a movement based only on the parties; or to a greater or lesser extent what we saw on the Fourth of August 1914:<sup>18</sup> the party's catastrophic passivity. Far-sighted national interest thus demands that our French and Italian comrades succeed in learning from the experiences made elsewhere.

I would also suggest that Comrade Terracini was not right in saying that a decision of this type was taken and then stuck in some file folder. Rather, when

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17 For the Socialist governments in Saxony and Thuringia, see p. 65, n. 8. For the Branting government in Sweden, see p. 132, n. 16.

18 On 4 August 1914, as World War I was beginning, the SPD fraction in the German Reichstag voted in favour of the government's request for war credits, marking a sharp break from the traditions of the SPD and the international workers' movement. Leading parties of the Second International in other countries rapidly followed suit, supporting the war effort of their respective bourgeoisies. In left-wing and revolutionary circles, the expression 'Fourth of August' thus became synonymous with the Second International's betrayal of socialism.

such a decision is taken, the most immediate and important task is to prepare the party for this course of action.

**Burian** (Czechoslovakia): Dear comrades, like Comrade Thalheimer I can, for my part, draw on important experiences that we have had in Czechoslovakia around the question of the united front. In the Brünn [Brno] region, we have about 20,000–25,000 members. Among the youth gymnastic clubs, about 99 per cent are Communist. The trade unions are Communist. Most of the cooperatives are administered by Communists. And in this region, which we appear to dominate, we have since December developed propaganda for the slogan of the united front. This has been very much to our advantage. Over this time, it has drawn large numbers to us – not only among our members and sympathisers, but also among new layers of workers. So we are exceptionally pleased with this slogan.

You may ask whether this slogan has really taken root among the masses. Since we left the country, there has been a major miners' strike. We have now received word that our teachers' unions, which were previously strictly nationalist and bourgeois in outlook, have donated 100,000 korunas to the strikers, and – among the Germans – 25,000 korunas. That is an indication that significant layers of white-collar workers are in motion against capitalism.

We have already had a joint meeting – not with the Social Democrats, but with the trade unionists. But the trade unionists want the united front to be constructed on the broadest basis of our entire movement. In addition, it is impractical to send a delegation to an international congress composed solely of trade-union representatives.

Comrade Terracini thinks he can resolve the question by saying, 'Not a united front, but united action!' That amounts to playing with ideological concepts and offers no practical advice. The French comrades come with many objections. I believe that we are well placed to come to an understanding with our French comrades over this question.

Given that our Czechoslovak bourgeoisie has a relationship of dependency on the French bourgeois state, the development of the French party is very important for us. The Communist Party of France came to communism in somewhat the same way as we did. We will not give the French Communists any advice that could cause them any kind of harm. Nonetheless, we hope that the differences are not profound. The French comrades conceive of the united front only as a slogan for the workers but then reject sitting at a common table with the Longuetists.<sup>19</sup> But perhaps, later on, they too will experience a moment that

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19 A reference to the French Socialist Party, whose most prominent leader at the time was Jean Longuet.

calls for and demands meeting together. Comrade Terracini said that we cannot struggle together with the Social Democrats even for immediate issues. But what matters is not what we think and what we suspect, but what the workers think. We must bring the workers to the point where they perceive and understand these issues.

We all have to attend the international conference; it is a necessity. I do not understand how any kind of distinction can be drawn here between the interests of the Russian and the world revolution. When we advocate the united front, this is for the world revolution. And this revolution needs the international conference. It is a platform where we can struggle for our demands.

If we are to achieve a united front, I consider that two preconditions must be achieved in all the parties. First, the parties have to be very solid internally and, second, their leadership has to be consolidated. We have met these two conditions in the Brünn region. We call for a united front because the working masses have need for it.

**Chair:** Concerning the speech of Comrade Renoult, two statements have been submitted.

# I

Comrade Renoult's comments could give rise to a misunderstanding, which demands that we state that as co-reporter he did not speak on behalf of either the delegation as a whole or the Communist party of France in its entirety.

Renoult spoke only on behalf of four delegates and of the party's Central Committee, which explained the Executive Committee's theses poorly and allowed them to be distorted.

We reserve the right to intervene in the general discussion and present the point of view of French Communists who are in accord with the general principles underlying the theses. We ask that certain provisions and conditions be applied to their implementation by the French Communist Party, in the interests of carrying out the Communist International's slogan in France.

*Ker, Souvarine, Treint*

## II

The party's Central Committee sent Comrades Marcel Cachin, Renoult, Louis Sellier, and Métayer to Russia in order to present the views of French communism on the united front.

The following text was adopted unanimously, with one abstention, at the Central Committee meeting of 7 January 1922:

'The Central Committee believes that the united front, in terms of agreements with the Dissident leaders and majority trade unions, cannot possibly be applied in our country.

'It considers that the united front presents unavoidable dangers for the International, regarding which safeguards are needed.

'It instructs its delegates to present this viewpoint to the international conference in Genoa.<sup>20</sup> They are also to ask that this question be placed on the agenda of the Fourth World Congress. This decision corresponds to that of the Marseilles Congress,<sup>21</sup> which was adopted unanimously against one vote, and to the conference of party secretaries held in Paris on 22 January 1922.'

*Marcel Cachin, Renoult, Louis Sellier, Métayer.*

*(The session is adjourned at 4:20 p.m.)*

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20 Presumably a reference to the planned conference of the Three Internationals that the authors assumed would be held in Genoa at the same time as the scheduled governmental conference.

21 The Marseilles Congress of the French Communist Party took place 25–30 December 1921.

## United Front – Discussion

*Continuation of discussion on united-front policy.*

*Chair: Kolarov.*

*Speakers: Walecki, Trotsky, Marshall.*

**Henryk Walecki:** The Communist Party of Poland accepts the principle of the united front, which it believes has already been applied in the specific conditions of the country. Nonetheless, Poland was not the cradle of the Communist International's new course of action, and other countries offer a more favourable milieu for its full implementation. In Poland we have so far utilised this policy mainly in the trade-union arena, that of economic struggles, given that the entire new policy has arisen in general from the employers' offensive and the defensive struggles of the working class.

The united-front policy faces significant obstacles in the political arena. Some time ago our party advised all its branches to take part in mass actions organised by the Socialist Party under our own banner, provided that these actions were linked to vital interests of the workers. Thus at the end of 1920, for example, we took part in a demonstration/strike against the Senate, not with the slogan, 'Down with the Senate', but rather with these: 'Down with parliamentarism! Long live the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet republic!'<sup>1</sup>

True, we did not address the Socialist leaders, proposing joint action. First of all, they had already given us a clear and decisive answer, which still stands. A few months ago, the following was posted every day at the top of the main Socialist publication: 'Socialist organisations are forbidden to permit Communists to take part in rallies against the emergency law.' The second reason is the deep abhorrence and hatred that prevails in broad layers of the party against the social-police leaders. It would be difficult for us if circumstances demanded that we overcome this abhorrence and hatred to the degree required to fully apply the united-front policy. The party's Central Committee has taken a definite stand for the united front, but it has specific reservations regarding agreements with the leaders. Certainly these opinions of our party, as with

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1 In October 1920 a general strike in Poland was held to protest the proposed creation of an upper house of parliament.

those of other sections, are not its final word. The decisions that you will take here will have a strong influence on the future development of the Communist Party of Poland's activity.

Now a few words on the position of the French party. Lenin once said that when faced with difficulties and obstacles, you can take two approaches. You can study them thoroughly and from every side, in order to surmount, demolish, bury, and get around them. Or you can talk a great deal about difficulties and obstacles in order to excuse your inactivity and unwillingness to struggle. I see something along these lines among some of our French friends. I believe that I can perceive in the aversion to the united front felt by broad layers of the French party – which was referred to here – a degree of resistance organised from the top. Frossard's entire speech at the conference of district secretaries did not help to clarify the question and investigate the obstacles and opportunities, but rather served to organise the struggle against the Executive Committee's proposals.<sup>2</sup>

Comrade Daniel Renoult tries to counterpose the united-front policy to a revolutionary bloc with the anarchists and syndicalists. First of all, that in no way resolves the problem of mobilising the *entire* working class for the daily struggles. Second, we must note that the French comrades often do not draw with sufficient clarity the line separating them from their anarchist allies. Boundaries should not be erased either on one side or the other. On the contrary, the Communist character of our party should be strengthened, alongside unity in immediate struggles.

Let me now take up Italy. The Italian party at home, in its own country, contrasts favourably with what we have heard from the Italian comrades here in Moscow. Already last summer it applied the united-front policy in the trade-union arena under exceptionally difficult circumstances. Comrade Bordiga, who represented the Communist International along with me at the Marseilles Congress, defended the united-front policy there.<sup>3</sup> The differences between the theses proposed here by the Italians and our viewpoint can be ascribed to an unfortunate tendency to raise accidental occurrences or aberrations into a principle. In this way they erect barriers that limit their own movements and lead their activity along false paths. This is the case when they erect a wall between trade-union and political fields of work, which is untenable in practice and false in theory. They reject the united front in the

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2 Frossard's speech at the 22 January 1922 conference of district party secretaries was printed in *L'Humanité* the following day, under the title 'La tactique du front unique'.

3 A transcript of Bordiga's speech to the Marseilles Congress of the French CP was published in *Bulletin communiste*, 30 March 1922, vol. 3, no. 13, pp. 251–3.

political arena, yet they propose an international trade-union conference with proportional representation of the political currents. The International must help our Italian friends to overcome certain contradictions that limit their policies.

I am for the united front in principle and for its application in all countries, taking into account the different situations, both on a general level and within the party. Of course we must extend the united front on an international level, especially given that there are issues that can be resolved only through international action. Our Communist International must be seen by the proletariat around the world as a pioneer in the struggle of the united working masses against capitalism and imperialism.

**Leon Trotsky:** I agree entirely with Comrade Radek that the speech by Comrade Terracini was nothing more than a new and, I must say, not greatly improved version of the objections he raised at the Third Congress against some of its theses.<sup>4</sup> But since then the situation has changed. Comrade Terracini says, 'Of course we are for mass action and for winning over the masses.' To be sure, but we are in a more advanced stage now. We're discussing now the methods that we will use to win them over and take action. At the Third Congress we resisted tendencies that could result in premature actions. Today we see the same tendencies, but they find expression in a different form, namely in the danger of a negative stance. At the Third Congress we determined that we are at the beginning of a new stage. The bourgeoisie has not regained its equilibrium and stability, but it has achieved sort of a pretence of stability. After the years 1919–20 the revolutionary mood of the broad masses was changed into one of expectation. We must now concern ourselves above all with how we can win the masses. Looked at from this point of view, the parties are divided into three groups.

The first group includes parties of countries where the Communist parties must still fight to win a place in the proletarian front, namely, Britain and Belgium. Second, by contrast, Bulgaria, where the Communist Party already has absolute dominance. Clearly in such a situation the question of a united front is almost non-existent. Third, between these two extremes, we find the vast majority of parties. And it is precisely in the countries where the Communist Party is a wing of the proletariat's organised vanguard that the question of the united front arises.

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4 Terracini's speech to the Third Congress during the debate on tactics and strategy can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 457–65.

We do not know when the moment for the conquest of power will come. Perhaps in six months, perhaps in six years. I ask Comrades Terracini and Renoult: Is the proletariat's struggle supposed to stand still until the moment when the Communist Party will be in a position to take power? No, the struggle goes forward. Workers outside our party do not understand why we split from the Socialists. They think, 'These groups or sects should give us an opportunity to struggle for our daily necessities.' We cannot simply tell them, 'We split in order to prepare for your great day after tomorrow.'

But the Communist Party comes to them and says, 'Friends, the Communists, syndicalists, reformists, and revolutionary syndicalists all have their separate organisations, but we Communists are proposing an immediate action for your daily bread.' That is fully in step with the psychology of the masses. I understand entirely that for a journalist who perhaps worked with Longuet in *L'Humanité*, the prospect of having to turn once again to Longuet is psychological and moral torture. But the French workers really are indifferent to such considerations. In order to show you, comrades, that the reservations widely held in France do not reflect the mood of the masses, I will read you a few quotations. True, quotations are, so to speak, the dried flowers of the workers' movement, but if you know a bit about botany, if you have seen these flowers in sunny meadows, these dried flowers do indeed give one a feeling for reality.

In the 22 January *L'Internationale*, Victor Méric writes:

Suppose that these theses are adopted and then, tomorrow, the Poincaré ministry is overthrown and replaced by a cabinet headed by Briand or Viviani, both outspoken supporters of peace, of an *entente cordiale* among the peoples, and of recognition of Soviet Russia. Will our deputies in parliament then be required to cast their votes for the bourgeois government? And if – who knows – one of our people is offered a ministry, should we bar him from accepting it?

What Comrade Terracini said was not exactly the same as Comrade Méric's remarks, but Terracini did try to conjure up the spectre of the three powers, numbered two, two-and-a-half, and three – Germany, Austria, and Russia. Comrades, the interests of the Soviet republic cannot be other than those of the international revolutionary movement. And if you believe that we are so absorbed and hypnotised by our role as statesmen that we are no longer capable of correctly assessing the interests of the workers' movement, then it would be appropriate to add a clause to the statutes of our International, saying that any party that lands in the lamentable situation of having taken state power will be expelled from the International. (*Laughter*)

Comrade Thalheimer said that if anyone has emotional grounds to not want to sit at the same table with people of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, it would be the Germans. But why would a French Communist come up with reproaching the Germans for a lack of hatred of the betrayals of the Two-and-a-Half International? I believe their hatred is no less intense than that of the writers and journalists who are far removed from events. Yet our German comrades nonetheless carry out the united-front policy. This shows that they see it as a form of political action, not of moral rapprochement.

Fabre writes that he is in full agreement with the united-front policy with only one reservation: 'Did it really make any sense to destroy unity, guns in hand?'

Here united-front policy is understood as a return to the situation before Tours, as a 'civil peace,' a 'sacred union' with the Dissidents [French *sp*], the reformists.<sup>5</sup> Méric says, 'I reject it.' Fabre says, 'No, I accept it.' Even Frossard, certainly an important politician, offers no more substantial arguments. Indeed, I must tell you that your methods and actions are superior to the arguments that you advance against the policy proposed by the International.

The party has 130,000 members; the Dissidents have, let's say, 30,000, 40,000, or 50,000 members more or less. (*Interjection: 15,000!*) The reformist syndicalists number 200,000, and again, that could be somewhat more or less. The revolutionary syndicalists 300,000. The French working class numbers in the millions.

The French party is the expression of the great revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat that emerged from the war. The revolution, however, did not materialise, and the broad masses are experiencing what one could call a psychological defeat, expressed in the fact that workers are leaving the trade unions. Now let us suppose that this transitional situation lasts another year, or two, or three. How will the working class in France respond if, under such circumstances, a generalised action takes place in the country? The Communist Party outnumbered the Dissidents about 4 to 1. But vague revolutionary feelings outnumber conscious revolutionary feelings about 99 to 1.

We have achieved great successes in propaganda through our schools and through *L'Humanité*, which has 200,000 readers. There are other ways to bring the broad masses into motion; for example, through the brilliant speeches of our French friends. Then we encounter the elections. A large mass of workers

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5 'Civil peace' (*Burgfrieden*) and 'sacred union' (*union sacrée*) were terms used by the majority leaders of the Second International to refer to their perspective of national unity with the capitalist class of their respective countries during the First World War.

will say that a 'Left Bloc' parliament is certainly preferable to the National Bloc of Poincaré.<sup>6</sup> Our task is to discredit in advance the idea of a Left Bloc in the eyes of the French proletariat. This is a very important question for the French party. For us, such a bloc is no misfortune; it can even be a gain, provided that the proletariat does not take part in it. We do not reveal in advance exactly how we will proceed. The main thing is to discredit the left bourgeoisie in the eyes of the broad working class, and to force it to show its true colours. We Communists have a pressing interest in luring these people out of their refuge, out of their chamber, and placing them before the proletariat in the framework of mass action.

This is not about a rapprochement with Longuet – that would really be a bit much, wouldn't it, comrades? We spent fifteen or sixteen months impressing on the French comrades that they had to throw out Longuet. And now comrades come saying that we are trying to impose on them a rapprochement with Jean Longuet. I well understand that after reading the article by Victor Méric, workers of the Seine Federation could be quite confused. We must tell them, very calmly, that something quite different is at stake here.

Comrade Terracini says that entirely different methods of action are at stake; we are for the revolution and they are against it. That is quite correct, but if this were not the case, the united-front question would not have posed any difficulties for you. The fact that we are for the revolution and they are against it is precisely what we must make clear to the proletariat.

The most dangerous thing in Renoult's speech was the assertion that at the present time we should have nothing to do not only with the Dissidents but with the reformist CGT. That would be an unpleasant surprise for the anarchists within the Unitary CGT, and I must say that this way of supporting the anarchists is very clumsy. It's precisely in the trade-union movement that you have applied the theory of the united front successfully, and if you now have 300,000 as against Jouhaux's 200,000, that is due in large part to the united-front policy. If we were to try to split the trade unions along the lines of the different currents, this would be suicide.

Jouhaux saw the ground disappearing beneath his feet. Our prediction was correct. He began the split through expulsions. In our struggle against the reformists – the Dissidents, as you call them – against the reformist syndicalists

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6 The National Bloc was a right-wing coalition under Raymond Poincaré that held power in France during 1919–24. The Left Bloc was an electoral coalition between the bourgeois Radical Party and the French SP. The first such bloc was the *Bloc des gauches* formed in 1899; the *Cartel des gauches* was formed in the early 1920s.

and the social patriots, we must place on them the responsibility for the split. We must continually compel them to pronounce their 'no' publicly before the entire working class.

When the situation is favourable for the demands of the working class, we must drive these gentlemen forward. Two years from now, we may have the revolution. In the meantime, increasingly broad mass movements will emerge, and people like Jouhaux and Merrheim will always try to take a step forward. But right now, Comrade Terracini says, there are no great events, and we have no reason for a united front. And the French comrades say that if no great events come, then we must initiate them through our own actions. I must tell you that one of the most significant barriers to the unfolding of these events is that several political and trade-union organisations are arrayed side by side, and the masses do not understand the differences among them. We propose a specific action to an organisation of this type. I maintain that the unaffiliated workers, those who are most downcast and sluggish, will be swept into the stream at a moment of acute revolutionary crisis, while in a time of a creeping crisis they will be Jouhaux's backbone.

As for the Conference of the Three Internationals, it might well be desirable that it take place later, but it was forced on us as a result of the Genoa Conference, to which Comrade Lenin received a personal invitation.<sup>7</sup> If this conference actually takes place, then the proletariat is required to do something. The Two-and-a-Half International takes the initiative and invites us. Are we supposed to respond to these people, 'You are traitors and we don't want to do anything together with you?' Their betrayal has been known for a long time. We have condemned them countless times. The fact is that Friedrich Adler turned to us and told us, 'We invite you to discuss and perhaps to decide on putting common pressure on the bourgeoisie and their diplomacy.'

If we were to say 'no', the Scheidemanns, Friedrich Adler, Longuet, and all the others would have an easy time of it in the working class. But let us perhaps set aside the epithet 'traitor' and 'blackguard' for use at the conference itself. At least, in our response, we should not say, 'We are not going because you are betrayers.'

We have nothing to fear from participation in such a conference. We will appear there as the revolutionary current of the working class. It may be

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7 The conference in Genoa, Italy (10 April–19 May 1922) had been convened to discuss economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe, and especially measures to improve relations with Soviet Russia. An invitation to Soviet Russia was issued in early January 1922. The inclusion of Russia among the thirty-four attending governments was a significant gain for the Soviet republic.

that the conference never takes place, because the parties refuse, fearing to be pushed into assuming obligations to the world proletariat. In that case, responsibility will lie with them, not with the Communist International. That is our gain, and that is also all that we desire. And that is why I believe we should decide unanimously to take part in the conference.

**Marshall** [Bedacht]: The slogan and policy of the united front is exceptionally important to the Communist Party of the United States. Beyond any doubt the impulse to unity among workers is growing stronger and stronger, especially in the US. This tendency has an effect on Communists, who think we are trying to amalgamate things that do not belong together. That must not, however, alienate us from the idea of a united front. In no way do we imagine a conference in the sense of sitting down with Berger and Hillquit at a table and working out a programme. We are not aiming for a repetition of the 1912 congress in Basel, when people got together in a church, gave fine speeches, and agreed on a programme that was never carried out.<sup>8</sup> We look to the unification of broad masses of workers in the framework of common struggle as an immediate goal.

In the United States the slogan of the united front has special importance. A major miners' strike is approaching, and already voices are heard that the miners should approach the transport workers, that is, the railway workers, in order to work out together what steps should be taken in order to secure victory. There are also a number of major questions in a political framework where we can without any doubt achieve a united front: for example, liberation of political prisoners, an end to the white terror, protection of the railway workers' right to strike. The Social Democrats have launched an initiative to found a labour party in the United States.<sup>9</sup> A similar initiative has come from another side. The country's capitalists recognise that the sharpening of the class struggle has awakened the political consciousness of the workers, and the labour party is

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8 The Second International held an emergency congress in Basel, Switzerland, on 24–25 November 1912. The meeting was convened as a demonstration against the Balkan War that was taking place, and the growing danger of a European-wide war. In the course of the congress, delegates joined in a march to the city's cathedral, where an anti-war rally was held. The manifesto issued by the Basel Congress can be found in Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 88–90.

9 A centrepiece of the May 1921 convention of the US Socialist Party was to advance 'independent labour politics', stating that 'the working class will very soon be compelled to have a political party of its own to express its interests'.

Widespread sentiment in favour of a labour party existed in the United States during the postwar period. The fight for the formation of a labour party became a central campaign of the US Communist Party in late 1922.

supposed to serve as a lightning rod. It would be a crime if the revolutionaries of the United States did not intervene here with the united-front policy, in order to utilise every position of strength. It would be a crime for the Communist Party of America to not take advantage of social contradictions driven to a peak of acuteness. By no means does that mean that we should sacrifice our own Communist point of view.

Before we can lead the working masses into the final struggle, we must first unite them and gain influence and sufficient trust among them. There are only two ways to do this. Either the working masses will declare that they are willing to lead their organisations together with ours into the struggle, or they will decline to enter into a struggle alliance with genuine revolutionaries. In the latter case, we have nothing to fear. We will thereby receive an opportunity to demonstrate to the masses who it is that is obstructing a united struggle.

It is simply madness to believe that we can undertake this unification theoretically, on paper, and only later say, 'Well, now we have all the workers. It's time for the struggle against capitalism.' It is much simpler to carry out unification in the framework of immediate struggles and demands.

**Kolarov** (chair): There are still 29 names on the speakers' list. I propose that from each delegation only one comrade take the floor. (*Following an objection by Comrade Ambrogi, the motion is adopted.*)

(*The session is adjourned at 10:45 p.m.*)

## United Front – Discussion

*Discussion on united front. The situation in Yugoslavia. Continuation of discussion on united front.*

*Chair: Roberto.*

*Speakers: Lozovsky, Stanič, Treint, Kolarov, Tomann, Rákosi.*

**Solomon A. Lozovsky:** The French comrades seek to explain united-front policy as an expression of the Soviet state's vital interests. 'What is the reason that we now need a united front?' Monmousseau wonders. He responds:

Because the revolution, surrounded by a world of enemies, is isolated, and in this hostile environment it cannot go forward indefinitely without help from the international proletariat. ... The Russian Revolution cannot rely on the hypothesis of world revolution or on the effective forces of the International. So it is constantly seeking a regroupment. It is no longer placing its bets on international revolution, but rather on maintaining the positions acquired so far.

And Monmousseau concludes:

The Russians ... are making contact with the capitalist states ... and wish to achieve an understanding with the reformists, in order to save the Soviet state.<sup>1</sup>

But is the present policy truly dictated purely by Russia's situation? The main task today, given that capitalism has gone over to an offensive all down the line, is to unite the vanguard with the masses, who are the main army. This policy flows from the international situation. *La Vie ouvrière* writes in an editor's note on the Communist International's united-front theses:

As has often been the case, this initiative of the Russians arrived quite unexpectedly. We must take into account that our movement is following in the wake of others, so that questions they pose now usually become rel-

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1 Monmousseau, 'Front unique!', in *La Vie ouvrière*, 3 February 1922.

evant to us only after a few years. This factor is the overriding factor in our confusion; there is also our inability to gain influence for our viewpoint in the decision.<sup>2</sup>

So our French comrades concede that there is confusion.

The Unitary CGT poses the question in abstract terms and avoids engaging with daily issues. It wants to achieve socialism in a single blow. A series of articles on the united front has appeared in *La Vie ouvrière* and in *Syndicaliste révolutionnaire*. There we read that they implemented the united front some time ago, yet Comrade Monmousseau says quite unequivocally that the united front represents a *denial* of our principles. And many other comrades from the French CP pose the question in those terms.

But the united-front policy does not entail any denial of principles or 'modification of the goal', as the French put it. It is not at all a matter of modifying the goal, but rather of adapting to present conditions in today's situation. There is only one way that will enable us to win over the masses once more: to go to the masses and pose all the immediate issues that concern them. What Communists are proposing is *united action*. And if we take part in such actions against the bourgeoisie, we as Communists will win the upper hand. When an action begins in any given country, leadership will fall to the party that proceeds in the most revolutionary, decisive, and consistent fashion.

Comrade Renoult has made a statement that the French Communist Party will obviously, as a disciplined section, comply with the conference's decisions. But you have done everything possible, comrades, to make it difficult to submit in this fashion. For example, Comrade Besnard writes in the 8 February issue of *L'Internationale*:

Why such a policy all of a sudden? Is there any provision for such a policy in the decisions of the Comintern and Profintern?

And he continues:

What kind of autonomy do they have when they can be compelled on the basis of discipline to submit to unconditional orders coming from Moscow? Will a decision be taken to turn them into puppets, playthings, eunuchs?

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<sup>2</sup> *Vie ouvrière*, 13 January 1922.

Especially noteworthy here is the use of the word 'eunuch', which calls to mind the style of Hervé.<sup>3</sup> This can happen unconsciously, but still a mood has spread within the party, or at least the basis has been created for it to spread, and therefore many comrades do not understand what is at issue, and precisely for that reason they rise up against the 'ukase' coming from Moscow.

The Communist International is the general staff of the world revolution. Now, comrades, we can change our decisions and take new ones every 24 hours, and anyone who objects to that merely shows that he does not have the slightest notion of revolutionary strategy. Bebel said once, 'Tactics can change every day,' and it is exactly this suppleness that is lacking among our French comrades. They approach every issue in a straight line. *Le Temps*, the paper of France's financial and industrial bourgeoisie, has better grasped the meaning of the united front. It writes, 'They (the Communists) have perceived that their methods have missed the mark and now attempt to reach the same goal with other means.' Yes, that's it! In order to reach our goal, we seek to create a counterattack against the employers' offensive by bringing together the Communist and Socialist parties. This flows not from the particular interests of Russia, but from the situation of the working class itself.

So you have posed the question wrongly, comrades, and in so doing you have come to incorrect conclusions. It would be a crime to fail to take advantage of the present peculiar situation. The working class is experiencing conditions right now where our active intervention in immediate struggles can draw it to our side and link the broad masses to our party. The result of this is that the world proletariat moves significantly closer to its final struggle.

**Chair:** I give the floor to Comrade Stanič for his report on Yugoslavia.

### The Situation in Yugoslavia

**Stanič** [Kosta Novakovič]: The Yugoslav law against Communists punishes any Communist propaganda with the death penalty or twenty years of hard labour, and bans any written correspondence among Communists. Nonetheless, the Yugoslav party executive has been able, within six months, to revive half of the trade-union movement in the form of independent unions, to reorgan-

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3 Gustave Hervé was a prominent French Socialist Party member who was known for extreme expressions of radicalism before World War I. After the war began in 1914, he became an equally extreme social patriot.

ise the party branches and provincial secretariats, and to publish six newspapers, of which three are political and three are on trade-union issues. Among our comrades who have any worth, not a single one went over to the centrists or the social patriots, and not a single union left our workers' federation.

At present we are underground, but we are still capable of functioning. As for the united front, at first we believed it to be unconditionally required in this difficult situation. I must concede that, when I arrived in Moscow, I was not particularly delighted to see the results of the New Economic Policy. This policy, however, does not reflect a weakening, and in any case it is also not the main reason for proposing the theses on the united front. The reasons are rather the offensive against the proletariat, on the one hand, and, on the other, the economic and military offensive against Soviet Russia. For this struggle we need large armies that are the equal of those deployed by the world bourgeoisie. Where shall we acquire them? I do not think that any reason can be offered for thinking that there is a purer and more revolutionary course of action that would be capable of drawing new masses to us. True, the theses presuppose Communist parties that are solidly organised and are equally strong in spirit. In addition, limits must be set, particularly to point 18, which could be misunderstood.<sup>4</sup> We have studied the theses assiduously, and the comrades who are opposed to them are well aware of what is at issue.

There are comrades who are solely interested in direct contact with the masses. But if we want common action with masses who are organised and also have *leaders*, we are forced to talk to these leaders in order to reach the masses. And we will do so if the interests of the International and the proletariat call for discussions with the leaders. I do not believe that this will cause an infection. On the contrary, it will create a favourable opportunity for the CP to display the essence of the Communist Party to the masses. We in Yugoslavia are in a special situation, and we will therefore apply this policy through *underground* work. In countries where industry is still weak and that are primarily agricultural, this policy will be applied in a different fashion, namely through purely political actions. This question should be taken up specifically by the Executive Committee or the Small Bureau.<sup>5</sup>

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4 For thesis 18 of the ECCI's December 1921 resolution, concerning the Communist parties' independence and ability to present their own viewpoint during united-front actions, see p. 260 of this volume.

5 The Comintern's Small Bureau, its day-to-day leadership body, had been renamed the Presidium in September 1921.

As for the French comrades, I believe that their speeches, articles, and newspapers betray something of their party's inability to apply this policy. If that is the case, this fact must receive special attention, and the Executive Committee must keep an eye on the opinions of the French comrades.

### Discussion on United Front (Continued)

**Albert Treint** (France): United-front policy is not only explained but is also justified by an analysis of the world economic situation. In the present period, every reform has revolutionary impact, because the bourgeoisie is not capable of carrying it out. Reform and revolution merge in the present situation. Reform is the practical equivalent of revolution. This is so much the case that even the reformists abandon the terrain of reform.

Until now, our propaganda reached only a relatively limited audience and consisted of theoretical explanation of the worth of communism and the betrayal of the socialist leaders. It is now possible to expand this presentation of theory by putting both communism and also reformist betrayal to the test of action. There is an enormous number of unorganised workers who will enter into struggle only if they are led by the slogan of the workers' united front. It would also be harmful to underestimate the influence of the Dissidents on a sector of the workers. In general, on a national scale, it can be said that they are a network of leaders with groups. But there are exceptions. In some departments (Loire-Inférieure, Finistère, etc.) the sections and federations of the Dissidents are close in strength to that of our own groups. The biggest difficulty arises from the fact that the period of the split is not yet completely behind us, while the period of the united front is already beginning. Our party has not yet fully banished the spirit of opportunism and must apply the united-front policy. This argument has been brilliantly deployed by Frossard. In response, I told our party's Central Committee that what they feared was the existing opportunist mood in our party seizing on the united front to prepare the ground for reunification of the organisation [with the Dissidents]. That is a genuine danger. So let us banish it by combating opportunism within the party.

It is also said that the policy may be good, but that the party will not understand it. Up until Marseilles the party was united and clear as a mirror. Now the Central Committee stands in front of a mirror and sees its own thinking reflected there, declaring this to be the thinking of the party. Nonetheless, a significant minority, making up a quarter of our federations, have shown that they understand the policy proposed by the ECCI. (*The speaker enumerates a large number of federation secretaries who have spoken in favour of the united*

*front.*) We have had the opportunity to speak directly about the united front with workers, members of our party, in many locations. In almost every case, after the back-and-forth of discussion, the sections shifted in the direction of the united front.

The basic proposition of the united front was distorted, with the Central Committee's compliance. It will take some time to carry out the necessary educational work. This policy enables us to unmask the reformist leaders. That is why Frossard accuses both us and the Executive Committee of naïve Machiavellianism. But neither naïveté nor Machiavellianism is involved. We put our cards on the table by telling the reformist leaders, 'You claim you are not traitors. Well, now is the moment to demonstrate that.'

There is talk of a decline or stagnation in the French party's membership. This crisis began six months ago. It is caused above all by the party's fickleness. It has limited itself to addressing the same audience of Communists and sympathisers, and has in this fashion isolated itself in sterile propaganda. (*Shouts of protest from Cachin, Sellier, Renoult, and Métayer*). The party must descend from intransigence to reality and carry out positive work. Here in Moscow, more than anywhere else, we should not forget that the Russian Revolution, the first revolution that was victorious, owes its genesis to the united front of the soviets in 1905 and 1917.

**Kolarov:** Comrades, the Bulgarian Communist Party fully approves of the united-front policy. This course of action was also carried out by the Communist Party of Russia at the moment of the October Revolution. The Communist Party of Germany is acting at present in this spirit, and I understand this is true of the Swiss party as well. Although we Bulgarian Communists were always an irreconcilably orthodox party, we also developed the united front during our struggles. All our trade-union actions were carried out jointly by both of the trade-union organisations, as in the railway workers' strike of 1906, along the railway network of the Oriental Expedition of 1908, during the printers' general strike of 1910, and so on.<sup>6</sup> During the postwar period, the general strike

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6 The 1906 Bulgarian railway strike lasted forty-two days. It was defeated after the government brought in troops to force workers back on the job.

In September 1908 a strike began on the Oriental Railway, a company owned by Turkey but whose lines passed through Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government, which proclaimed its independence from the Ottoman Empire, sent in troops to take over running the railroad.

The Sofia printers' strike of 1910 was part of a wave of work stoppages that occurred in all of Bulgaria's industrial centres, together with mass actions and campaigns involving tens of thousands.

of railway, post, telegraph, and transport workers of Bulgaria in December 1919 provides an outstanding example of the united front. The trade-union organisations reached agreement at that time in proclaiming the general strike and also carrying it out in unity.<sup>7</sup> Even the small and supposedly 'neutral' machinists' union took part. The result was that the opportunist and neutral organisations were destroyed and absorbed into the Communist federation.

During this struggle, which was the largest ever to have taken place in Bulgaria, the working masses had every opportunity to perceive the difference between the Communists and the reformist parties. They also saw that the united-front policy, when well organised and carried out effectively by a true Communist Party, does not cause any confusion in the minds of the masses, but rather results in victory for the Communist Party.

We are also applying this policy in certain cases today. There are three organisations of war invalids: one is Communist, the second is 'neutral', and the third is made up of invalid officers. Our Communist organisation turned to the other two and called on them to join in a common struggle for specific demands. The organisation of invalid officers accepted this proposal, and we began a common struggle with them, while the third organisation responded negatively. We are sure that this initiative of ours will contribute to the victory of the Communist organisation.

The Russian comrades have refuted the misgivings regarding Soviet nationalism. Comrades, it is not up to the Russian comrades to defend themselves. The other delegations are duty-bound to protest against charges of this type. The Soviet republic belongs not only to the Russians but to all revolutionaries. In the same fashion, the Red Army is not an army charged with defending specifically Russian interests, but is an instrument of world revolution. Certainly the new policy entails certain dangers, particularly when applied by a Communist Party that does not have a clearly delineated programme. Verfeuil published an article in *L'Internationale*, an organ of the Communist Party of France, that attacked so-called red militarism, putting the Red Army on the same level as a bourgeois army, a tool of capitalist politics.<sup>8</sup> Comrades, when Communists defend such points of view, it is difficult – indeed dangerous – to establish a united front with Longuet and his friends, because the workers will no longer be able to distinguish Communists from opportunists.

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7 In response to a wave of strikes during the fall of 1919, on 24 December the Bulgarian government declared a state of emergency in Sofia. A protest strike began among transport and communications workers and became a general strike on 27 December. The government responded with repression by police and armed squads. The strike lasted until 3 January.

8 Raoul Verfeuil, 'Contre le militarisme' in *L'Internationale*, 27 January 1922.

The policy of a united front of workers' parties is a psychological necessity flowing from the masses' instinct of survival. This will to unite is a natural response to the bourgeois attempts to splinter the workers, which receive support from the social patriots and centrists. If the party were to set itself against these instincts, the masses would sweep it aside. It is therefore necessary to adopt the theses on the united front unanimously, with conviction and good will.

**Karl Tomann:** For us in Austria, the question of the united front is one of advancing together with the fighting proletariat under the leadership of the Communist parties in each country, and not one of going forward with the Social-Democratic leaders. We are a relatively weak party faced with an enormous Social-Democratic apparatus, a disproportion without parallel in other countries. So far, the Austrian Social Democracy has been able to block the broad masses of the proletariat. It plays a double role. When it is necessary to enter into negotiations with the bourgeoisie, Renner, a favourite of the bourgeois class, steps forward. But when it is necessary to appear before the proletariat in a revolutionary guise, the 'revolutionary' Friedrich Adler comes forward – he who assassinated the minister Stürgkh.<sup>9</sup> This party has 500,000 members in its ranks, 600,000 in its trade unions, and one million in cooperatives. It has more than 70 newspapers for a population of just over eight million. We are concerned that the methods of the Austrian Social Democracy may now be extended internationally. It is no accident that the Two-and-a-Half International is directed from Vienna, that Domes and Hueber play a very significant role in the Amsterdam trade-union International, and that Fimmen spends a large part of his time in Vienna, conferring with our Social Democrats.

Of course we have to go to the conference [of the Three Internationals]. But will this conference simply result in carrying out the plan outlined by Friedrich Adler fully two years ago in the national workers' council and the Vienna district workers' council? That is what leads us Austrians to speak on this issue. *Der Betriebsrat* writes: 'All obstacles that could stand in the way of the conference must be swept aside; above all, we must all come together.' And when

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9 Friedrich Adler, a leader of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party and opponent of World War I, shot and killed the Austrian minister-president Karl von Stürgkh on 21 October 1916. Adler was sentenced to death, which was commuted to eighteen-years' imprisonment. He was freed following the outbreak of the 1918 revolution that toppled the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Adler came home after a discussion with Radek,<sup>10</sup> there was a meeting of the Vienna district workers' council the next day in which, not accidentally, Adler placed the united front on the agenda. In the same session, a conflict broke out between Otto Bauer and our comrades. Adler says that the majority of the proletariat must determine the course of all actions, including those of the Third International, and he poses that as a precondition for any common work.

We in Austria are forced by events to take up the united front and the practical struggle of the proletariat, and there are no objections to that. There is concern, however, regarding having to enter into negotiations with the Social-Democratic leadership. Here is an example: We initiated a campaign around joblessness. In the end a single demand was adopted, that government unemployment assistance should last not merely six weeks but for a longer period of time. This demand met with support from both Hanusch and Domes. They were both elected into the committee along with Communists and jobless workers. This is the same Hanusch, who, as minister of social welfare after the fall of the monarchy, enacted a law providing for government aid to the jobless until they obtained work. Then he modified the law in the interests of the bourgeoisie. And now he appears as a delegate from an assembly of the jobless and is supposed to ask that support for them be extended. Based on the experiences we have had, we are concerned that this could become a permanent organisation; further, that when the leaderships meet nothing will be decided, which could limit the Communist Party's freedom of action; and, additionally, that Friedrich Adler's plan to extend the Austrian workers' councils on an international scale could become a reality.<sup>11</sup>

**Mátyás Rákosi:** I will take the liberty of pointing out a few errors that we have made. One consisted of not distinguishing between what parties said and what parties did. Engels once remarked quite correctly that just as in private life, so too with regard to parties a distinction must be made between what someone says and thinks as against what they actually are and do.

The French party, despite certain imperfections attending its birth, has functioned well. When the class of 1919 was called up, its conduct was much better than that of many comrades who later criticised it. And so too in the action for Sacco and Vanzetti, the election of Marty and Badina, the campaign against

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10 A reference to talks held in January and February 1922 in preparation for the Conference of the Three Internationals.

11 Workers' councils (*Arbeiterräte*) emerged in Austria during the 1918 revolutionary upsurge that accompanied the fall of the Hapsburg Dynasty. Friedrich Adler was chair of the Vienna Workers' Council.

Poincaré, and the campaign against hunger.<sup>12</sup> Comrade Radek referred to the fact that the idea of the Open Letter, that is, of the united front, was born at a time when the Communist International had resolved to go over from the method of immediate attack to one of more extended struggle. The French comrades have now taken this path. They do not want to hear any talk of united fronts, but what they do is different from what they say.

As for the Italian party, the situation is quite similar. Only after great efforts and sacrifices did the Italian comrades succeed in overcoming the preconceived attitudes toward them that existed among good Communists.

Quite different and more profound reasons must be sought for the rejection of this policy by the French party. These reasons are suggested by the question raised by many comrades: Why is it that the French comrades detest Renaudel even more intensely than the Germans do Scheidemann and Noske? We must admit that we are not at all familiar with the relationship of the French proletariat to its social traitors. And in our ignorance on this issue, we came upon a point that unexpectedly provided us with an answer.

When the French comrades were here for the Third Congress, the Communist Party had an excellent relationship with the trade unions. Later, when a split became inevitable [in the CGT], the comrades, following our advice, spoke out against the split, and by so doing they had to cede the main leading posts to the anarchists and syndicalists, who were for the split. I greatly fear that we are making the same mistake on a political level that we did then on the trade-union question. In my view we must proceed with great caution in this question. The French comrades, and Frossard in particular, talked of Hungary. We too had a united front in Hungary. But there is of course no comparison. When we entered into a united front with the Social Democrats,<sup>13</sup> Soviet Russia was battling against eighteen enemies, and still the Russian Communists warned us against the dangers of this kind of unity. I would like to point that out to Comrade Frossard.

*(The session is adjourned at 4:40 p.m.)*

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12 For the military call-up of the class of 1919, see p. 73, n. 7. For the Sacco-Vanzetti defence movement, see p. 120, n. 4. For the election of Marty and Badina, see p. 72–3, n. 5.

13 For the unification of the Communist and Social-Democratic parties during the Hungarian soviet republic, see pp. 111–2, n. 9.

## United Front – Discussion; Béla Kun Affair

*Continuation of discussion on united-front policy. The Béla Kun affair.*

*Chair: Roberto.*

*Speakers: Bobst, Lunacharsky, Landler, Zinoviev.*

**Hermann Bobst** (Switzerland): A number of comrades have approached the question of the united front in the same way as Serrati did at the Second Congress regarding problems of proletarian revolution. He represented ‘pure’ socialism.<sup>1</sup> In the same way, we note that the Italian CP today is also concerned about the purity of communism.

In Switzerland the question of the united front arose a long time ago. It was posed concretely for the first time after the general strike of 1918,<sup>2</sup> and the question was raised in the fall of 1920 for discussion and definitively decided at the trade-union congress. At that time the Communist Party had 8,000 members. Its situation was similar to that of the British Communist Party today. We were for a unified organisation in which we retained freedom of criticism. This was denied. The reformists did not want it, even though they already foresaw that sooner or later they would not be able to maintain any other concept.

At the unification congress,<sup>3</sup> the platform proposed by Comrades Platten and Schneider was adopted by majority vote. Immediately thereafter, capitalism launched an offensive in the metal industry, the question of support to the unemployed came up, and so on. At that point the right wing of the party led by Schneider made efforts to revive the slogan of a unified organisation; the party leadership counterposed the slogan of the united front. In Basel and elsewhere

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1 For examples of Serrati’s ‘pure’ socialism, see his remarks at the Second World Congress on the national and colonial question (session 5), on the conditions for admission to the Comintern (session 8), and on the agrarian question (session 13). In Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 1, pp. 276–8, 280–1, 374–80, and 653–4.

2 A general strike, involving over 900,000 workers, occurred in Switzerland 9–11 November 1918. Strikers raised a number of social demands, including women’s suffrage, an eight-hour day, social security for the elderly and disabled, and state control over imports and exports.

3 A reference to the 5–6 March 1921 congress that founded the Swiss Communist Party, unifying the original CP formed in 1918 with a current that had recently split from the Social-Democratic Party.

in Switzerland, the Communist-minded workers dropped the old slogan and took up the new one. Propaganda for the united front revived the party, while groups split off both to the left and the right.

Nonetheless, in Switzerland we have not addressed all the organisations – thus not the Grütli current, which belongs to the Second International, or the Christian trade-union organisation, which claims 20,000 members. The Grütli current, which has abandoned the class struggle, complained of this treatment.<sup>4</sup>

Now as to the effects of this slogan. It was rejected by the trade unions and the Social-Democratic Party in an open letter, under the impulse of Grimm, which agreed that objective conditions existed to conduct a defensive struggle, but stated that the subjective requirement of a sufficiently organised and class-conscious working class was lacking. We maintained that creating the subjective conditions was precisely the task of the united front. Some months later, during a discussion with the secretary of the trade-union federation, Grimm declared that the subjective conditions were now indeed present, but the objective conditions were lacking.

The united-front slogan touched off enormous confusion in the trade-union federation. Even as we appealed for unity and united struggle, the reformists carried out the split. However, the adoption by parliament of an emergency law showed that although the Socialists and reformist trade-unionists refuse to struggle in a united front, they have declared their readiness to struggle against this law together with the Communists, the Grütli Society, and the Swiss office workers.

On another question, Swiss agriculture is made up of small and middle peasants who are in distress because at current price levels they cannot pay the increased interest on their mortgages. These people are bourgeois in outlook, but they share common interests with those of the proletariat. As soon as we return home, we will raise the slogan of a united front with the distressed small and middle peasants. That is how we conceive of the united-front slogan, and it should be posed and applied in the same specific way in other countries.

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4 The Grütli Society was formed in Switzerland in 1838 as part of the rising democratic movement in Europe, with ties to early workers' organisations. It later became closely linked to the Swiss labour movement and Social-Democratic Party.

### The Béla Kun Affair

**Lunacharsky:** On 21 January the ECCI Presidium established a commission to look into the charges laid by some Hungarian comrades against Comrade Béla Kun. The commission was made up of Comrades Bukharin, Lunacharsky (represented by Comrade Pyatakov), and Sokolnikov.

The commission reviewed all the available documents. The main group of charges against Comrade Béla Kun have a purely political character; a second group consist of references to different actions of Béla Kun that are impermissible in terms of elementary morality.

The commission held several sessions, calling in a large number of witnesses and checking and comparing a great many documents. It came to the conclusion that the charges of political unscrupulousness and even betrayal are entirely false and untenable. This applies to the suspicion that Béla Kun negotiated with the Entente regarding the [Hungarian] soviet government's surrender, to the legend that Béla Kun fled prematurely after the fall of the soviet dictatorship, and to evaluation of the military situation at the end of the dictatorship. This applies also to the accusations concerning the murder of two supposed Communists sent to Hungary by Comrade Rakovsky. The charges that Comrade Béla Kun made improper use of public resources for personal purposes have also been shown to be entirely unfounded. The commission concluded that, on the contrary, Comrade Kun lived with his family in emigration in extremely bad financial circumstances.

After thorough investigation of the vast majority of charges, including the most important ones, the commission came to the conclusion that there is no need to pursue this matter any further by setting up a special investigation commission on the personal questions. Most of the charges collapsed at the first touch. The commission is well acquainted with the unfortunate psychological symptoms that occur after defeats in action. What we have here is a typical case of mutual incomprehension and, just as typically, the substitution of legends for facts.

The commission proposes to the Executive Committee of the Communist International that it firmly call the Hungarian comrades to order, pointing out that such charges bring joy to our enemies and deal harsh blows to the international working class.

The report is signed: *A. Lunacharsky, C.W. Kuusinen, Boris Reinstein.*

The Control Commission declares that the investigation commission has carried out its task objectively and faultlessly. Signed: *Clara Zetkin, H. Walecki, Friis.*

*(Friis proposed the following resolution:)*

The Enlarged Executive Committee takes note of the unanimous decision of the investigation commission set up by the International Control Commission. The Enlarged Executive Committee expresses its sympathy with Comrade Béla Kun, its trust in him, and its indignation that such slanderous methods have been utilised against him.

*(Comrade Landler, speaking for the Hungarian opposition, called for the opening of a discussion on this matter. Comrade Zinoviev, speaking for the Presidium, opposed opening a discussion. The Enlarged Executive Committee then adopted Comrade Friis's motion to adjourn, with 1 against, 5 abstentions, and all others for.)*

*(The session is adjourned at 9:45 p.m.)*

## United Front – Summaries; Workers' Opposition

*Chair: Carr.*

*Speakers: Terracini, Renoult, Zinoviev.*

### Summaries on United-Front Policy

**Terracini:** It must be because of my inadequate French that my remarks have been so misunderstood. My position is in no way determined by moral considerations. My speech did not advance any new theory and does not represent any anarchist tendencies contrary to the decisions of the Third Congress.

Radek accused us of holding the position of the Mensheviks both before and after the March [1917] revolution. Elsewhere he said we were similar to the KAPD. He presents us as both defenders of the Third Congress decisions and as their hidden enemies. Trotsky, for his part, assures us that there is absolutely no contradiction between the Italian position at the Third Congress and our position here today. I must express my boundless admiration for the Russian comrades' admirable polemical art. When they cannot locate any weak points in their opponents arguments, they fabricate targets for their spears. So we had this illusion of putschism at the Third Congress.<sup>1</sup> Comrades Trotsky and Lenin spared no harsh reproaches with regard to what they regarded as the Italian party's tendency to jump into military adventures. And now we have a new invention: that we are rejecting action.

I have already presented you with a rough idea of our party's activity, and I would like merely to stress once again that its goal has always been to win over the masses. The theses we have distributed do not deny action in any way but rather pose unambiguously the need for a generalised action by the proletariat.<sup>2</sup> Why is this not understood? The [Third Congress] theses on the world economic situation state that the crisis of capitalism does not develop in a straight and rising line but in one that is winding and tortuous. Each single

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1 A reference to the Third Congress debate on the March Action in Germany and the 'revolutionary offensive' theory.

2 For these theses, see p. 124, n. 8.

segment of this curve represents a time of generalised crisis, but one that has a particular character based on its own nature.<sup>3</sup>

So, for example, the present period is characterised by *capitalism's offensive*, which is not limited to one city or one category of workers, but is carried out on a national and even international level against all types of workers. That is why I spoke of a *generalised action of the proletariat*, explaining that either the entire working class will achieve victory or the class as a whole will be defeated. Given the fact that workers of every party are unified along with non-party workers in the trade unions, it can certainly be said that all Communist trade-union members have worked in the interests of generalised action. In fact we have never yet had occasion to see Socialist, Christian, anarchist, or Communist workers striking separately. On the contrary, every strike embraced workers of every political persuasion.

The united-front question first came up in Germany, and we must thank the comrades of this country who were our teachers and who provided the first experience in their well-known Open Letter in 1920 [1921]. The teachers have limited themselves, however, to actions of which we cannot approve. The Communists there have proposed a workers' government to the Social Democrats. That means that the Executive Committee's theses could now signify participation by Communist parties in government under bourgeois rule. Radek has also spoken of this possibility. This perspective regarding future struggles must be countered by strong opposition. An experiment in participation in a proletarian government will lead a Communist Party to collapse. The Executive Committee's theses have opened the door to collaboration with the powers that be. I hope that those defending the theses will affirm this explicitly. In the meantime, I am sounding the alarm alone and taking a position in opposition.

Zinoviev will apply the experiences in Russia to the united-front question. Between March and November 1917 the Bolsheviks frequently called on the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries to form a united government.<sup>4</sup> Today it is said that this approach was good, without noting that no workers' government was actually formed in Russia. Do the German comrades hope that when they propose agreements to the Majority Socialists [SPD], these will always be

3 A reference to the 'Theses on the World Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International' adopted by the Comintern's Third Congress. In Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 901–20.

4 For most of the period between the March and November revolutions (February and October based on the old Russian calendar), the Bolsheviks called for 'All power to the soviets'. At the time the soviets were led by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties.

rejected? I will reply with what Comrade Lenin told me personally during the Third Congress: You must take into account the unusual situation in which the Russian Revolution took place.<sup>5</sup>

As for Comrade Lunacharsky's accusations, I would like to respond that the Italian Communist Party certainly applies the united front as a proletarian course of action for a generalised response to the capitalist offensive. But if a particular case arises that, in its opinion, poses a danger of the united front being applied automatically, the party is prepared to set aside this course of action and respond to the tasks using other means.

Given that the Executive Committee's theses do not exclude the possibility of unity with the Social Democrats, the opposition is presenting the theses signed by the French, Italian, and Spanish delegations.

**Renoult:** The arguments of those defending the Executive Committee's theses would be invincible if they were directed at those who oppose appealing to the masses while utilising the immediate demands of the working class for generalised agitation and propaganda. It has been shown that during a period of offensive by the employers, the proletariat tends to unite its forces and defend its vital interests. No one has contested this truth; no one opposes the theses of the Third Congress. At issue here is merely the question of how to apply this and what methods to use.

The masses must be rallied for specific goals, while taking care not to conceal the revolutionary character of our actions as a whole. Comrade Lunacharsky explained, using a very apt turn of phrase, that it's necessary to unleash a broad minimalist workers' movement.<sup>6</sup> We are quite aware that this does not correspond very well to the thinking of those defending the Executive Committee's theses. Comrade Treint states that reform is the practical equivalent of revolution. To this we can only answer that assertions of this type represent distortions of the first order. We demand that assurances be provided regarding the practical implementation of the appeal to the masses. Further, we are in full agreement with the Executive Committee regarding the basis and the need for this course of action.

Italy, France, and Spain (for the Spanish comrades have also signed Comrade Terracini's motion) appeal to you, comrades: You must appreciate the deep ferment in our countries and bear that in mind. An attempt has been made

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5 Terracini is referring to Lenin's speech replying to him at the Third Comintern Congress in the debate on tactics and strategy. It can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 465–73; the reference to the Russian Revolution is on pp. 467–8.

6 For Lunacharsky's remarks on this, see p. 134.

to attribute the prevailing discontent in France to articles and statements by a few journalists or polemicists. But cause and effect should not be confused with each other. If the application of the December theses has generated discontent,<sup>7</sup> it arises precisely from the healthiest layers of communism.

Comrades, we hold it to be necessary, in the interests of winning the masses, for the Communist Party to retain its purity, its irreconcilability, and its revolutionary firmness. We can show that the unorganised and backward workers are joining the Communist Party because they instinctively feel that the party is defending the true interests of the proletariat and is holding high the banner of revolution.

We are firmly resolved to continue applying the Third Congress theses, but we do not see why this makes it necessary to establish any relations with the leaders of opponent parties. The proposed course of action offers only troubles and dangers. For this reason we are duty-bound to call on the International to take the necessary protective measures and to avoid the policy's consequences. Nonetheless, whatever decisions you take, we will submit to them, as is our Communist duty. The Communist Party of France will not take any step that could cause the slightest harm to the International and the Soviet republic.

**Zinoviev:** In my opinion, point 22 in the December theses is worth special attention. This thesis talks of rightist or even half-centrist groups [in Communist parties] that are marked by two main tendencies:

Some forces have really not broken with the ideology and methods of the Second International, have not freed themselves from reverence to its previous 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 policy of the 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.

Our three days of discussion have provided a good illustration of the correctness of thesis 22. In Germany, Levi was for the united front; now he and his entire little group have landed in the USPD. In France, Fabre understands the united front as meaning that he, like Levi, wants to join the Social Democracy.

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7 For the December 1921 theses on the united front, see pp. 254–64.

Similarly, Comrade Höglund in Sweden wants to apply the united front by sending birthday greetings to a Social Democrat from the Communist Party, saying, 'Perhaps I am mistaken, but still it seems to me that those gathered with you this evening represent an initial step toward a proletarian united front in our country.'

In thesis 21 we read:

In proposing this plan, the Executive Committee of the Communist International 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, 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 leaderships be distinguished by ideological clarity.

So we are aware of the dangers and have pointed them out.

I would now like to answer the Italian comrades. Let us consider the facts. In August 1921, our Italian party took the first practical step toward a united front. In December, the party's representative, Comrade Gennari, voted in the Executive Committee in favour of the theses. In Marseilles, Comrade Bordiga, a representative of the Italian party, spoke for the united front and against the French point of view. Now suddenly we see in this session of the Enlarged Executive Committee that the Italian comrades are making common cause with the French point of view, against which Bordiga polemicised. Comrade Gennari is repudiated, and they are stubbornly defending an absolutely untenable – indeed an absolutely contradictory point of view.

Terracini's entire philosophy is summed up in the statement, 'With D'Aragona yes, but with Turati no!' I read you Bordiga's telegram.<sup>8</sup> They are saying: Yes, we are for a common conference with the trade unionists, but we ask that the political tendencies within the trade unions be taken into account. I must ask: Is the party taking responsibility here? The Communist trade unions in Italy are a branch of their party. This distinction between the trade-union and political fields is completely untenable.

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<sup>8</sup> For the text of Bordiga's telegram, see p. 116.

In my opinion, instead of criticising the German party, the Italian party would do better to join in proposing a slogan for the establishment of a workers' government. Terracini is wrong in saying that every section can do what it wants. We are not the Second or the Two-and-a-Half International; we are the Third International. If you adopt the resolution and the Italian party submits to discipline, we will tell you to issue the slogan of the united front. It is childish of you to try to convince us that we are favouring Millerandism. Millerandism consists of a unification of a wing of the working class with the bourgeoisie.<sup>9</sup> What are we proposing? *A united front against the bourgeoisie.*

We are proposing a course of action aimed at separating the wavering figures of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals from the bourgeoisie, at least for a period of time. And how are we to respond to the question whether we take responsibility? We could say that, as Comrade Terracini has told us, we should wait. But our task consists not of waiting but of hastening the process of development. Have a look at Terracini's theses. Perhaps it's because of a poor translation or a general lack of clarity, but it is hard to understand what is meant here. The heart of their theses, point 5, reads:

The establishment of proletarian unity in action cannot be achieved through formal agreements between the political parties. They have a programme whose principles determine their tactical directives, whether this is with regard both to limited issues or to those of a general character, whose resolution is dependent on the theoretical principles on which the party is founded.

Every word of this is false. This proceeds from the concept that the party is a cloud in the sky, while the trade unions are something that live on this sinful earth. However, we poor Marxists think that the party is a component of the working class itself, and these workers do not live in heaven but on earth. The Italian party's error is based entirely on the concept that the unions should join in a united front, but the parties should not. Thesis 5 says that the parties are constrained by theory, but the unions are not constrained by anything. This only demonstrates what we say in our thesis 23, namely that the united-front slogan will enable us to force all parties to show their true colours. Some, like Höglund and Fabre, will show that they understand the united front as meaning

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<sup>9</sup> Millerandism refers to the practice of socialists taking posts in bourgeois governments. It is named after Alexandre Millerand, a leader of the French socialist movement who accepted a post in the French cabinet in 1899.

a reunified Social Democracy; others will demonstrate their total sectarianism. And that is what the Italian comrades have done.

Are you presenting the theory that the trade unions are neutral? In that case, you are in the Menshevik camp. The logic of the class struggle makes neutrality impossible. We say that there cannot be any principled difference between a united front on a trade-union and on a political basis. What's at stake is winning the masses. How can we do that if we let the Social Democrats off so easily?

Suppose that the Communists have five votes, and it depends on them whether a *workers' government* will be formed – true, one with a Social-Democratic coloration, but nonetheless a workers' government – or a bourgeois government. And the Communists opt for the bourgeois government. How will we justify that to the non-party workers? Terracini and Renoult say that they're totally in favour of winning the masses. Fine, but how do they think that will happen? Do you really think that the masses gather in a big street and we come to them and say, 'Good morning, masses; please come to us!' (*Laughter*) No, the masses are dispersed, they are in factories and shops, and also they are organised to some extent by other political parties. The masses have confidence in their halfway-bourgeois leaders. And we must not hit them over the head on this question of a workers' or bourgeois government by opting for the latter. Were we to carry out such a policy in Saxony and Thuringia, the masses would drive us away, and rightly so.

Now as to the French party. As I said, we well understand this party's difficulties. To be clear on the facts, we must acknowledge that the French party has taken an enormous step forward. We have here a party that wants to struggle and has already registered major successes. We are quite familiar with the major contributions of these comrades, of Comrade Cachin, for example, in his tireless work for the Russian Revolution and for the Communist International. Already the party has acquired enormous historical importance. I must acknowledge this all the more since the Social Democrats present our argument with the French comrades as if we were separated from them by a chasm. I am confident, however, that after the discussion here we will, in the end, arrive at agreement.

As for the arguments advanced by Comrade Renoult, as I have already said, the opposition of the French party gives voice to the views of the leftward-leaning masses. This is a good, revolutionary, and intransigent point of view. In France as nowhere else this is understandable. Nowhere else was the betrayal by the social patriots so shameless; nowhere else has so much mischief been carried out under various slogans of unity. This mood is a healthy one. But when this mood leads us to misinterpret the Communist International's entire course of action, this poses a danger. Comrade Renoult stressed that there is an inner

movement in the masses, an 'emotion', as he put it.<sup>10</sup> Where does it come from? I can well understand that this emotion is aroused, given that for two months there have been daily articles on the united front in the party's leading newspaper presenting it as a bloc with Briand. Given the temperament of French workers, I am surprised that enthusiasts did not come here from Paris to break our windows.

Comrade Renoult declares that this policy would lead to a breach with the best syndicalist forces. I maintain that this will not happen. We must not carry out an ostrich policy. The Unitary CGT is not yet our organisation. It does not yet want to have anything to do with the Red International of Labour Unions, the Communist International, or official relationships with the French Communist Party. Nonetheless, it is a revolutionary organisation, and we must win it over.

I have here an article by Comrade Frossard in which he says, 'We are talking of unity. Well, now we have an opportunity to achieve this unity in order to win for the workers an important reform – the eight-hour day.'<sup>11</sup> Well said, Comrade Frossard! But we must be able to go forward consistently to the end. If such a position is possible with regard to the eight-hour day, it must be possible in other questions as well. Another article by Frossard is entitled 'Workers' Unity in Spite of Everything'. Doesn't that amount to simply a united front? It is an untenable situation when our best party leaders, like Comrade Frossard, write with one hand an article like 'Workers' Unity in Spite of Everything' and then, with the other, write an article saying that under no conditions do we want a united front; it would mean going to the Social Democrats, and so on.<sup>12</sup>

Comrade Renoult spoke in particular detail about the relationship of the masses and the leaders [*chefs*]. Comrades, you can draw your own conclusions as to whether we are really so fond of these *chefs*. But the question has political significance. The masses are tied to their leaders. Separating them from these leaders – there is the challenge. We have just spoken about how this can be done. And then you tell us, 'Yes, agreed we want to go with the masses, but not with the leaders.' You are ignoring the difficulties, and that is no way to resolve them.

The comrades in France tell us that the Longuet group is just the same as the Levi group. That is an important point. But if this is the case, we must consider

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 120–1.

<sup>11</sup> Frossard, 'L'offensive contre les huit heures', in *L'Humanité*, 11 February 1922.

<sup>12</sup> The article 'Unité quand même!' that Zinoviev cites was written by Monmousseau, not Frossard, and was published in *La Vie ouvrière* (10 February 1922).

how we can modify somewhat our course of action in France. We are not going to turn to Levi in Germany, because he has no masses behind him. Imagine that the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals were to tell us, 'Good, we will form a united front with you, but only on the condition that it includes Levi.' (I do not think this will happen, because for now Scheidemann has no more use for Levi than we do.) Do you think we would turn them down because of Levi's presence? That applies to France as well.

Now I come to the heart of the matter. We are being asked: why a conference [of the three Internationals] so quickly and so suddenly? I must say that I was also at first against speeding things up. But this was not decided by us alone. The Genoa Conference is an international political issue. A proposal was made by Amsterdam, by Stauning – previously a minister and now leader of the Social Democrats in Denmark – to convene a conference. A proposal came from the Two-and-a-Half International, and we cannot ignore this.

Often the comrades tell us sincerely, 'We have to save the Soviet republic.' Comrades, don't save us; save yourselves! Save the working class of your country! I am not saying that our situation is wonderful. But when we consider the international situation, we tell you frankly: there is no need for you to be so frightened. We are advising you to raise the slogan of the workers' government not because this will be helpful for Moscow, for the Russian government, but because it will be helpful for the Italian party, and thereby, indirectly, for the Russian working class and the entire Communist International. The [international] conference came up not for our sake or for that of the Soviet government, but rather in the interests of the entire workers' movement.

This is a situation where we can back the Social Democrats against the wall and ask them: united front with the bourgeoisie or with the workers and Communists? A united front with the imperialists or with the Communists? In 1919 we would have rejected the invitation, because the situation in Italy and other countries was such as to lead us to hope for an early victory. We were right at that time to boycott the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. Now the situation has changed. Now we must agree to the conference and say: yes, we will go.

What will we gain from this? That is the question most frequently posed. Granted, we cannot know all the details in advance. We have a whole array of demands that are extremely popular among the broad masses of the working class. We must formulate them. That will be a turnabout of sorts for the Social Democrats, who will agree to many demands that they are unable to carry out. We will take them at their word.

That is the initial perspective. Then we come to demands of an international character, such as how to prevent new wars and how we should com-

bat them. We will present our viewpoint. Our task is to present it in terms so that an ordinary worker will understand that his interests are identical with ours.

I am convinced that many comrades still have the feeling, 'This is all very well, but earlier we were told something different. Probably there are special factors at work here, Genoa, Chicherin, and so on.' I would like to quote to you from a work written when Genoa did not yet exist as a political factor. Here is what Lenin said:

Our theory is not a dogma, but a *guide to action*, said Marx and Engels. The greatest blunder, the greatest crime, committed by such 'out-and-out' Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc., is that they have not understood this and have been unable to apply it at crucial moments of the proletarian revolution.

He continues:

Prior to the downfall of tsarism, the Russian revolutionary Social Democrats made repeated use of the services of the bourgeois liberals, i.e., they concluded numerous practical compromises with the latter. In 1901–2, even prior to the appearance of Bolshevism, the old editorial board of *Iskra* (consisting of Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, Martov, Potresov, and myself) concluded (not for long, it is true) a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism, while at the same time being able to wage an unrelenting and most merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois liberalism and against the slightest manifestation of its influence in the working-class movement. The Bolsheviks have always adhered to this policy. Since 1905 they have systematically advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, against the liberal bourgeoisie and tsarism, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against tsarism (for instance, during second rounds of elections, or during second ballots) and never ceasing their relentless ideological and political struggle against the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the bourgeois-revolutionary peasant party, exposing them as petty-bourgeois democrats who have falsely described themselves as socialists.<sup>13</sup>

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13 Lenin, 'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *LCW*, 31, pp. 71–2.

And Lenin goes on to explain how we concluded agreements with the Mensheviks in 1917, just as we did in 1911 and 1912, and how even after the October Revolution we made concessions to the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We must have the support not only of the working-class vanguard but of a genuine majority of the worker masses. Lenin writes:

Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, which has been confirmed with compelling force and vividness, not only in Russia but in Germany as well. To turn resolutely towards communism, it was necessary, not only for the ignorant and often illiterate masses of Russia, but also for the literate and well-educated masses of Germany, to realise from their own bitter experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, and the utter vileness of the government of the paladins of the Second International; they had to realise that a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia; Kapp and company in Germany) is inevitably the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat. The immediate objective of the class-conscious vanguard of the international working-class movement, i.e., the Communist parties, groups and trends, is to be able to *lead* the broad masses (who are still, for the most part, apathetic, inert, dormant, and convention-ridden) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead, *not only* their own party but also these masses in their advance and transition to the new position. While the first historical objective (that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not have been reached without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second and immediate objective, which consists in being able to lead the *masses* to a new position ensuring the victory of the vanguard in the revolution, cannot be reached without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors.<sup>14</sup>

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14 Lenin, *'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, LCW, 31, p. 93.

I believe this stands as evidence that our proposed course of action is correct. We have a correct theory, Marxism – and if we master it, this theory will serve as the engine driving forward our work. Historical development is on our side. And the outcome of our four-day debate must therefore be that we join with our French and Italian comrades in adopting the united-front policy. We must do everything possible to make it easier for them to carry out the policies of the Communist International in their own country. What Comrade Renoult has said about party discipline is commendable. But it is a matter not of formal discipline but of formulating a unified line and carrying it out. I am convinced that three months from now, or at most six months from now, there will no longer be a single section that has not recognised how right we were. The only missing factor for the proletarian revolution is the masses. We have the best line of march to tie the masses to the banner of communism. We have a favourable historical situation, and we must utilise it. Half a year from now, or at the most a year from now, we will be in the presence of a large Communist workers' party in every country, and with that the world revolution is already half-achieved.

***Statement to the Conference by Treint***

*(The following statement was read by Kolarov:)*

A passage in my speech yesterday on the united front could be misinterpreted, and this prompts me to specify the meaning of my statement more precisely.

I had no intention of belittling the importance of propaganda within the party. But I believe that there are certain limits to the propagation of the overall ideas of communism. These ideas find an audience not among the masses of the proletariat but rather among only a limited audience of Communists and sympathisers.

After this limit has been reached, purely Communist propaganda does not extend the party's influence among new proletarian masses.

It was in this sense that I counterposed in a condensed formula the relative sterility of propaganda to the fruitfulness of united-front policy, whose role is to draw the backward masses of the proletariat into class action.

*(signed:) Treint*

**Zinoviev:** In order to come to an understanding with comrades of the opposition, I propose that a commission be chosen without holding a vote, in order to undertake an effort to come to an agreement with the comrades concerned.

The Presidium proposes the following comrades: Cachin, Renoult, Mac-Manus, Walecki, Burian, Carr, and Dimitri Popov. In addition, Wertheim of the Austrian delegation and González of the Spanish delegation have been proposed.

**Kolarov:** I propose that all comrades who are part of the opposition be allowed to take part in sittings of the commission, even if they do not belong to it.

*(After a brief discussion, the proposal of the Presidium to set up a commission was adopted. A list of fourteen delegates plus an Austrian and a Spanish comrade was accepted. In addition, on the Presidium's proposal, Comrade Métayer was elected to the commission, since he, according to Comrade Zinoviev, represents a distinctive nuance regarding the French question.)*

### The Case of the 'Workers' Opposition'<sup>15</sup>

*(At this point two letters are read out.)*

To members of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Comintern

Dear comrades,

We read in the press that the Executive Committee of the Communist International is taking up the question of the united front, and we consider it our Communist duty to inform you that in our own country all is not well in this regard, not only in the broad sense of the united front, but within our own ranks.

At this time the bourgeoisie is exerting pressure on us from every side, and this affects our party too, all the more given our social composition: 40 per cent workers and 60 per cent non-proletarians. Our party's leading bodies are carrying on an irreconcilable struggle against all those, especially proletarians, who have the courage to express their own views, and even make use of forms of repression within party circles against those expressing such views. This is demoralising for the party.

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<sup>15</sup> The Workers' Opposition was a group within the Russian CP among whose leaders were Aleksandr Shlyapnikov, Alexandra Kollontai, and S.P. Medvedev. Formed in September 1920, it called for trade-union control of industrial production and greater autonomy for CP fractions in the unions. After its position was rejected by the Tenth CP Congress in March 1921, the Workers' Opposition subsequently raised criticisms of measures adopted related to the introduction of the NEP. Following its censure at the party's Eleventh Congress in March–April 1922, the Workers' Opposition ceased organised activity.

Efforts to draw the proletarian masses closer to the state are branded as anarcho-syndicalist, and supporters of these efforts are disciplined and discredited.

In the trade unions it is no different: independence and initiative is repressed, while a many-sided struggle is waged against those with different ideas.

The united forces of the party and trade-union bureaucracy, utilising their power and position, ignore the decisions of our party congresses. Our trade-union cells and fractions at congresses are robbed of the right to express their will with regard to carrying out the principle of workers' democracy with regard to electing trade-union leaderships. The bureaucracy's pressure and paternalism are so great that party members are instructed, under threat of expulsion and other reprisals, to vote not for candidates proposed by Communists themselves but those favoured by intriguers.

Such methods of work promote the development of careerism, intrigue, and servility, and workers respond to these methods by leaving the party.

While accepting the united front as proposed in thesis 23,<sup>16</sup> we turn to you, impelled by our sincere wish to put an end to all these anomalies in our party, which obstruct the road to the united front within the ranks of the Russian Communist Party. The situation in our party is so grave that we are compelled to ask for your help and thereby head off the danger of a splintering of our party.

With communist greetings,

M. Lobanov (1904); N. Kuznetsov (1904); A. Polosatov (1912); A. Medvedev (1912); G. Miasnikov (1906); V. Pleshkov (1918); G. Shokhanov (1912); S. Medvedev (1900); A. Pravdin (1899); M. Burolin (1917); I. Ivanov (1899); F. Mitin (1902); P. Borisov (1913); Kopylov (1912); Zhilin (1919); Chelyshev (1914); A. Tolokontsev (1914); A. Shlyapnikov (1901); G. Bruno (1906); V. Bekrenev (1907); A. Pavlov (1917); A. Tashkin (1917).

Plus the added names of A. Kollontai (1898); Zoia Shadurskaia.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See p. 263.

<sup>17</sup> The years given indicate the date when each signatory joined the party. In the German text, each person's party membership number is also included. The present text follows the French-language proceedings, which omits these numbers, including only their names and the year they joined the party.

*Reply by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party*

To the enlarged session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International:

The Political Bureau of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee has received a copy of the appeal by 22 RCP members to the enlarged plenum of the ECCI. The Central Committee considers, of course, that any group of party members has the right to submit a complaint to the Communist International's highest body. The Central Committee is prepared to present a full explanation of the real nature of this appeal by 22 persons and of the questions in dispute, which they have distorted. We can do this to the conference or to a special commission, if the conference holds the election of such a commission to be necessary.

For now, pending a decision by the ECCI, the Central Committee will limit itself to supplying the full text of the resolution on party unity and the anarcho-syndicalist current by the Tenth Congress of the RCP, held 8–16 March 1921.<sup>18</sup> All 22 comrades (Miasnikov was expelled from the party for systematic breaches of party discipline) were members of the group, which the Tenth Congress unanimously condemned for its tendency to anarcho-syndicalism.

On behalf of the RCP Central Committee: *Trotsky, Zinoviev.*

Appended: Resolutions of the RCP Tenth Congress on party unity and the anarcho-syndicalist current.

**Brandler:** Given the exceptionally important role that the Communist Party of Russia plays in the International, I propose the establishment of a commission to report on the question of the Russian party.

*(A commission was elected, consisting of Comrades Clara Zetkin, Cachin, Kreibich, Kolarov, Friis, Terracini, MacManus.)*

**Stanič:** *(Reported on the basis of a telegram from Yugoslavia on the trial in Zuzla, where 16 Communists were convicted, and another in Belgrade, which ended in the conviction of 14 comrades.)* I propose that the Presidium draft a protest resolution against the machinations of the white terror and bourgeois reaction

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18 A reference to the resolutions 'On Party Unity' and 'On the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party', both drafted by Lenin and approved by the Tenth RCP Congress. Lenin's draft resolutions and his report to the congress on them can be found in *LCW*, 32, pp. 241–60.

not only in Yugoslavia but wherever white terror rages, as in Romania, Greece, Poland, and Finland.

*(The proposal is adopted.)*<sup>19</sup>

*(The session is adjourned at 6:15 p.m.)*

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<sup>19</sup> For the Resolution against the White Terror, see pp. 245–7.

## Trade Unions

*Reports on the trade-union question.*

*Chair: Kolarov.*

*Speakers: Zinoviev, Bokányi, Lozovsky, Brandler.*

**Zinoviev:** We have present with us in this hall a delegation of Hungarian comrades who have been released from the prisons of white Hungary and arrived in Moscow yesterday. These are comrades who conducted themselves heroically and also acted as revolutionary fighters during the trial.

*(Bokányi of the Hungarian delegation was given the floor. He eloquently greeted the Russian workers and the Third International. The session then moved to the next point on the agenda.)*

### Reports on Trade-Union Question

**Lozovsky:** I will speak first of the trade-union question's general importance. The provisional council of trade-union federations, established on 15 June 1920 at the trade-union Zimmerwald, did not at first have a clear programme. The first congress of revolutionary trade unions was held in Moscow 3–19 July 1921. It laid the foundation stone of the great trade-union international.<sup>1</sup>

In building the Red International of Labour Unions there has been a contradiction from the outset. It includes, on the one hand, entire organisations, as in Russia, Yugoslavia, and Spain and, on the other hand, minorities in the old reformist organisations. It consists of four currents:

1.) A rather large number of Communists, who have a precise and clearly defined programme.

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to the July 1921 founding congress of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU, also referred to as the Profintern, based on its name in Russian). The 'provisional council' formed in June 1920 was the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions.

By referring to 'the trade-union Zimmerwald', Lozovsky seems to be saying that the preliminary June 1920 meeting led to the formation of the RILU just as the 1915 Zimmerwald Conference led to the eventual formation of the Communist International. For Zimmerwald itself, see p. 529, n. 2.

2.) Revolutionary syndicalists, who have learned a great deal from the war and the revolution and who seek, just like the anarchists, to create a bloc of all revolutionary forces.

3.) The far left wing of anarcho-syndicalism, which has nothing in common with the Communist International and seeks to build a purely trade-union organisation on the basis of anarchism and syndicalism.

4.) The fourth current is championed by representatives of the Italian workers' federation. Comrades Bianchi and Azimonti criticised the viewpoint of the left reformists rather fully on behalf of the Italian confederation.

These four currents clashed at the first [RILU] congress. The difficulties have not yet been overcome. The first difficulty was raised by our French comrades, the Communists and the revolutionary syndicalists, who – still unaware of the congress decision – demanded complete independence, autonomy for the federations, and the immediate convocation of a special congress. Their viewpoint reflected the old syndicalist theory based on the Amiens Charter, a lady of rather advanced age. This unfortunate Amiens Charter is, as you know, a bible for our French syndicalists.<sup>2</sup> Taking their stand on this bible, the syndicalists launched an opposition against the trade-union International.

In the French CP we see an unusual and peculiarly French drama: Communists, party members, defend this Amiens Charter in their party's main newspaper, argue for complete union independence from the party and, in general, for the slogan of trade-union independence, which is a purely anarchist and anti-Communist notion. The party has done nothing to mount an opposition to this work in the organisation and to defend the concept of a bloc of syndicalists and Communists. The party remained neutral and waited upon events, leaving it up to Moscow to resolve the problem. Only on the eve of the Marseilles Congress did an article on the trade-union movement appear in *L'Humanité*.

The trade-union movement of France is dominated by an anarchist theory that goes by the imprecise designation of 'absolute independence'. This theory, coming from syndicalism of the past, goes roughly as follows: Trade unions will prepare the revolution, carry it out, and bring about its results. That is more or less the theory that you can fish out of numerous pamphlets, books, and articles dealing with revolutionary syndicalism.

There is another interesting phenomenon in France: not only do revolutionary syndicalists and some party members adhere to the Amiens Charter, but

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<sup>2</sup> Adopted by the French General Confederation of Labour (CGT) in 1906, the Amiens Charter was a programmatic platform for revolutionary syndicalism. For the text, see Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, p. 607.

leaders of the reformist workers' confederation like Jouhaux and Merrheim cling to it too. Revolutionary syndicalism in France is presently gathered in the Unitary CGT, which opposes the reformist CGT but is lacking in programmatic clarity and tactical precision. The anarchist ideology of freedom is still dominant there. That poses a great danger for the workers' movement, since these abstract, anarchist, and metaphysical ideas could lead the Unitary CGT to destruction. At its most recent congress, the Unitary CGT adopted a resolution against the Red International of Labour Unions, declining to join it and adopting a waiting stance, which consists of not speaking out clearly either for it or against it.<sup>3</sup>

In Italy the syndicalists have split into two segments, and two currents can now be perceived in the syndicalist federation there. One favours building a bloc of syndicalists and Communists on the basis of practical work. The other current defends the same theory as do the French syndicalists afflicted with a sickly anarchism. A battle between these two currents is under way within the *Unione Syndicale Italiana*. This body has spoken out in favour of joining the *Profintern*, in principle, although it also decided at the same time not to send delegates to the *RILU's* Executive Committee. Yet another current then took shape whose programme is as follows: (1) defence of revolutionary syndicalism; (2) immediate affiliation to the *Profintern*; (3) application of the agreements recently concluded in Moscow between the Italian syndicalists and Communists. This current is also present in Spain.

As for other countries, Argentina should also be mentioned, where there are also two currents. One is for immediate affiliation, and the other is for affiliation subject to certain preconditions. The latter group, which is very small, favours founding a syndicalist International. We recently received news from Argentina that a unification congress had been convened there and that anarchists and syndicalists had already agreed on the same statutes.

In order to give you a complete picture of all the currents present in the revolutionary trade-union movement, the situation within the *IWW* must also be mentioned. This organisation is opposed to our decisions because the *IWW* is also against any organisational ties between the revolutionary trade-union movement and the Communist International.<sup>4</sup> Recently a faction was formed in the *IWW* led by Comrade Hardy, which has begun to publish a periodical,

3 A reference to the CGTU's Unity Congress of 22–24 December 1921.

4 The *IWW* had sent an official delegate to the *RILU's* First Congress in 1921, although he was an opponent of Communism and the *Profintern's* perspective. Several other *IWW* delegates had also been sent by their local unions. *IWW* founding leader Bill Haywood was also present. See Williams 1921, pp. 3–6, and Tosstorff 2004, pp. 318–19.

*Unity Bulletin*. This faction is by and large for unconditional affiliation to the Profintern. The same currents for and against the Profintern can be found in the other countries.

In many countries we have rather significant minorities whose presence continually raises the question of how we can win over the trade unions. This question is posed differently in different countries. We can see that the minority in Germany, the United States, and Italy is constantly growing and that our influence is increasing, despite all the negative efforts.

Britain offers an example of the difficulties facing the Profintern. Here the enormous trade-union movement with more than eight million members is experiencing a severe crisis. A current has taken shape that, to be true, is not Communist, but has an outspoken oppositional character. The largest trade-union organisation, the Federation of Miners, is striking proof of the new oppositional and revolutionary movement. What is interesting here is that the Federation of South Wales, with 190,000 members, has called for affiliation to the Profintern. The British Communist Party's trade-union wing is unfortunately not yet strong enough to unite these oppositional movements, and in this regard much still needs to be done.

In Germany we have an extended trade-union movement with about nine million members. Communist cells and groups are present in the old federations, and the KPD, which has 300,000 members at present, has influence in unions with about 2.5 million to 3 million members.

The Italian General Confederation of Labour is against us, but a minority is steadily growing in its ranks which is now estimated to represent a third of the organisation as a whole. The oppositional group is extremely active, and the Communist Party's influence in the unions is growing more and more.

There is an interesting situation in the land of Gompers, the United States. The movement to create a left-oriented bloc is growing there with every passing day, and the main beneficiary of this is without doubt the Comintern. Although this bloc has not yet come into being, our American comrades are well on the way to achieving this, and that alone signifies a big step forward.

We can confidently say that there is no country in the world where we do not now already have significant influence. The countries that are new to the trade-union movement are drawn directly to us, as in Australia, where, among 650,000 workers, 500,000 are already affiliated to the Profintern. So too are the majority of the newly organised working class in New Zealand and Java.

Many comrades ask regarding the two Internationals, Amsterdam and the Red International of Labour Unions: What is the strength of each of them? The Amsterdam International is *not an International* but simply an amalgam of the national conservative currents in the working class. Its strength is sig-

nificantly overestimated. In France, for example, it was said in 1921 to have 1.5 million, while in fact the reformist CGT has at most 200,000 members. A scholar once said, 'Statistics is an art,' and the Amsterdamers are showing themselves to be statistical artists. Nonetheless, Amsterdam represents a force, because four organisations stand behind it: in Germany, Austria, Britain, and Belgium. The Amsterdamers do not represent an International of any significance because in attempts at united action, national interests have always outweighed international ones. As a result of this situation, the Amsterdam International is a factory of resolutions but not an organisation of struggle. Characteristic of this situation is the conflict that occasionally breaks out over the question of the trade-union federations of Upper Silesia. Here it is evident that the Amsterdam International is made up of nationalist tendencies.<sup>5</sup>

We have devoted special attention to our work in organising along industrial lines. Besides the Amsterdam International there are, as you know, 25 industrial organisations. The Amsterdamers had resolved that no trade-union federation belonging to the Profintern can belong to an international industrial organisation. Thus the international federation of printers, for example, expelled representatives of the Russian printers' union. Our first international trade-union congress decided to create special propaganda committees in each branch of production. Some of these committees already include the majority of federations in their branch of production. In the wood industry, federations of Russia, Italy, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Alsace-Lorraine, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Norway have a revolutionary position. Among the transport workers we have close to half; we have many revolutionary railway workers, seamen, and so on. Right now we are witnessing the working masses as a whole turning to revolution because of the fierce attacks of capitalism.

It is often said, particularly now, that the Red International of Labour Unions was a good idea generally speaking but was born too soon or too late. That is Paul Levi's view. This liquidationist tendency found conspicuous expression in the KPD, and that carried over into the Communist International.<sup>6</sup> The

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5 For a description of the trade-union movement in Upper Silesia, see the report to the Third World Congress by Rwal (Reicher) in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 712–15.

6 At the Fourth Comintern Congress several months later, Zinoviev reported, '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. 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.'

crisis in the KPD led to the foundation of the KAG, whose programme included the struggle against the Red International of Labour Unions. The demand for liquidation of the RILU also found support in the German party, and in the most recent Central Committee meeting Friesland and others presented a resolution stating, 'The activity of the Red International of Labour Unions led to a split in the trade-union movement and to dangerous contradictions.' Levi's supporters maintain that the Communists split the trade-union movement, although they know that we made the greatest efforts in every country to maintain unity. Where there were splits, this was the work of the Amsterdamers. The Levi people are treating the Red International of Labour Unions question as a political manoeuvre. They want to deal the Communist International a blow, for the Red International of Labour Unions is a giant reservoir out of which communism gathers new forces for the struggle against capitalism.

In addition to this openly liquidationist current there is also another that finds expression in vacillation, as in Norway, Czechoslovakia, and so on. There are comrades who say that the Red International of Labour Unions must be liquidated because the Amsterdam International is becoming daily more revolutionary, it is doing all it can to aid Russia, it has published revolutionary appeals, and so on. And if it continues along these lines the RILU is superfluous. But despite such revolutionary words, the Amsterdam International's posture remains reactionary.

Where do we stand regarding the *united front*? In every country we have done everything we possibly could to maintain unity. When we saw that the French trade-union movement was headed toward a split, we made a proposal to the Amsterdamers for a conference with representatives of the Red International of Labour Unions and both French trade-union currents. They rejected this and clamoured about our intentions to split.

In all our exchanges with the Amsterdamers we have always said that we are ready to remain a minority in every organisation, but if we have the majority, we are not prepared to leave the others in charge. That is why the Amsterdamers are against us, making such a racket trying to destroy the RILU.

It would be absurd to conceal that the Red International of Labour Unions has encountered great difficulties, but this is no less true of the Communist International. The working class is currently undergoing a crisis in every country; it is the target of a huge capitalist offensive. But despite this offensive, the workers' movement continues to press forward. Without excess optimism we

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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.' In Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 115.

can state that within one to two years we will have the majority in the trade-union movement, even though the trade-union International has existed for only six months and it is hard for our resolutions to reach distant countries. Objective conditions are favourable for the trade-union International to go forward, because the capitalist world is moving toward revolution. The Red International of Labour Unions is body and soul with the Communist International. It is a reservoir of the broad working masses from which the Comintern recruits its supporters.

**Brandler:** Comrades, in speaking about Communists' tasks and course of action in the trade unions, I have nothing fundamentally new to contribute that was not already taken up at past congresses of the Communist International. What is at issue now is only the fact that a new stage is being added to those that we have experienced in the past, corresponding to the fact that our influence in the trade unions has grown.

There is still a group of comrades who are of the opinion that Communist trade-union work consists of finding a special formula, a unique way to carry out this work.

That is an error. Our task in the trade unions is to win the masses for a revolutionary struggle for power. The task is simply to link up with the various forms that trade-union work have taken in life in order to get beyond those forms in revolutionary struggle. There are comrades who believe that we have the working class on one side, which can be brought together and united through some miraculous means, and on the other side the unified bourgeoisie. In reality there are contradictions within both classes. It would be absurd not to take advantage of the contradictions within the bourgeois camp. We also have contradictions within the proletariat. The task of Communists is to carry out their trade-union work in such a way as to overcome these contradictions in order to engage the forces of a united working class against the bourgeoisie.

In the last six months the question has arisen in various countries of whether the Profintern has any right to exist. The Profintern seeks a unification of working masses who are prepared to struggle and to defend themselves against the increasing pressure of the employers, a unity that includes syndicalists or oppositionists in the Amsterdam camp who are not yet Communists. We Communists know that in the present situation every significant economic struggle can broaden into a struggle for power. We must be aware of these implications at the outset of major struggle.

I'd like to refer to the example of the *national union of railway workers* in Germany, which was a solid prop of the German bourgeoisie and state. It entered into struggle around purely wage demands and lost out because of its fear of

this battle's political implications. And yet the strike of these workers, petty-bourgeois in their ideas, became one of the most important *political events* in Germany in recent years. The leaders maintain that the principle of political 'neutrality' proved in this strike to be correct. That shows only that they have still not learned anything new.

When our syndicalist friends resist joining the Red International of Labour Unions and propose revolutionary slogans in place of revolutionary action, they are consciously or unconsciously acting for the counterrevolution.

We have to take into account four different levels of possibility for struggle.

In the countries of the Far East – in India, Java, and Japan – a powerful trade-union movement exists that is quite similar to the first beginnings of this movement as a whole. This movement has great revolutionary significance. We must engage intensively with the movement of these countries, which will acquire great importance as a reserve for the world revolution in Europe, and we have an immediate interest in assisting our class brothers in these countries.

In the war's victor countries, above all those whose currencies are strong, the state emerged from all the earthquakes of the war still firmly in the hands of the bourgeoisie that had won out on the battlefield. Here the task is to utilise the increasing disintegration of the old social structure – unemployment, wage reductions, and the like – in order to consolidate revolutionary cadres in the struggle for leadership of the proletariat.

In Germany and the other vanquished countries, making the trade unions into instruments of struggle to shift the burdens that weigh on the proletariat onto the bourgeoisie is increasingly a matter of life and death for broad masses.

In Russia, in addition to the difficult tasks previously faced by the trade unions, they must be an active force in building a communist economic structure and in organising the struggle against private employers. The developing class contradictions drove the proletariat to class struggle.

So we see three different forms of the workers' movement, corresponding to capitalism's level of development in Western European countries. In Britain, a form has developed that even today makes it enormously difficult to create a party of the proletarian class. Only economic struggle was conducted. Thus the British trade unions developed, and since the British proletariat was able to utilise the division of its bourgeoisie into two counterposed parties to entrench the gains achieved in its economic struggle, it was not possible for a strong political party of the workers to take shape. In France, the land of finance capital, Proudhonism developed, after Blanquism had shattered against the bourgeoisie's power. The workers were betrayed by every political party – first, in the period where they were following in the wake of the radical-bourgeois parties, and then in the Social Democracy, where Briand, Millerand, and Hervé

utilised the working class as a springboard for their political careers. That is why the workers came to adopt an anti-political stance. It is no accident that the workers are even today suffering from that. Our work in the French trade unions focuses on the question of the party. The party must be truly Communist, truly revolutionary to win the confidence of the mistrustful syndicalists. Particularly with regard to France, the International has encountered reservations that undoubtedly show that things cannot continue like this. The disagreements on the united front are thus no accident. It is no accident that in France, in the trade-union question, we face a complete mess, and that's why trade-union work in France is particularly difficult.

In Germany and in other countries where the proletariat is more imbued by a revolutionary will, the disintegration of the trade unions has not proceeded so far. Nowhere has the conflict between the Amsterdamers and the Red International of Labour Unions been as fierce as in Germany, and yet this has not led the unions to disintegrate. The KPD in Germany works in the spirit of the Profintern in order to revolutionise the workers who belong to unions. Quantitatively, this is probably the greatest component of what is being done today by the Communist International. We can say without exaggeration that in Germany hundreds of meetings take place every day in which work is being carried out in the spirit of the Profintern, with varying degrees of consciousness and organisation by the Communists. Communist influence in the unions in Germany would be even stronger than it is today if it were not for vacillations in the KPD's trade-union policy.

The fact that liquidationist tendencies have cropped up in Germany is no accident. We note that the same persons who, in the first days of spontaneous revolutionary struggle in 1918 and 1919 were for split and for the founding of new trade unions, are now in the camp of the liquidators, with Levi. Within the Communist Party, Levi himself was the father of the notion of syndicalist unions.<sup>7</sup> Hauth was one of those who was founding new unions right up to the Heidelberg Congress of 1919 and who wanted to split the old ones.<sup>8</sup> Neither Levi nor the others had sufficiently close ties to the unions. Their policy swung back

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7 After the First World War, anarcho-syndicalist and Left Communist forces began to create a new type of workplace organisation, termed *Unionen*, which combined party and union functions and were counterposed to the conventional unions, known in German as *Gewerkschaften*. To reflect this distinction, *Unionen* is translated here as 'syndicalist unions'.

8 In 1919 Wilhelm Hauth was a leader of the current in the KPD then aligned with Paul Levi's perspective. The KPD's Heidelberg Congress of 20–24 October 1919 was the scene of a struggle with leftists who wanted to smash the old unions; many of these leftists went on to form the KAPD.

and forth. In 1918–19, the perspective of winning over the unions was too slow for them; they wanted to smash the unions. Today, when this process has turned out to be too extended, they want to do without Communist activity in the unions and are advocating the liquidation of the Profintern and the Communist parties as a whole.

In Germany the elemental impulse to unify the struggle against the employers is enormously strong, just as is the poverty of the proletariat. This leads many to the viewpoint that it is best not to interfere with this impulse through Communist criticism; that we must achieve unity at all costs. We are for unity, but not unity at all costs. Unity is only useful when the workers, in their majority, gain insight into the correct road forward. Old scoundrels like Grassmann, Jouhaux, Appleton, and the like are not impressed by our fine revolutionary speeches. What impresses them is a really strong Red International of Labour Unions, a strong Communist Party.

In 1920, as the Red Army advanced toward Warsaw, we published a unified appeal to the German proletariat. There were some who regarded this as a dangerous fall from grace into opportunism and reformism. Well, in addition to the united appeal, we published a special statement that said, most politely, that the leaders of the SPD, USPD, and trade unions (ADGB) would continue to betray the workers in all their struggles in the same way as before, unless the workers were vigilant. Of course the SPD, USPD, and ADGB pounced on us. But the workers mobilised. In the March Action,<sup>9</sup> when they thought they had battered us down, it was not we who rejected united action but the SPD, USPD, and ADGB. Then came the hunger strike of the political prisoners.<sup>10</sup> Influenced by our strengthened trade-union work, renewed and tumultuous conferences of factory committees took place.

The ADGB, SPD, and USPD were still shouting, 'No unity with the Communists!' But then we saw that the USPD, under pressure from deputations, suddenly declared its readiness and invited the Communists to discuss jointly with them. They came to the factory committees' conference, and the ADGB declined to do so with a lengthy, polite letter. It is significant how, under the pressure of events, the USPD was pulled along by the hair and led to declare

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9 The March Action of 1921 was an attempt by the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany, with support from some within the Comintern leadership, to turn a defensive proletarian battle into a general strike and spark a revolutionary uprising through the efforts of a determined minority. The adventure failed and the German proletariat and Communist movement suffered a major defeat. The adventurist thrust of the action was criticised by the Comintern's Third Congress.

10 For the November 1921 Lichtenburg hunger strike, see p. 65, n. 9.

its readiness to collaborate. This indicates, in my opinion, that resolute trade-union work that succeeds in linking up with all daily economic and political events will not be in vain.

It is dangerous to toy with the idea of unifying wage movements in individual countries. What does that concept mean? Surely unifying wage movements broadens the base of struggle. Under what conditions can we draw larger masses of workers into the struggle by raising wage demands? In my opinion, we must draw a distinction here between countries where the currency is strong and those where it is weak. In the first group – the United States, Britain, and Switzerland – it will be possible and advantageous to unify the workers defensively for common resistance to wage reductions, but this unification will be advantageous only if the wage struggles in categories that are important for industry – like the railroads, the mines – are linked with wage struggles in less important categories like construction and the wood industry.

In countries where the currency is weak, like Germany, such a unification can be successful only in the brief periods of apparent boom, when the employers do not want to undertake a struggle.

Our experience in Germany with the slogan of unifying wage movements shows that pure and simple wage struggles do not achieve their goal. In Germany, a wage increase of – let us say – 30 to 40 *pfennigs* is quickly cancelled out by the decline in the mark's purchasing power during the same period. Under such conditions, broad masses of workers cannot be mobilised and led into struggle for the goal of wage increases alone. The goal of the struggle is totally out of proportion to the effort required to conduct it. In the case of the dockworkers in Bremen and the metalworkers in Rhineland-Westphalia, the employers split the workers, and all the talk about solidarity got us nowhere.

Revolutionising the trade unions consists of addressing workers' daily suffering by drawing them into struggles that go beyond usual simple wage issues. In Switzerland, France, and all the countries marked by a mounting employer offensive, the struggle against taxes will not disappear from the immediate agenda. The trade unions have the task of countering taxes and inflation systematically and on an international scale. They should not limit themselves to wage struggles but also take up, as specific goals of struggle, price controls and shifting the burdens onto the bourgeoisie.

If we want to bring revolutionary-minded workers into the struggle around their specific vital needs and consciously extend Communist influence to these struggles, in terms of both their quantity and quality, we have to draw the organisational conclusions. We must remain in the national federations. If comrades regard this as contradicting our overall policy, they forget the decisive and cru-

cial distinction.<sup>11</sup> We are against leaving the trade unions to avoid having the forces caught up in revolutionary ferment from becoming isolated from the rest of the working masses. We are for splitting from the Amsterdam clique of leaders because we are uniting the revolutionary masses of workers who have perceived the betrayal of the leaders, in order to deprive this bankrupt clique of the sounding board for their services to the bourgeoisie.

Once we have gained the support of a majority in a country's trade unions, we must reorganise them. We must convert them from support organisations of the bourgeoisie – which is what they were under the leadership of Amsterdam – into instruments of struggle of a proletariat contending with all its strength. An initial precondition for that is to overcome their national limitations and form a revolutionary international power base. So we call for unification of all workers who want, in contrast to the Amsterdam bureaucracy, to fight for their very existence, in the Red International of Labour Unions. For the Amsterdamers do not merely oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat, they oppose every serious struggle against the bourgeoisie. In the name of democracy, they brutally struck down the miners in Britain and Czechoslovakia alongside the railway and municipal workers in Germany, workers who were struggling merely for a wage increase of a few pennies.

Finally I will take up a question concerning the Polish comrades, the Norwegians, and one other section. They put forward the viewpoint that of course we must take a stand for the Profintern, but when we gain the majority in the trade unions, they should not quit the Amsterdam International. If that becomes the position of the Communist International, in my opinion we must dissolve the Red International of Labour Unions. If we as Communists are working only as an ideological current, we have no need for the Red International of Labour Unions.

Among the most important tasks of the Comintern in the coming year will be the question of the syndicalists. We will invite the syndicalists again to the Second Congress of the Profintern. But this will depend on what Communists do on behalf of the Red International of Labour Unions in the countries where syndicalists are active. In my opinion, comrades, the struggle against the syndicalist leaders that set themselves against the revolutionary will of the syndicalist proletariat will be carried out more easily than that against the Amsterdamers. There is still important work to be done in the fifteen propaganda committees that we have founded. With active collaboration of Communists

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11 'Our overall policy' here refers to building the Profintern in opposition to the Amsterdam International.

in different branches of industry, the Profintern will elaborate not a recipe for miracles, but a practical programme of action. The task is simply to utilise conditions in the trades and in industry and to transform them with the goal of revolutionising the trade unions and converting them from a tool for maintaining bourgeois rule to one of proletarian power.

*(The chair proposes the election of a commission for trade-union issues. The following comrades are elected: Lozovsky, Brandler, Sellier (France), Roberto (Italy), Kohn (Czechoslovakia), Pollitt (Britain), Carr (United States), and Antonowicz (Poland).)*

*(The session is adjourned at 4:30 p.m.)*

## Famine Relief; New Economic Policy

*Report on famine relief. Theses on the New Economic Policy in Russia.*

*Chair: Kolarov.*

*Speakers: Münzenberg, Sokolnikov.*

### Report on Famine Relief

**Willi Münzenberg:** As soon as it became known last summer that the famine catastrophe had grown to a dreadful extent in a number of Russian provinces, the Executive Committee of the Communist International decided to set in motion a general international proletarian relief campaign.<sup>1</sup> The bourgeois capitalist governments immediately attempted to use Russia's plight to serve their own purposes. Let us recall the policy of extortion that they set in motion, which included even sabre-rattling by Poland.<sup>2</sup> Many governments, under pressure of public opinion, decided to provide funds for the support of the starving; France, for example, donated seven million francs. So far, this money has not been put to use; not a gram of flour has been sent to Russia. The American Relief Administration at present accounts for the majority of the relief expedition; its distribution agency is feeding several million people. However, it is no secret that at a moment when the Russian crisis has become acute, the ARA is planning to make far-reaching demands. The Amsterdam trade-union International has attempted unscrupulously from the start to utilise the relief campaign for its political propaganda.

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- <sup>1</sup> In September 1921, the ECCI issued an appeal to the workers of all countries, 'Proletarian Relief to Soviet Russia', that stated, 'We are calling upon the Communist parties of all countries to get in contact with all labour organisations for the purpose of forming central committees of relief, whose task it will be to carry on an agitation among the wider popular masses for the collection of funds for the purchase of bread and medicaments.' Published in *Bulletin of the Executive Committee of the Communist International*, no. 1, 8 September 1921, pp. 31–3.
  - <sup>2</sup> Hoping to take advantage of perceived Soviet weakness caused by the famine, in September 1921 the Polish government sent an ultimatum to Soviet Russia concerning the terms of the March 1921 Riga Treaty that formally ended the previous year's Soviet-Polish war. The French government, which had instigated the ultimatum in a clear attempt to provoke renewal of the war, was simultaneously sending troops to Poland in anticipation.

In launching our campaign, two considerations guided our efforts: First, to attempt to organise a workers' relief organisation independent of the bourgeois campaign; and, second, to attempt to unify all workers in the campaign, whatever their party or trade-union affiliation. Comrades, this was the first attempt to realise the united front in practice. It was not possible to achieve this front on an organisational level, but we did succeed, through our propaganda and organisational work, in involving quite significant and broad masses of non-Communist workers. It has proven possible to conduct the campaign in all the countries of Europe, even those where the Communists are strictly illegal. Relief organisations were founded in Yugoslavia, Romania, Latvia, Poland, and so on. The campaign has extended beyond Europe, embracing the United States, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and South Africa. A movement is starting up in Japan. To sum up, it has become a powerful campaign embracing the entire globe.

Up to the end of January, the results of fund-raising – unfortunately still not complete – amount to 200 million German marks. Thirty shipments were sent to Russia, containing more than 13,000 tons of foodstuffs, tools, and machinery. During the same period the Amsterdam International, with its 24 million members, carried out a campaign that raised 60 million German marks and sent a single ship with one thousand tons to Russia. In Switzerland, for example, 220,000 trade unionists raised only 75,000 francs, while 6,000 Communists collected 170,000 francs. The small Communist Party of the Netherlands collected 180,000 guilders, while the trade unions of that country, seat of the Amsterdam International, together with the Social-Democratic Party that is still rather strong there, raised only 38,000 guilders. It should also be noted that we spent less than 0.5 per cent of the funds received on costs, despite our extensive propaganda, while the British Quakers spent 25 per cent on costs.

We have set about establishing distribution centres in Russia, and these now exist in five provinces: Saratov, Samara, Kazan, Cheliabinsk, and Orenburg. There we are supplying provisions for 70,000 people daily, and every new ship will make it possible to raise that number.

The main question right now is how to carry the action forward. We must discuss expanding the campaign, linking famine relief with assistance to economic production. If we limit ourselves to sending foodstuffs, famine relief will not have permanent impact. The task now is to take precautions against any repetition of the famine catastrophe. We have received requests coming from the base – from individual local committees, authorities, and soviets – for help in building up their economy. Thus the fishing cooperatives on the Volga River, where the fishing industry was destroyed by famine, have appealed to us

to help them obtain painting supplies and salt. Other cooperative enterprises have made requests to us to send them machinery from Germany.

Comrades, we believe that it is our duty to meet these urgent requests to the degree that our strength allows. If we succeed in getting the Volga fishery going again, we will be providing a service to Russia and its hungry people that is just as important as sending them some wagons of grain. In Petrograd and Moscow, the availability of a large quantity of tin cans left by the relief expedition and other used materials gave us the idea of transforming the scrap metal into tools. We have undertaken this work in some factories on behalf of the government, but we have gone over to organising smaller enterprises through the cooperative system.

Our tasks in carrying out economic assistance are as follows:

- 1.) Providing for workers in the regions devastated by famine, in particular in selected enterprises and institutions.
- 2.) Mobilising and utilising Russian and European labour power that is presently unproductive – particularly with regard to political émigrés living in Russia.
- 3.) Aid organised by economic centres based on the model of workers' organisations in Western Europe and the United States.

A great quantity of scrap metal is available in Russia – iron, steel, copper, and so on, which the Soviet government has been trying for years to utilise. Some 16–18 applicants have volunteered for this. We have proposed that our organisation take charge of selection, and we envisage utilising this metal for social needs. It should be possible to carry out this initiative by utilising émigrés who are presently unproductive. By utilising metal cast aside by the relief organisation, the Soviet government would achieve great savings in fabrication.

But enough on our efforts in Russia itself. Reviewing our efforts in different countries of Western Europe, we can say this: We are committed to doing everything possible for the Soviet government by maximising working-class support through pressure on the governments and the united front. It is also our duty to do everything humanly possible to assist Russia in its present economic struggle, by mobilising economic resources, labour power, and money.

We now arrive at the main point. Based on reports reaching us from different countries, it seems possible to collect \$10 million in the course of this year. The practical value of this sum of money is overshadowed by its propaganda value: a campaign of this type can have an immense impact in the West in reknitting the union of workers with Russia, even as we draw from it a material gain.

Regarding the technical organisation of this undertaking, very serious considerations could arise. Our American friends have a plan to have 6,000 Amer-

ican workers go to Siberia.<sup>3</sup> They are making extravagant promises, and we are dubious. They tell people that if you come up with \$100 for food, you can work in Siberia, where gold lies in the streets. Our response to this is that efforts must first be made to enable the political emigrants to be productive and able to work. Immigration from outside Russia should be limited to only the number of chosen technically trained people that are needed to enable the available Russian labour force to be productive. What we must now provide for Russia is labour intensity and the organisational form of Western European and American workers. The first requirement for a successful outcome of this campaign is its strict centralisation. Matters have developed so far that some shops are now functioning with workers from abroad, and there is a strong impulse for this outside Russia. As Communists, we are obligated to take the matter in hand. It will be the responsibility of the Presidium, or of a commission that it establishes, to take charge of the matter and organise it.

### New Economic Policy in Russia

**Grigorii Y. Sokolnikov:** (*His remarks correspond to the following 'Theses on the New Economic Policy of Soviet Russia', presented 3 March 1922.*)

1.) The New Economic Policy expresses above all the relationship of forces within the alliance of Russia's proletariat and peasantry, after their common victory against the restoration of the bourgeoisie and the owners of landed estates.<sup>4</sup> This policy signifies, on the part of the proletariat, recognition of the inviolability of small peasant farms and private property as regards the product of the small producer's labour. It also signifies the proletariat's recognition and

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3 This may be a reference to the Kuzbas (Kuznetsk Basin) project in a coal-mining region near Tomsk in central Siberia. The project involved establishing 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.

4 The New Economic Policy (NEP) comprised a series of measures introduced in Soviet Russia in March 1921 and subsequently, aiming to restore economic relations between 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.

public declaration that the Soviet government's policy during the Civil War of taking control over all production and consumption of the peasant economy was only temporary in nature. This policy was dictated by the need to conduct the common struggle against the estate owners and large-scale capital through to complete success, and was not a permanent system reflecting the Communist Party programme.

2.) This acknowledgement is absolutely appropriate and necessary because it expresses precisely the party's viewpoint as it was expressed both before and after the October Revolution. This viewpoint was that the completed communist order would not be introduced at once, but that this revolution would open an extended period of transition from capitalism to communism. During this time the economic weight of small-scale property and enterprise in agriculture, industry, and trade would decline. However, although large capitalist property would be expropriated and socialised, there would be no forcible expropriation or socialisation of the individual labour of small producers.

3.) Peasant support for the proletariat's New Economic Policy has been expressed in the strengthening of their political support for the Soviet government. This signifies that millions of small producers working on their own holdings recognise the economic system established by the working class, according to which the soil and its wealth, large-scale industry, transport, and credit are not private property but are entirely or predominantly socialised and administered by the Soviet state, in other words, organised in line with the socialist programme for the transitional period.

4.) This aspect of the agreement with the peasantry does not deviate from the maximum programme that the Communist Party in Russia adopted at the beginning of the struggle for power. In the course of the struggle with large-scale capital and large landowners, the Soviet government's practical measures went far beyond this programme. This necessity was foreseen by Engels, who wrote that the proletarian revolution must go as far as possible in order to triumph. Impelled by necessity, the Soviet government utilised methods of both political and economic terror, not only against the large landowners but against layers of the middle and smaller property owners who tended to follow large-scale capital (thus the nationalisation of all industry and trade). The course of the struggle for victory over the estate owners and the bourgeoisie, which took the form of an intense civil war, inevitably produced a number of illusions. It even created an ideology that was in sharp contradiction with the party's real theory and real programme, which is now, under different conditions, unfolding in a new policy. In essence this policy is not new at all, but is the old policy of the prewar period.

5.) Secondly, the New Economic Policy expresses the resolve to incorporate the proletarian state in the fabric of international economic relations. So long as the capitalist order survives in the countries surrounding Soviet Russia, its inclusion is quite inevitable. A policy of economic isolation is simply revolutionary economic nonsense and voluntary *hara-kiri*, which could only bring joy to the proletariat's enemies. The victory of the revolution in one country does not mean instantly surmounting the existing international division of labour, which occurs even in capitalist society. On the contrary, a country in which socialist revolution has triumphed must propose a programme for a fuller, more expedient, and more economical division of labour, in order to utilise all natural resources. This programme must expose the weakness and bankruptcy of crisis-ridden capitalism. The programme must serve as the foundation for an appeal to the working masses for the socialist restoration of the international economy.

6.) The penetration of Soviet Russia by foreign capital brings with it the great danger that the socialist economy now taking shape will be subjugated by the power of capital. Capital strives to apply to the proletarian state its long experience and tested methods of colonial exploitation and oppression. True, this danger is diminished by the increasing struggles of capitalist groups amongst themselves. It can be more effectively countered, however, by the organised struggle of the international proletariat against the financial potentates of the European-American bourgeois world. It will be fully eliminated only by the broad development of international socialist revolution.

7.) On the other hand, as foreign capital is drawn into our technically backward country, it promotes the rise of the Soviet Russian economy. This process increases Soviet economic and political consolidation, its weight in international politics, and its influence in the unfolding economic and political world crisis.

8.) It has thus become the task of the Communist Party of Russia following the end of the period of 'military communism'<sup>5</sup> to maintain and strengthen the proletariat's political power on the basis of an agreement with the peasantry, one permissible in terms of party discipline. The party seeks to rationally organise the economic possessions of the proletarian state, which has rejected any attempt to organise the totality of production and distribution, retaining only

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5 War communism was a policy instituted in Soviet Russia as a military necessity during the Civil War. A centrepiece of this policy was the forced requisitioning of the peasantry's surplus grain in order to feed the cities and the Red Army. War communism was ended in early 1921 with the adoption of the New Economic Policy.

the dominant economic positions ('the commanding heights') which hold the key to everything else. It seeks to organise mutual relations with the capitalist world on a basis that gives Russia the best assurance against attempts at economic subjugation and political restoration of the bourgeois regime.

9.) In the publications of the Russian White Guard and of bourgeois socialism, a modern agitational formula is often voiced, namely that the Russian Revolution has experienced its Thermidor and that the New Economic Policy is carrying out the liquidation of the revolution. This assertion makes no more sense than Martov's outworn comment that the October Revolution represented the 18th Brumaire of Napoleon's coup.<sup>6</sup>

The petty-bourgeois socialists who keep talking about Thermidor should explain how Thermidor makes any sense after Brumaire. Communists respond to this simple-minded chatter with an irrefutable argument: the fact that power in the Soviet republic remains in the hands of the Communist Party, which has demonstrated its capacity to adapt its policies to the needs of the moment, while remaining true to itself and to the international cause of the proletariat.

10.) The international significance of the New Economic Policy cannot be determined without an estimation of the overall international economic and political situation. This situation permits of only one interpretation: the world economic crisis continues, becoming more acute in first one, then another country and undermining the roots of bourgeois organisation of the economy. The imperialist war that ended with the Treaty of Versailles is in reality continuing as a raging economic war. Political conflicts grow more acute and redouble the burden of economic conflicts. Coalitions are formed around common interests and then fall apart. A great many small states fragmented out of Europe carry on an illusory existence, dreaming of being elevated through adventure. The defeated states are threatened with loss of territory. Monarchist reaction prepares its revenge, which will cut up the map of Europe anew at its discretion.

Having overcome its greatest difficulties, the proletarian party is strengthening its organisation and broadening its influence on the masses of workers and small peasants. The epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism is one

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6 'Thermidor' here refers to the counter-revolutionary coup that overturned the Jacobin leadership of Maximilien Robespierre on 27 July 1794, the ninth day of Thermidor in the French revolutionary calendar. That coup marked the turning of the tide against the French Revolution. The 18th Brumaire (2 December) was the date of Louis Napoleon's 1851 coup against the bourgeois republic in France. With the Stalinist degeneration of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky and other Marxists later came to use the Thermidor analogy themselves.

of crises, wars, and revolutions. This process confirms the correctness of the Communist Party of Russia's policies, which reckoned with such a transitional period, leading unalterably to the full victory of communism.<sup>7</sup>

*(The session is adjourned at 10:15 p.m.)*

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<sup>7</sup> This resolution was adopted in Session 17. See p. 230.

## Communist Press; Youth

*Report on the Communist press. Report on International Press Correspondence. Report on the economic demands of youth. Resolution on the struggle against the impoverishment of worker youth. Motion on the agricultural proletariat.*

*Chair: Kolarov.*

*Speakers: Humbert-Droz, Thalheimer, Schüller, Brandler, Osinsky.*

### Report on the Communist Press

**Jules Humbert-Droz** (Switzerland): We do not want all of our Communist press to look like a copy of, say, the Moscow *Pravda*. Quite the contrary: externally, the appearance of our papers should be similar to those of the bourgeois papers in a given country, in order to more readily make headway among the unorganised masses. To this end, they should include sections on sports, theatre, and light features. Their consistently Communist character should find expression, however, through the educational analysis of all daily events, even those that are not political. The paper should be neither too abstractly theoretical nor too journalistic in style. Contact with the working masses should be achieved by publishing workers' letters, which induces factories to take an interest in distributing the paper. But this must be done systematically and not just through occasional inquiries that do not find any genuine response in the working class.

The proletarian nature of the newspaper will be strengthened if the editors hold daily open-door consultation hours for workers, and if the editors seek out the workers in their homes. The local papers must avoid limiting themselves too much to local issues, but they must also avoid excessive coverage of remote questions of international politics. The papers must root themselves in the political life of their countries. All parties are recommended to establish press correspondence vehicles on the pattern of the French party's bulletins for the French press.

The project of an international Communist telegraph agency should be developed for the Fourth Congress.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to the memoirs of Marcel Cachin, the idea here was to use the Russian telegraph

### Report on *International Press Correspondence*

**Thalheimer:** The reporter portrayed the bulletin's distribution to date and the guidelines adopted by its publishers for their activity.<sup>2</sup> He referred to the various ways in which he considered that the bulletin could be strengthened.

*(A discussion followed, with contributions from Comrades Zinoviev, Wertheim, Roberto, Bell, Carr, and Thalheimer. In general, appreciation was expressed for the progress and successes of the Communist press, while various proposals were made for its improvement, and criticisms were made of some aspects. In conclusion, a motion by the Presidium was adopted for election of a commission to consider questions of the party press. The commission consists of Comrades Humbert-Droz, Thalheimer, Sellier, Wertheim, Kreibich, Carr, and Bell.)*

### Report on the Economic Demands of Youth

**Richard Schüller:** The conditions of worker youth have always been more difficult than those of the adult working class. The war and the postwar crisis of capitalism worsened their conditions still more. Today the new generation of the working class is in great danger. The blows of capitalism's present offensive fall with the same impact on adult and young workers, but the latter suffer doubly because their capacity for resistance has already been so weakened. Young workers face special burdens through wage reductions, the lengthening of the workday, and unemployment among worker youth in the trades. The Communist Youth International presents a motion to include on the agenda of the international conference [of the Three Internationals] a point on the struggle against the impoverishment of worker youth and to invite the three proletarian youth Internationals to this conference. I propose the following resolution:

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agency ROSTA as a rough model, creating an agency providing information that could be used by the Communist press around the world. See Cachin 1998, p. 203.

2 In September 1921 the Comintern established a German-language newsletter, *Inprekorr* (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*), published several times a week. The following month the newsletter began to be published in English as *Inprecorr* (*International Press Correspondence*). The French edition was titled *La Correspondance internationale*.

## Resolution on the Struggle against the Impoverishment of Worker Youth

Delegates to the enlarged session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International take note of the Communist Youth International report, which highlights the exceptionally difficult conditions of worker youth, which have been further worsened by the world crisis and the international offensive of capital.

The Comintern and the Red International of Labour Unions stress the exceptional importance of the conditions of worker youth and of their active participation in the class struggle of the proletariat as a whole and its liberation. The Comintern and the Red International of Labour Unions stand in solidarity with the opinions of the Communist Youth International and stress the need to integrate youth into the united front of adult workers to repel the capitalist offensive. For this reason the Comintern and the Red International of Labour Unions endorse the proposal of the Communist Youth International's Executive Committee, namely:

- 1.) To take up the struggle against the impoverishment of worker youth and include this question on the agenda of the international conference of political parties and trade unions.
- 2.) To invite representatives of the proletarian international youth organisations (Communist Youth International, International Working Union of Young Socialists, Labour Youth International) to take part in the common conference.<sup>3</sup>

The situation of working youth needs to be taken up at the first conference on repelling the employers' offensive because, first of all, the capitalist offensive does not merely gravely threaten the present generation of the working class but also, through its effects on the situation of working youth, threatens the next generation of the working class. That is why we propose that the struggle against the impoverishment of working youth be added as a *special* agenda point. For the workers' organisations of the world proletariat, a number of urgent demands of worker youth stand in the foreground, and the entire working class should struggle for them.

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3 The Labour Youth International was the youth affiliate of the Second International; the International Working Union of Young Socialists was affiliated to the Two-and-a-Half International. The 'common conference' refers to the planned conference of the Three Internationals.

1.) In order to thwart the efforts of capitalism to utilise the cheap labour of working youth as a weapon for economic struggle against the adult working class.

2.) In order to protect the new generation of the working class from sinking into physical and moral deprivation.

The Comintern and the Red International of Labour Unions call on all youth organisations, political parties, and trade unions of the proletariat to publicise these proposals and demands on the broadest scale and to discuss them in their newspapers and assemblies.

We propose the following urgent demands:

*I. General demands for all youth up to 18 years old.*

Minimum wages corresponding to the minimum necessary for survival.

Struggle against lengthening the eight-hour workday.

Inclusion of apprenticeship study time in the working day and implementation of a six-hour day for youth.

Assure the upkeep of unemployed youth; house them in training workshops.

Weekend rest of 44 hours.

Four weeks' paid vacation.

Ban on night and Sunday work.

Ban on employment of youth in workshops and factories where conditions are unhealthy for youth, such as specific branches of the chemical industry, underground work in the mines, etc.

*II. Protection of apprentices.*

Strict regulation of the right to train apprentices; elimination of individual apprenticeship contracts; inclusion of apprentices in provisions of collective agreements; supervision of apprentices' employment by the trade unions and factory committees.<sup>4</sup>

**Brandler:** On behalf of the Executive Committee's commission on the youth question, I support the proposal of the Youth International. The destruction of the capacities of worker youth is proof of capitalism's collapse. It destroys the most important productive force, that of the young workers' generation. The revolutionary working class must not tolerate this, for its worker youth will construct the new society. Soviet Russia provides an example of this, despite its deep poverty.

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4 This resolution was adopted at Session 17. See p. 221.

### Motion on the Agricultural Proletariat

**N. Osinsky:** On behalf of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, I present the following motion to the Enlarged ECCI:

The Communist Fraction of the Council of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture proposes to the Enlarged meeting of the ECCI at this time a motion to:

1.) Convene in Moscow a conference on agriculture of the rural divisions of all Communist parties.

2.) This conference is to take place following the end of the Fourth Comintern Congress or by September 1922, if no world congress has taken place at that time.<sup>5</sup>

3.) A preparatory committee of five comrades is to be established immediately.

4.) Prior to the conference the individual Communist parties will carry out inquiries into the conditions of agricultural workers and peasants and the overall economic conditions of agriculture in their country.

These inquiries will take place around a uniform questionnaire, which will be developed by the People's Commissariat for Agriculture in collaboration with the agricultural division of the Socialist Academy<sup>6</sup> and confirmed by the preparatory committee.

The delegations will bring documentation on their inquiry to Moscow, where it will be processed by the standing bureau in collaboration with the Socialist Academy.<sup>7</sup>

*(The session is adjourned at 4:15 p.m.)*

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5 For the Fourth Congress discussion on the agrarian question, see Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 951–60.

6 The Socialist Academy of Social Sciences in Moscow opened in October 1918. In April 1919 it became simply the Socialist Academy, renamed Communist Academy in 1924.

7 This resolution was adopted in Session 17. See p. 247.

## Workers' Movement in France; War Danger

*Report on the situation of the workers' movement in France. Resolution on the French question. Report on the danger of new imperialist wars. Election of the Presidium.*

*Chair: Kolarov.*

*Speakers: Trotsky, Clara Zetkin.*

### Report on the Situation of the Workers' Movement in France

**Trotsky:** The commission chosen to study the French question came to a unanimous conclusion. This agreement is politically significant, because the task was to find an overall solution to the present crisis.

The French party developed in an eventful period. The Tours Congress brought about the split with the reformists, who are formally responsible for it, since they walked out of the party. But we bear political responsibility for the split. The Tours Congress signified that the French proletariat was announcing its will to revolution both in principle and on an organisational level. But a major problem remains, namely to create an instrument that is adequate to this changed situation.

The Marseilles agreement was the second stage of the French revolutionary movement. The Marseilles Congress resolved the questions before it in a Communist manner, but nonetheless a question of organisation arose at this congress, and there was debate on whether the crisis was one of ideology or of personality.<sup>1</sup>

Comrade Soutif will be of assistance to us, because some of the words he spoke at the Marseilles Congress illuminate the situation. According to the report in *L'Humanité*:

The speaker [Soutif] said that since Tours certain tendencies have formed, but this should not make us uneasy, because it expresses the party's vitality. In addition, these tendencies also exist in the Communist International. Both here and there we find right opportunism and centrism.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For the Tours Congress, see p. 72, n. 2. For the Marseilles Congresses, see p. 145, n. 21.

2 The account of Soutif's speech that Trotsky is quoting from appeared in *L'Humanité*, 26 December 1921.

In my opinion, this assertion by Comrade Soutif needs to be corrected to the extent that the mere fact that tendencies exist, in itself, does not yet demonstrate the party's vitality. It was to be expected that after the Tours Congress reformist tendencies and leanings would not find sufficient openings to express themselves freely. Opportunism in the bosom of a revolutionary party appears initially as a small cloud, a small spot. If it does not encounter resistance, it develops like a spot of oil and spreads, and then it can become a serious danger. We can confirm that the rightists in the Communist Party of France are a tendency still in the process of formation, or, if you will, undergoing a revival. It makes itself known around a few issues, especially that of militarism. Thus Comrade Cachin is attacked because he demanded the arming of the working population.

Here, for example, is an article that was published in *L'Internationale*:

Some excellent comrades are astonished that a certain number of us remain true to the old anti-militarism of long ago and mount an absolute and obstinate opposition against any form of armaments.

What kind of militarism is being discussed here? The author continues: 'There are not two militarisms; there is only one.'

So a member of our party – and I am referring to Comrade Raoul Verfeuil – detests militarism, whatever its coloration, because it annihilates individuality. Comrades, believe me, I am not speaking here as a defender of the Red Army. If it was a matter of defending the Red Army or current Russian 'militarism' or red militarism against such articles in *L'Internationale*, we could readily state that such articles in *L'Internationale* are not dangerous provided, of course, that the French proletariat had already carried out and consolidated its revolution.

Unfortunately, that is not the case. And then we read a decisive argument:

It is objected that we have need of the army in order to make the revolution. But the revolution could be made much more readily if no army existed.<sup>3</sup> (*Prolonged laughter*)

And by this the opponent is disarmed. This argument overwhelms all resistance. We say, and we repeat: that the proletariat's only possibility of achieving liberation is to seize power from the bourgeoisie and to disarm it, even as the proletariat arms itself. Beyond any doubt, the education that the party must

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3 Raoul Verfeuil, 'Contre le militarisme', in *L'Internationale*, 27 January 1922.

carry out consists of preparatory work to make the proletariat understand that it cannot defeat the bourgeoisie other than through revolutionary violence.

Do Comrades Méric and Verfeuil think that the French proletariat is exempt from the need to employ revolutionary violence against the bourgeoisie? We have to show the proletariat that the violence of the bourgeoisie cannot be overcome except by violence – our violence.

When I was reading these articles, I accidentally ran across the resolutions adopted by the anarchist congress, where the following was said:

Anarchists do not want power; they remain enemies of every form of dictatorship, whether established by the Right or the Left, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Anarchists remain enemies of militarism, in whatever form it appears, whether that of the bourgeoisie or that of the proletariat.<sup>4</sup>

That's exactly the same ideology.

I want to also quote our comrade Pioch. He made the following statements at the party congress:

The peoples do not engage in combat with each other merely to serve their own interests. They wage war on each other, and this releases passions that make the war lengthy. If you do not recognise this truth, you will create a society from which war cannot be eliminated.

So war is not a result of social structures but is a psychological phenomenon. It unleashes passions; people must be educated in such a way as to prevent society from engaging in war. Now I come to his conclusion, and this sentence is the worst of all:

As regards desertion, I cannot advise either for it or against it. That is a matter of conscience. As for forming cells in the army, that is a dangerous sophism.<sup>5</sup>

And this is a speech given at a congress of the Communist Party.

Comrade Pioch is an outstanding poet and author, and we respect him for that. But he is secretary of the Seine Federation, the party's largest. I must won-

4 Trotsky is quoting from a resolution adopted by the French anarchist congress that met in Lyon on 26–27 November 1921.

5 The account of Pioch's speech at the Marseilles Congress appeared in *L'Humanité*, 30 December 1921.

der what kind of echo such a speech will find in the mind of a young worker, whether Communist or partly Communist – a speech that tells him that violence and bloodletting are not issues of principle for Communists.

Points of view such as those we have just examined can only generate total confusion in the minds of the youth organisation, and this has already been recognised by the entire French delegation. Our comrade Georges Pioch even says that the word ‘discipline’, as a military term, must be banished forever from use by Communists.

The commission noted that there are no very marked differences between the party majority, as it took shape after the Marseilles Congress, and the group that we can call, to give it a name, the ‘group more inclined to the left’.

If there were differences, they were based more on nuances. For whatever reason, the split is still a difficult process. Our French party states firmly that it will never present such a spectacle to the French proletariat – never. The tendency we see here is still quite undefined, but to the degree that it takes shape it should be removed from the party without delay. And since the party, through the delegation of its leading committee, confirms that it will never allow such situations to arise, there is no basis and no justification to form factions within the party.

The commission presents you its resolution, the result of its deliberations, which we hope will help our Communist Party in France to overcome its present crisis in short order.

### Resolution on the French Question

*(Following the report by Comrade Trotsky on the French question, the conference unanimously adopted the following resolution, which was proposed by the reporter.)*<sup>6</sup>

Since the Tours Congress, the Communist Party of France has carried out major organisational efforts that have retained in its ranks the best forces of the proletariat that have awakened to political action. The Marseilles Congress provided the party with an opportunity for serious theoretical work from which the revolutionary labour movement will doubtless derive very great benefits.

By breaking with the parliamentary and political traditions of the old Socialist Party, whose conventions merely provided a pretext for oratorical duels among the leaders, the Communist Party has, for the first time in France,

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6 The translation, based on the German text, has been compared with the French text.

summoned all workers engaged in struggle to a preliminary and deep-going review of the main problems concerning the development of the French revolutionary movement.

The organisational crisis in the French party – whose importance it would be wrong to either minimise or exaggerate – constitutes a stage in the development of the French Communist Party, its internal cleansing, and its internal reconstruction and consolidation upon genuinely Communist foundations.

The split at Tours drew a basic line of demarcation between reformism and communism. But it was absolutely unavoidable that the Communist Party issuing from this split would contain elements retaining various survivals of the party's reformist and parliamentary past, of which it can divest itself through internal efforts based on participation in the mass struggle.

The survivals of the past are expressed in certain groups within the party through:

- 1.) An urge to restore unity with the reformists.
- 2.) An urge toward a bloc with the radical wing of the bourgeoisie.
- 3.) A substitution of petty-bourgeois humanitarian pacifism for revolutionary anti-militarism.
- 4.) A false interpretation of the party's relations with the trade unions.
- 5.) A struggle against genuine centralist leadership in the party.
- 6.) Efforts to replace international discipline in action by a platonic federation of national parties.

In the period following the split at Tours, tendencies of this sort could not fully disclose themselves and hope to gain a broad influence in the party. Nevertheless under the powerful pressure of bourgeois public opinion, elements inclined toward opportunism tend naturally to gravitate toward each other and seek to create their own publications and points of support. Although they have had little success in this direction, it would be a mistake not to assess properly the extent to which their work threatens the revolutionary character and unity of the party. A Communist organisation can never serve as an arena for the same views that led to the split of the reformists and apostates from the working-class party. Any unclarity in this connection would unavoidably hinder for a long time the work of revolutionary education among the masses.

The plenum of the ECCI affirms that the resolutions of the Marseilles Congress, imbued with the spirit of the Communist International, create extremely important points of support for the party's revolutionary activities among the toiling masses of city and countryside.

The plenum of the ECCI also notes with gratification the declaration of the French delegation to the effect that *Le Journal du peuple* – the organ that serves as the rallying point for reformist and other confusionist tendencies – holds

a position directly contrary to the programme of the International, contrary to the decisions of the Tours and Marseilles Congresses of the French Communist Party, and contrary to the revolutionary irreconcilability of the class-conscious French proletariat. This paper's ties with the party will therefore be ended in short order.

The exceptional importance of the Marseilles Congress consists in having posed before the party the overriding task of carrying on systematic and regular work in the trade unions in the spirit of the party's programme and tactics. Thereby it condemned definitively the tendencies among party members that are, under the guise of fighting for the autonomy of the trade unions – which, by the way, no one disputes – in reality fighting to retain their own autonomy in trade-union activity, free from the party's control and leadership.

The ECCI plenum also takes note of the French delegation's statement that the party's leading committee will take necessary measures to assure that all party decisions are carried out in a fully united and disciplined manner and in a spirit of Communist activity under the supervision of this party's leading committee.

Given the fact that the Statutes of the Communist International and of its sections, founded on the principles of democratic centralism, provide ample guarantees for a correct and normal development of each Communist Party, the plenum considers as wrong the resignation of several members of the Central Committee who were elected by the Marseilles Congress.<sup>7</sup> This is wrong independently of the political motivations that provoked these resignations. Renunciation of posts conferred by the party can be construed by the broad party circles as a declaration that correct collaboration of different shadings is impossible within the framework of democratic centralism and can serve as an impulse to the formation of factions within the party.

The ECCI plenum expresses its firm conviction that the struggle against the above-cited manifestations of anti-Communist tendencies will be conducted by the overwhelming majority of the party and its leading bodies as a whole.

The creation of factions would unavoidably cause the greatest injury to the party's development and to its authority among the proletariat. In recognition of this fact, the Executive Committee plenum notes with satisfaction the

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7 The December 1921 Marseilles Congress of the French CP was the scene of a sharp struggle between the party's left and its centre and right wings. In the elections to the new central committee, Boris Souvarine, one of the leading left-wingers, was not elected. Other left-wing leaders (Loriot, Treint, Dunois, and Vaillant-Couturier) interpreted this as an attack on the Left as a whole and refused to accept their own elections.

For the Statutes of the Communist International, see Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, pp. 694–9.

declaration of the French delegation that the Central Committee is prepared to take the necessary organisational measures to ensure that the will of the Marseilles Congress is carried out without alteration and in full, and that the comrades who submitted their resignation will once again take part in the party leadership and carry out regular and harmonious work in that framework.

(Signed: *Trotsky*)<sup>8</sup>

### Report on the Danger of New Imperialist Wars

**Clara Zetkin** (*a summary of her extended report*): After the World War ended, the cry went up: 'Never again war'. But today we face new dangers of war. The world is loaded with explosive material that at any moment could set off new and even worse wars. The exclusion of Russia from the world's economy and the overthrow of German imperialism have not lessened but rather sharpened the antagonisms. Germany has been plundered and impoverished; this has not strengthened Britain but rather weakened it, while French imperialism has been reinforced. French imperialism's penetration of the Near East threatens Britain's path to the East Indies, quite apart from France's predominance on the European continent and its overriding influence on the states of the Little Entente.<sup>9</sup> German statesmen had counted on Britain's antagonism with France on the continent. But to their dismay, they now see Britain forced to sacrifice its continental interests in favour of those in Asia.

Britain treats Germany as a balancing factor in overcoming dangers it sees, especially in the disorders in Egypt and the revolutionary ferment in India.<sup>10</sup> An additional factor is the enormous expansion of the political and economic power of the United States. The country itself has now become too small to

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8 This resolution was adopted in Session 17. See p. 241.

9 For the Little Entente, see p. 76, n. 19.

10 Egypt, which had been under effective British control since the late 1870s, was declared a British protectorate in 1914. In March 1919 a popular uprising took place in response to Britain's deportation of Saad Zaghlul Pasha, leader of the nationalist Wafd Party. The uprising was crushed within a month, with some 4,000 Egyptians killed. Britain declared Egypt formally independent in February 1922 under the rule of a monarchy.

India, an effective colony of Britain since the early nineteenth century, was then in the midst of an upsurge of anti-colonial struggle known as the non-cooperation movement. Begun in 1920, the movement sought to resist British occupation through nonviolent means.

contain North American capitalism's drive for expansion, and it is reaching out into Europe and East Asia. Here both North American and British imperialism are running into Japanese competition, and a struggle between these two sides is flaring up over the exploitation of the enormous Chinese territory. These antagonisms are the cause of the massive expansion of naval armaments in recent years.

Despite all these antagonisms, however, the capitalist states have something in common: they are on a war footing against Soviet Russia. The mere existence of Soviet Russia, as a strong point of international proletarian revolution, poses a constant threat to the capitalist world. The use of violence against Soviet Russia has failed. Now they want to use the concessions to capitalism that Soviet Russia is obliged to make in order to subject it to a campaign of ruthless robbery. This continual threat makes it impossible for Soviet Russia to disarm. It must stand ready for battle, not only to defend its own freedom and independence but in the interests of world proletarian revolution.

Thus the world is bristling with weaponry, even more than before the World War. Alongside the efforts by the capitalist economy to rebuild, immense armaments are accumulated in order to protect the capitalist system in each country against its internal and external enemies – and all on the backs of the working class. Not only are antagonisms mounting more and more between the imperialist powers, but so too are those between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This generates internal difficulties for the capitalists of individual countries, which they seek to overcome through concessions to their own proletariat paid for by other countries. Competition among the powers on this globe thus becomes increasingly acute.

For all these reasons, we must not count on any reduction in the war danger. The Washington Conference was just as barren in its results as its predecessors, revealing that these antagonisms cannot be overcome. True, disarmament was agreed on for one particular type of murder weapon, but other instruments of murder and even more terrible weapons are being created and built. The coming Genoa Conference is an admission that peace treaties cannot secure the peace.<sup>11</sup> Its outcome will confirm once again that the bourgeoisie is incapable either of reconstructing the world economy or of assuring world peace. Pacifist rhetoric will not change that in any way; it can only sow confusion in the ranks of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie has disarmed the proletariat and presides over the means of production of death, in order to prevent the

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11 For the Washington Conference, see p. 55, n. 2. For the Genoa Conference, see p. 152, n. 7.

proletariat from taking hold of the means of production of life. Bourgeois violence can be overcome only by the violence of the proletariat. Violence in the hands of the bourgeoisie is reactionary; in the hands of the proletariat it is a force for liberation. The proletariat must take from the bourgeoisie its military apparatus and place it – through the Red Army – in the service of its liberation struggle.

Even the Amsterdam trade-union leaders cannot deny the dangers of war and feel compelled to hold anti-war rallies. This is being done by the same union leaders who, during the war, were the most rigid advocates of continuing the struggle to the end. The only way to counter the threat of war is the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. World war or world revolution – that is our slogan. We must utilise all effective means of struggle, legal or illegal, in the service of the struggle against the war danger. We must imbue the youth with this spirit and win over the soldiers, so that the army, as a weapon of capitalism, breaks down at the decisive moment.

Against the threat of world war we must establish a solid united front of the proletariat for the struggle against war and imperialism. The struggle against the dangers of war and armaments must be a step forward toward winning political power of the proletariat. Only the overthrow of capitalism can lead humankind to world peace.

### Election of the Presidium

**Kolarov** (chair): We will proceed to the election of the new ECCI Presidium. It has been proposed that the Presidium should consist of the president, elected by a congress as provided for in the Statutes, plus seven members and two alternates. The proposed members are Radek and Bukharin (Russia); Brandler (Germany); Souvarine and Sellier (France) (they will share one vote); Terracini (Italy), who may be replaced; Kreibich (Czechoslovakia); also Béla Kun. As alternates: Walecki (Poland) and Kuusinen (Finland).

The election of two French comrades onto the Presidium is to serve as a sign that the internal crisis of the party has been overcome. Comrade Béla Kun asks that his nomination be set aside, because he does not have a united party behind him and he wishes to devote his energies entirely to rebuilding and strengthening the Hungarian party. In place of Béla Kun, Carr (United States) is proposed.

The following list was unanimously adopted: Zinoviev, Bukharin, Radek, Brandler, Souvarine/Sellier, Terracini, Kreibich, and Carr; with Walecki and Kuusinen as alternates.

**Clara Zetkin** recalled with moving words that precisely three years ago, on 2 March 1919, in this very same Mitrofaniev Hall of the Kremlin, the Communist International was founded.

*(The session ended with the singing of the 'Internationale'.)*

*(The session is adjourned at 1:00 a.m.)*

## Resolutions

*Economic demands of youth. Resolution on united-front policy. Resolution on proposed international conference. Resolution of the minority on the united front. Resolution of the minority on the international conference. Resolution on the trade-union question. Resolution on the Communist press. Theses on the New Economic Policy. Resolution on the struggle against war. Resolution on the Near East. Resolution on the French question. Resolution on the British question. Resolution against the white terror. Resolution on the agrarian question. Motion on famine relief and economic aid. Decision to call the Fourth World Congress. Report on the Russian question. Resolution on the Russian question. Announcements.*

*Chair: Kolarov.*

*Speakers: Zinoviev, Safarov, Borodin, Kreibich, Zetkin.*

### Economic Demands of Youth

*(The resolution on the struggle against the increasing impoverishment of worker youth was adopted unanimously.) [For the text, see pp. 208–9.]*

*(Voting was then taken on the following resolutions presented on united-front policy:)*

### Resolution on United-Front Policy

The discussion has overcome misunderstandings and showed that the united-front policy proposed by the Executive Committee in no way dulls our antagonism to reformism, but rather continues and develops the course of action of the Third Congress and the sections. The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International therefore approves the December theses on the united front. It instructs the Presidium to determine, together with the delegations of the most important sections, the immediate practical measures to be undertaken in their countries to carry out the adopted course of action, which must, of course, be adapted to the conditions of each country.

## Resolution on Proposed International Conference

*Resolution on the Communist International's participation in the proposed conference of all the workers' organisations of the world.*

The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International has taken note of the Vienna Working Group of Socialist Parties' proposal and favours participation by the parties of the Communist International.

For its part, the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International proposes to include all trade unions and their national and international federations: the Red International of Labour Unions, the entire Amsterdam trade-union International, the Unitary CGT of France, the Unione Syndicale Italiana, the American Federation of Labor, and individual independent trade unions. The Communist International considers it essential that the most important syndicalist and anarchist organisations – the IWW, the Shop Stewards, the Factory Committees, etc. – should also be invited. The international conference must become a genuine and comprehensive representation of all the world's workers' organisations. The world conference of workers' organisations must adopt a single and overriding task: organising the defensive struggle of the working class against international capitalism.

Capitalists around the world have undertaken a systematic offensive against the workers. Everywhere wages are being reduced, the unemployed are increasingly impoverished, taxes and prices are rising.

World imperialism takes advantage of the splintering of the working class and is now attempting to shift the burden of the world slaughter's financial and economic results onto the shoulders of the working class.

Imperialist politics started up again right away after the war and found its most blatant expression in Versailles. This has divided the world into new camps and has led to attempts at new imperialist alliances, which can only lead to new wars. The Washington and Genoa Conferences are steps toward a new campaign of pillage by world imperialism and are the breeding grounds for new wars.

Even the leaders of the International Federation of Transport Workers (affiliated to Amsterdam) and recently also the leaders of the International Federation of Metalworkers (also affiliated to Amsterdam) have declared with alarm that such a danger exists.

Given these conditions, all workers must join together immediately in defence of their fundamental and immediate interests. Anyone rejecting participation in such a united front of all working people under these conditions shows that in reality he is in a united front with the bourgeoisie against the workers.

The Communist International proposes that the coming conference take up only questions that concern immediate and practical united action by the working masses. The agenda of the international conference must be entirely shaped to assure unity in action by the working masses, which can be achieved immediately despite the existence of fundamental political differences of opinion.

Workers who are well aware of the deep roots of these disagreements nonetheless demand, with an overwhelming majority, unity in action of the working class with regard to the urgent and immediate needs of the working class. This healthy demand of the working masses coincides entirely with the position of the Communist International.<sup>1</sup>

The Communist International maintains its fundamental assessment of the tasks of the working class in the present revolutionary period. Now as before it sees the dictatorship of the proletariat and the council system as the decisive instruments to overcome capitalist world anarchy. It is aware, however, that the road to the final battle leads through a unified struggle by the working masses against the attacks of the capitalist class. It is therefore prepared to take part in an international workers' conference that serves the interests of unified proletarian action.

The Communist International accepts the agenda points proposed by the Vienna Working Group for the conference: defence against the capitalist offensive, struggle against reaction. It requests that these points be expanded to cover the following issues:

- 1.) Preparation of the struggle against new imperialist wars (see the decisions of the trade-union federations affiliated to the Amsterdam International).
- 2.) Assistance in restoring the economy of the Russian Soviet republic (see the appeals of the Amsterdam International, particularly as regards famine relief).
- 3.) Reconstruction of devastated regions and the imperialist Versailles Treaty.

The enlarged session of the ECCI expresses its conviction that the international conference of workers' organisations take place at the same time as the governments' economic conference in Genoa. This has already been proposed by the Socialist Party of Denmark, which belongs to the Second International, on a motion by Stauning.

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<sup>1</sup> The translation here follows the French text. In the German version, the paragraphs of the resolution that follow are wrongly placed after the two minority resolutions.

The course of events assures the victory of Communist ideas among the working class of the entire world. The more quickly that the broad working-class masses join in defence of their most elementary interests, the faster will communism be victorious.<sup>2</sup>

*(These two resolutions were adopted. Among the 22 delegations that took part in the vote, 19 – with 46 votes – were in favour and 3 – with 10 votes – were opposed.)*

*(The Italian, Spanish, and French delegations voted for the minority resolutions, which were rejected.)*

### **Resolution of the Minority on the United Front**

*(Rejected)*

The Enlarged Executive Committee declares that the theses of the Third Congress calling on the masses and on workers' groupings for class action for the immediate demands of the proletariat must be applied conscientiously by all sections of the Communist International, taking as its basis and utilising the tendency toward unification of the struggle that is becoming evident within the working class.

In addition, it declares that this essential action must be undertaken without any formal rapprochement with the political parties, since they are all equally incapable of contributing to even the most urgent demands of the working class.

### **Resolution of the Minority on the International Conference**

*(Rejected)*

With regard to the invitation issued to the Communist International by the Vienna organisation to take part in a united conference with leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, the Enlarged Executive Committee decides that there are no grounds to accept this invitation.

For the Italian delegation: *Terracini, Ambrogi, Roberto*

For the French delegation: *Marcel Cachin, Daniel Renoult, Louis Sellier, Roger Métayer*

For the Spanish party: *González.*

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2 For Lenin's comments on this resolution, see pp. 371–2.

*Declaration by Cachin*

*(Presented on behalf of the French, Italian, and Spanish delegations.)*

We have carried out the mandate that was laid on us. We have explained our thinking, defended our resolutions, and brought them to a vote. It appears to us that the reformists of every country are distancing themselves from the working class more with every passing day, applying policies contrary to the daily defence and welfare of the proletariat. We do not doubt that they will show themselves in every situation to be open opponents and saboteurs of a true united front of the working masses. The Executive Committee is in agreement with our estimation, although it is not fully in accord with our decision.

We voluntarily submit to the majority that has just adopted the proposed course of action. We ask that you examine the significance of the vote with close attention. Three countries came together in order to jointly present their reservations. We also note with satisfaction that the Enlarged Executive Committee has committed itself through repeated declarations that it will take this situation seriously into account in the application of its decisions. As for us, comrades, you can rest assured that we will be disciplined in this as in every other circumstance and will remain true to the decisions of the Third International. The debate that ended today has shown that the Third International, more than ever, remains the vanguard of the world revolutionary proletariat.

**Zinoviev:** The new Presidium views the declaration of the French, Italian, and Spanish comrades to be fully comradely and satisfactory. Many comrades have demanded that when we are to meet for the first time with the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, we should ask these gentlemen for clarification on a number of important questions. Many Russian comrades demand that Vandervelde, who as chair of the Basel Congress was the first to betray this congress's decisions, accept responsibility for this.<sup>3</sup> Some Petrograd workers' assemblies have demanded that Vandervelde be placed before the Soviet republic's revolutionary tribunal, since it is the only revolutionary court existing at this time. Two members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party of Russia have just publicly admitted that they were assigned by the party's Central Committee to prepare the assassination of Lenin and Trotsky and that they murdered Comrade Volodarsky.<sup>4</sup> Our Russian comrades demand that this

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3 Vandervelde was named Belgium's minister of state in August 1914, at the beginning of the First World War. For the 1912 Basel Congress of the Second International and its commitment to the struggle against the war danger, see p. 153, n. 8.

4 V. Volodarsky, a Bolshevik member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, was assassinated in Petrograd 20 June 1918 by a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

Central Committee of terrorists and murderers be pilloried at the international conference. The comrades of Georgia call Henderson to account because he demanded on behalf of British imperialism that Georgian workers and peasants be disarmed. The Yugoslav comrades ask that we call the Yugoslav Social Democrats to account for their united front with the police and reaction. Many German comrades ask for clarification of the role of Scheidemann and Noske in the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and in the Baltic adventure. The Polish comrades demand that Daszyński be called to account over his activity on behalf of British and French counterrevolution. As for the Italian comrades, they demand that Serrati explain his pact with the fascists.<sup>5</sup> The former Austrian chancellor Renner also faces demands for clarification of his role. Similarly, clarification is demanded with regard to the Social Democrats of Finland and Latvia regarding the white terror.

Despite all these comrades' wishes, we consider the realisation of the united front and the question of capitalism's offensive against the working class to be more important and want it to be given priority at the conference. Independently of that, we are certainly ready to demand answers to all the other questions at the appropriate time and place. We do not believe that these questions should be left unanswered, nor that history should not speak its verdict on betrayal. But above all we want the proletariat around the world to gather for the struggle. The victory of the proletariat will seal the verdict on all the betrayers.

### Resolution on the Trade-Union Question

*(The following resolution on Communist tasks in the trade unions was adopted unanimously, with the French delegation abstaining.)*

1.) The Enlarged Executive Committee confirms that no major changes are required to the decisions of the Communist International's Third Congress on this question.<sup>6</sup> The six months covered by the report have demonstrated again that the guidelines adopted there for trade-union work are correct and effective. The present session has taken up the trade-union question only with the goal of indicating to Communists that, in a manner corresponding to their

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5 The PSI parliamentary group signed a 'pacification pact' with the fascists on 3 August 1921, in the vain hope of ending fascist violence.

6 For the Third Congress 'Theses on the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions', see Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 953–65.

influence in the unions, they should make this work more specific and adapt it to the particular conditions of different countries and different branches of industry.

2.) As a result of the increasingly vigorous capitalist offensive, the trade-union movement of all countries is today experiencing a severe crisis. This crisis finds expression in a decline of membership and the drying up of financial resources. On the other hand, the increasing impoverishment of the broad masses generates a spontaneous impulse to take up the struggle as a united body against the capitalist offensive. They seek to break through the hesitant policy of the reformist leaders, which has robbed the trade unions of their fighting strength. And if there is no alternative, they are willing to proceed without the reformist leaders and over their heads to defend their elementary needs through unified actions.

3.) Conditions in the international trade-union movement are extremely favourable for further development and deepening of activity to win over the unions and broaden Communist influence among the masses. Communists in the unions must take this reality as their starting point when they struggle for the Red International of Labour Unions.

4.) In some countries the RILU is, so far, only a current within the old organisations, while in others it embraces the majority of members, and in a third category of countries, it already encompasses the trade-union confederations. Taking this as a starting point, in places where the RILU is still only a current, Communists must work in every trade union, both national and international, to unite all workers in a firm power centre determined to take up and carry out a serious struggle against the bourgeoisie. Where we have a majority of revolutionary-minded workers in the trade unions, the task of Communists is to work for their affiliation to the RILU on a national basis.

5.) The task of Communists in the coming period consists in extending their influence in the old reformist trade unions, in struggling against the split policy of the Amsterdam leaders, and in carrying out precisely and consistently the united-front policy in the trade-union movement. No matter how small a minority they may represent in individual trade unions or union federations, Communists must work for the goal of keeping that minority within their organisation and struggling there for their programme and policies to be carried out. The affiliation of trade-union minorities to the RILU may be purely ideological in character, but these minorities must demonstrate their affiliation to the RILU by carrying out in practice the decisions of the first congress of revolutionary trade unions and following the policies of the Profin-tern.

6.) Communists are called on to strive to keep every RILU-affiliated trade union within the international trade and industrial secretariats. If they have not yet affiliated, they should do so. We raise the need openly before the international proletariat to remain in the international trade-union alliances and affiliate to the RILU only when we win a majority for its principles. The workers of each country should decide at their general trade-union congresses which programme and which course of action expresses the interests of the working class – those of the Amsterdam International or those of the RILU. The broad masses will recognise the Amsterdammers only as accomplices of the bourgeoisie, who defend bourgeois democracy against proletarian dictatorship while treating proletarian democracy with contempt – when Communists seek to win the majority in the trade unions through the means of proletarian democracy, in order to transform them, in accordance with the will of the majority of unionists, from agencies assisting the bourgeoisie into organs of struggle against them.

7.) Currents have appeared within some parties orienting to liquidation of the RILU, based on much unclarity and on a mistaken hope for a left turn by the Amsterdam leaders. This must be strongly and categorically condemned. The Amsterdammers will always waver back and forth and bend to the left to the degree that Communist influence increases in this or that country and that the RILU broadens its organisational and ideological influence on the trade-union movement in all countries. The Communists must not count on a left turn by the trade-union leaders. Communists base their course of action on the inevitable revolutionising of the masses. As social contradictions develop, as the influence of the Communist parties and Communist International increases, with the growth of revolutionary ideas in the working class, there will be more attempts by the Amsterdam International to cloak their reformist deeds, their evasion of any struggle – even efforts against urgent impoverishment – with revolutionary phrases.

8.) The Communist parties and the Communist International, which took the initiative in forming the RILU, must continue their work to strengthen and develop this organisation, which encompasses not only Communist but also syndicalist and non-party revolutionary forces.

### Resolution on the Communist Press

(*The following resolution was adopted unanimously:*)<sup>7</sup>

1.) The Enlarged Executive Committee reminds the International's sections that the press – and particularly the daily Communist press – is important in reaching the broad working masses to educate them, train them, and draw them under the party's influence.

2.) Sections of the Communist International must seek to make party newspapers into newspapers of the entire working class. The Enlarged Executive Committee adopts the suggestions found in the letter of Comrade Zinoviev on the nature of these papers.<sup>8</sup>

3.) The appearance and contents of the Communist press are shaped by the milieu and the need to take into account the habits of its readers, in order to win them. It must be distinguished above all by its proletarian character. In this sense, the parties must create a new type of workers' newspaper.

4.) We should avoid making our papers too theoretical and abstract, which would distance them from the mass of ordinary workers. We must also avoid giving them the character of papers written by professional journalists who do not have close and permanent contact with the life of the working class.

5.) Communist newspapers will achieve a proletarian character by linking their editors more closely with workers and by direct or indirect collaboration by the workers themselves in the editorial process.

6.) The Executive Committee recommends that the national sections that have a large number of weekly local and regional newspapers nourish these papers through a national bulletin of the Communist press, as is done in France and Germany, broadening in this way the scope of the local papers, which is often limited to local and regional politics.

7.) The Executive Committee instructs the Presidium to convene in the course of the year a special conference on the Communist press to discuss the many technical and practical challenges faced by our newspapers.

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7 This resolution is not found in the German text, and is translated here from the French.

8 A reference to a letter Zinoviev wrote to editors of Communist periodicals in 1921. It was published as 'The Character of Our Newspapers' in *Bulletin of the Executive Committee of the Communist International*, no. 1, 8 September 1921. Also published in *Inprecorr*, 1 October 1921.

## The New Economic Policy

*The theses of Comrade Sokolnikov on the Soviet New Economic Policy, presented in Session 14, are unanimously adopted. [For the text, see pp. 201–5.]*

## Resolution on the Struggle against War<sup>9</sup>

*The following theses on imperialism, the struggle against war, and the danger of war are adopted unanimously:*

1.) The imperialist war of 1914–18 and the treaties through which it was ended – Versailles, Trianon, Saint-Germain, Sèvres, and Neuilly<sup>10</sup> – did not dispose of the existing global economic and political conflicts among the capitalist great powers of Europe. These conflicts continue to operate in different forms and under different conditions in the struggle for primacy and domination of the European and world market. New conflicts of this type have arisen among the imperialist great powers of Europe. Conflicts between Britain, the United States, and Japan, which were fuelled by the war, are growing rapidly. The national conflicts are increasing between the colonial powers of Europe and the peoples subjected to their rule or threatened by them. Soviet Russia has been sidelined from the world market and world economy through blockade and war, which the imperialists of all countries hoped would overthrow the only state in which the peasants and workers have taken power from the hands of the bourgeoisie. The rise of national states on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the establishment of border states between Western Europe and Russia have multiplied tariff barriers obstructing the free development of productive forces.

2.) The Entente has smashed German imperialism militarily and subjugated it economically and politically. This has freed Britain, for the moment, from its most feared adversary of the prewar period in the struggle for global supremacy and exploitation. French imperialism seeks to overcome the eco-

<sup>9</sup> The style and content of this resolution strongly suggest Zetkin's authorship.

<sup>10</sup> For the Versailles Treaty, see p. 58–9, n. 6. The parallel treaties of Saint-Germain (September 1919) and Trianon (June 1920) allocated the territory of Austria-Hungary into several successor states. The Sèvres Treaty of August 1920 parceled out Ottoman territory to several powers. The Neuilly Treaty between Bulgaria and the Allied powers, signed 27 November 1919, called for Bulgaria to cede lands to Yugoslavia and Greece, reduce its army, and pay war reparations.

conomic devastation of France and its increasing financial needs by squeezing dry a Germany delivered into its hands. However, the pitiless pillage of Germany, combined with other consequences of the World War – devaluation of money, inflation, and the like – lead to impoverishment, which destroys the capacity of the German market to absorb British goods, a vital necessity if Britain's economy is to flourish. At the same time, under these circumstances, as a result of the oppressive weight of reparations that Entente imperialism has imposed on Germany, the British and world markets are swamped with cheap German goods. No tariff barriers or anti-dumping laws can provide protection from such cutthroat competition. The weakening of Germany in the world economy and political system do not actually strengthen Britain but rather weaken and threaten it. This is reinforced by the substantial expansion and consolidation of French imperialism.

3.) The economic development of France has received a significant impulse through the outcome of the war. France possesses the most significant iron ore reserves in Europe, while Germany still possesses the greatest amount of coal on the continent. Unification of exploitative power over iron and coal, whether through conquest or treaty, would be a deadly blow at Britain's economic and political position inside and outside Europe. Nonetheless, even without this unification, which is promoted by the coal Germany provides as reparations, France has been transformed from a rentier state that provides loans into a country with blossoming heavy industry ruled by finance capital, which seeks a secure productive base and a consolidated territory for exploitation. France is emerging as an increasingly significant competitor of Britain in the coalfields of Czechoslovakia and Poland and in the oilfields of East Galicia and Romania. Thanks to its economic, political, and military ties with the Little Entente, with Poland, and with the border states, France is superseding British economic and political influence, and more important, it is securing at Britain's expense a closed terrain for the plundering of the Balkans, Soviet Russia, and the Near East.

The global economic and political antagonisms between French and British imperialism are ever more evident and pregnant with conflict – on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, in North Africa, the Near East, and the Middle East. France's position in Morocco and Syria, its Angora [Ankara] agreement with Turkey, and this agreement's effects in the Muslim world threaten not only Britain's previous and future fields for exploitation in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia but also, even more, its link to India.<sup>11</sup> As Britain's colonial realm is

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11 Morocco became an object of European colonisation efforts beginning in 1840. In 1904,

increasingly shaken by extended and intense national and social movements, it becomes increasingly important for Britain to secure its domination of the Dardanelles and the Suez Canal, through a dependent and pliant Arab state and through strong positions in Mesopotamia, Iran, and Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> The weight of these world economic and political concerns presses Britain to strengthen Italy and Greece at the expense of French imperialism, driving Italy to arm itself in order to reduce France's influence in the Mediterranean. As Soviet Russia moves closer to being incorporated into the capitalist world market, Britain and France are visibly contending for primacy in the opportunity to exploit the natural resources and labour power of the proletarians and peasants of this great republic.

4.) During the four years of imperialist slaughter, primacy in world markets was transferred from Britain to the United States, which was transformed from a supplier of food and raw materials to Europe and recipient of its industrial goods into a manufacturer of finished products. The United States replaced and drove out European products from the markets of North and South America, pressing forward with increasing dominance in China and the British colonial countries. Industry in the United States shifted from a focus on quantity to one on quality. It has achieved a high level of technical production, assuring it – quite apart from other advantages – of a great superiority over British produc-

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France and Spain secretly divided the country into spheres of influence. In 1912 most of Morocco formally became a French protectorate.

Following dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, an independent kingdom of Syria was established in May 1920. In July, French troops defeated Syrian forces and occupied Damascus.

The Ankara Agreement between France and Turkey of October 1921 ended the Franco-Turkish War.

- 12 Britain gained control of the Suez Canal in 1882. Egypt, which had been under effective British control since the late 1870s, was declared a British protectorate in 1914. Britain declared Egypt formally independent in February 1922 while retaining effective domination of the country.

Iraq, previously known as Mesopotamia, was carved out of the Ottoman Empire by the British and French following Turkey's defeat in World War I, remaining under British military occupation.

Iran was partially occupied by British troops during World War I. In 1919, after the Russian Revolution and withdrawal of British troops, London attempted unsuccessfully to establish a protectorate there.

Afghanistan had effectively been a British protectorate since the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War of 1878–80. Afghanistan gained its formal independence in 1919.

tion. The United States of North America is no longer a debtor of Europe; it is Europe's creditor. It now has the lion's share of the world's gold reserves. Britain is hardly in a position to fend off the enhanced competition of the United States in European markets. Britain seems powerless to win back or expand its old economic predominance in North and South America, on the coasts of the Pacific, and in the South Pacific.

Japan also developed its industry during the imperialist war and thus enhanced its world economic and political sphere of influence. It appeared in the markets of South Africa as a competitor of the United States and gained a foothold in the islands of the Pacific. Japan seized the rich Chinese province of Shandong, used its base in Korea to take possession of Manchuria, penetrated East Siberia as a conqueror, and reached out to grasp Mongolia.<sup>13</sup> Japan's rising imperialism points its spear toward the United States, threatening its position in the Pacific, in the South Pacific Islands, and its ambition to exploit China. Britain came to terms with this development hoping it would stem the tide of American imperialism. Britain's alliance with Japan aimed to secure its rule and its ability to pillage southern China, while it granted the north of the Middle Kingdom to the Japanese robbers.

During the war, in order to secure the needed financial and military support of its colonies and dominions, Britain had to grant them the right to participate in setting foreign policy. This has placed heavy shackles on Britain in its relationship to the United States and Japan. Canada feels itself much more closely tied to the United States, economically, politically, and culturally, than to the motherland. The Australian federation is in sharp conflict with Japan's lust for imperialist expansion. Meanwhile Japan, Britain's earlier ally, is probably still secretly linked to Britain in the latter's opposition to the United States. British South Africa, overwhelmingly a peasant country, has no reason to support Britain in its war moves. The United States can still hold its own in the economic

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13 In 1915 China was forced to cede control of former German concessions in Shandong peninsula to Japan. Chinese sovereignty was reestablished in 1922.

Korea became a protectorate of Japan in 1905 and was effectively annexed by it in 1910.

In Manchuria Japan became the dominant power following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Until 1931 it did so working through local warlords; in 1931 Japanese troops invaded the country and took direct control.

In eastern Siberia, a Japanese interventionist force that eventually numbered 70,000 troops occupied Russia's Pacific coast in 1918, while Japanese corporations and settlers arrived in an apparent effort to colonise the region and move on to Mongolia. Facing both Soviet advances and opposition within Japan, Japanese troops withdrew in 1922.

rivalry with Japan thanks to its industrial superiority. However, political considerations – above all with regard to the ‘closing’ of China – sharpen the conflict between American and Japanese imperialism.

5.) The capitalist great powers’ four-year campaign of devastation and pillage resulted in the emergence of fervent revolutionary movements both in the British colonies and in territories over which it aims to extend its colonial subjugation and exploitation. These movements draw inspiration and strength from the example of the Russian Revolution and the existence of Soviet Russia. They are primarily nationalist and religious in character, but they are linked to social-revolutionary struggles. Despite Ireland’s proclamation as a republic, in a federal relationship to Great Britain, bloody struggles continue in Ireland, nourished by insuperable economic and social contradictions.<sup>14</sup> The banner of national rebellion, raised by Zaglul Pasha, waves over Egypt. In India both harsh coercion and concessions are equally powerless to cope with the national rebellion against Britain’s rule.<sup>15</sup> One strike after another demonstrate that alongside the national dispute, class struggles between exploiters and exploited must be fought out. From the Atlantic Ocean to the Himalayas, indeed even into China, the Muslims are aroused and in ferment. This unrest among the peoples of Asia and Africa finds expression in many different ways and fluctuates in intensity. However, it is directed against the capitalist states and is reinforced by their mutual struggle for world markets and exploitation.

6.) Regardless of the irreconcilable conflicts of interest among the major capitalist powers, they stand united, armed, and ready for struggle to overthrow Soviet Russia. The imperialist states are not satisfied with the concessions that Soviet Russia, under the terrible pressure of its economic plight and left in the lurch by proletarians of the other countries, is prepared to grant to foreign capitalists. They strive to suck the blood of this enormous territory, to pillage its natural resources and labour power, without the limits imposed by Soviet law. Above all, they want to destroy Soviet power itself. Soviet Russia is a vivid example to the workers of every country that they must take state power, establish their dictatorship, and rip capitalism out by the roots. Soviet Russia provides the strongest support for all struggles of the exploited and oppressed

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14 The Irish war of independence of 1919–21, led by the Irish Republican Army, sought to end British rule over the island. The war ended with the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, which partitioned the country. A Free State was created in the south as a self-governing dominion within the British Empire, while open British rule continued in six northern counties. The treaty led to a split in the IRA between supporters and opponents of the treaty, culminating in the Irish civil war of 1922–3.

15 For the anti-colonial movement in Egypt and India, see p. 217, n. 10.

against their exploiters and oppressors. It is the motherland and the treasure of proletarian world revolution.

French imperialism has served as the sword of capitalists of every country against Soviet Russia. France squandered countless billions in order to instigate counterrevolutionary conspiracies inside and outside Russia, to arm the destructive campaigns of tsarist generals and nationalist bands in the border states and to cover their costs. These French-financed counterrevolutionary armies – especially Wrangel – were defeated by the Red Army, demonstrating that French policy was a lost cause. France has now adopted a new policy toward Russia. Its goal, however, is to extort the same giant sums from Russia to satisfy French creditors. French imperialism will therefore continue to squander the wealth of the working masses of France in order to nourish the militarism of the Little Entente and the border countries – notably, that of Poland. French diplomacy and French generals are preparing new war moves against Soviet Russia from Finland to Romania. Munitions, logistical supplies, and battle-ready troops can be sent from France to support its allies on the front lines. German ‘neutrality’ is no wall against transport. Given the weakness of the German bourgeois government – whether led by Wirth or someone else – this neutrality becomes transformed into encouragement of war and where possible also participation in war, given their hatred of the proletarian and peasant state and their fear of proletarian revolution. The Ludendorffs lie in wait to lead the struggle against Bolshevism, with French imperialism’s approval. Although Soviet Russia pursues no imperialist goals and must devote all its resources to reconstruction, it cannot disarm. It must remain ready for battle in the interests of proletarian revolution.

7.) Three years after the end of the imperialist world slaughter and two years after the signing of peace treaties, the world – and especially the capitalist world – is covered with inflammable material that can flare up in new imperialist wars, more gigantic, more terrible, more destructive, and more murderous than those that raged from 1914 to 1918 before the eyes of a horrified humanity. The capitalist states are carrying a load of armaments heavier than in the pre-war period. The resources of individual countries are still quite insufficient to even begin to heal the wounds caused by the last war to the working masses and to rebuild what has been destroyed. Already the bourgeois governments are squandering the resources of the toiling people for war armaments on land, sea, and air. And these armaments themselves heighten and hasten the dangers of war rising up on all sides.

After the initial bold leap forward of the Russian Revolution, the proletarian world revolution has developed at a slow pace, permitting the bourgeoisie in the big capitalist countries to attempt to restore their crisis-ridden economy

and the shattered state on capitalist foundations. The restoration of the capitalist profit system and bourgeois order entails the continuation of all economic, political, and social conflicts and contradictions, both nationally and internationally. At the present stage of capitalist development, these contradictions drive inevitably to world wars of immense scope, frightening character, and consequences that can hardly be imagined. What is more, these conflicts and contradictions are aggravated and heightened both by the war and its consequences and by the bourgeoisie's efforts to maintain capitalism through the barbaric exploitation and subjugation of the proletariat.

The free play of enormous means and forces of production, created by capitalism, cannot be contained any longer within the narrow frontiers of national bourgeois states. Capital demands the entire world as its field of activity. Private property of the means of production still exists; the lust for profit of individual capitalists and groups of capitalists remains the driving force of production; heavy industry and finance still dominate the economy and state. Given all this, capitalism in decline is still characterised unavoidably by enormous war armaments, the ongoing danger of war, and ultimately world war, in which millions are slaughtered and crippled while blooming heartlands of civilisation are transformed into wastelands. The forces calling for peace in bourgeois society cannot prevail against the forces of capitalist imperialism that are driving for war.

8.) All the gatherings and consultations of ministers, diplomats, parliamentarians, financial potentates, and friends of peace organised since the war have not succeeded in banishing the threatening danger of world wars. The fate of the League of Nations – this grotesque caricature of proletarian solidarity – also stands as a warning to those fanatically committed to illusions in peace. Alliances of capitalist states bring not peace and security but threats and preparations for war. The most recent example of this is the Washington Disarmament Conference, which shows that the capitalist world has neither the capacity nor the will to secure peace for humankind. Despite the four- and five-power alliances for capitalist profiteering in China and East Siberia, the 'East Asian question' remains unresolved. It may well in the near future drive the allies into war against each other and against the peoples whom they wanted to endow with the blessings of capitalist civilisation. The decision to reduce naval fighting forces makes a mockery of the very idea of disarmament. The notion of reducing land and air armaments, which probably represent the most horrific form of destruction of human life and achievement, was rejected out of hand. The hopes of the naïve, of those who cannot learn, that the Washington Conference could secure peace and promote the economic and political reconstruction of Europe have burst like a soap bubble.

9.) The coming economic conference in Genoa aims to alter the world-historic fate of capitalism – world war or proletarian revolution – from another starting point. The goal is to overcome the economic and political conflicts of the large capitalist states of Europe and to organise their resources internationally in a unified plan for economic reconstruction. Now that the bourgeoisies of impoverished Europe and their helpless governments have agreed to set this goal, we await the provisioning of the enormous means required for this goal by the United States, which is drowning in its own wealth.

The calling of this conference is an admission that the Versailles Treaty and the other similar peace treaties are untenable, that they cannot provide a foundation for Europe's reconstruction. Rather, they are means for its further destruction and impoverishment. Calling the conference is an admission that the bourgeoisies ruling in each country are incapable of bringing order and stability to the economic chaos bequeathed by the war and of enabling a new and higher life to bloom in the ruins. The conference will demonstrate that this gigantic task is beyond the resources of a united Europe and America. This task can be accomplished only after the overthrow of bourgeois rule by the revolutionary proletariat. This act will not only free human labour power from the yoke of capitalist exploitation and subjugation, it will also free all the material means of production from the limits imposed by the capitalist profit economy and thereby create the conditions for full social reconstruction.

The economic and political situation outlined in the theses of the Communist International's Third World Congress have not significantly changed.<sup>16</sup> It does appear that there are signs of economic recovery in the United States and elsewhere. However, the overall situation confirms that the capitalist economy is on the downward curve of its development and is nearing its end. On this unstable and weakening historical basis, the proposed economic conference seeks to maintain, strengthen, and improve the capitalist economy of Europe that has been shaken to its very roots. The conference must square the circle. It must satisfy the claims of French imperialism to plunder the German economy, and nonetheless maintain the viability of this economy so it can serve as a market for British goods and protect British industry against the dumping of competitive German goods. The costs of reconciling the interests of French and British capitalism are to be borne by German proletarians and, in line with the shared fate of all the world's exploited, by the proletarians of all countries. The

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16 A reference to 'Theses on the World Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International', in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 901–20.

international bourgeoisie wants and imagines that these costs will be borne above all by the state in which the workers and peasants have taken power, Soviet Russia. Will a single mammoth international capitalist syndicate take part in Soviet Russia's economic reconstruction, or will this be done by a number of companies, many of them large? That seems to be the question. It is a matter of robbers coming to agreement on how to plunder their victim and how to divide up the booty.

The conference preparations, the experts' reports, the chatter of diplomats, the speeches by ministers, the counsels and intrigues of 'influential circles', the postponement of the conference date – all this expresses the irreconcilable conflict of interests, chasms dividing the capitalist world. The bourgeoisie of every country is of one mind in its goal of driving Soviet Russia down to the status of a colonial territory open for international capitalist exploitation. Yet every day the contradictions are more evident in this proposed deal for plunder between the capitalists of France, Britain, the United States, and Germany. The struggle between the French and British government over the Russian question is an unambiguous expression of these conflicts, as is the stance of the German government. Germany's policy toward Russia was nothing but a shadow of the one followed by the Entente, and with regard to Soviet Russia's reconstruction, Germany now appears as a vassal of Britain. And that is happening even though Germany's capitalist interests demand an independent policy.

Although the outcome of the conference is uncertain, one thing is already clear: Germany will be the object over which Entente imperialism negotiates. Germany will not dare to present the concept of revising the Versailles Treaty, even though it is evident that without this revision Europe's economy cannot be constructed on a capitalist basis. But the Entente imperialists will have to negotiate with Soviet Russia. Despite the pitiable condition of its economy, the power of Soviet Russia will find expression here – the power it owes to the proletarian revolution. This revolution, which created the Red Army out of nothing in order to defend the Soviet order, will also strengthen the Soviet government in countering the economic attack of world capitalism. The Soviet government has received *de facto* if not *de jure* recognition through being invited to the international economic conference, and this will increase the conflicts among the capitalist states even more. Although it is uncertain whether these states will reach agreement in Genoa regarding Europe's reconstruction, it is certain that capitalism will receive at most a breathing space and not a life-saving cure. World wars or proletarian revolution? This question will remain on the historical agenda even after the Genoa discussions and decisions.

10.)<sup>17</sup> Bourgeois pacifism and anti-militarism, which before the war was an uninfluential ideology among small groups, could achieve real significance in the present historical situation. If realised, this ideology would represent a final attempt to maintain capitalism through unifying and organising social forces on an international scale. But this attempt would ultimately be revealed as a delusion and a failure. Even if international organisations were to succeed in expanding the framework for production, it would still remain too narrow for the free play of increased productive forces. They would break free of the framework and find release through a massive crisis.

Every attempt to take even the first tentative steps toward the realisation of pacifist goals will fail. The conflicts between the groups of capitalists in different countries are irreconcilable. So too are the conflicts among the individual victorious states and among the helpless defeated states. Any attempt to present a programme of pacifist reconstruction will in reality only show to the broad masses of the proletariat and the small and middle bourgeoisie that bourgeois pacifism is a capitalist illusion.

Pacifism is just as incapable as bourgeois social reform of overcoming the contradictions, evils, and crimes of capitalism. However, it introduces division and uncertainty into the ranks of the bourgeoisie, and thereby weakens the proletariat's class enemy. Communists need to utilise this possible weakening of the bourgeoisie by taking every pacifist effort of the bourgeoisie as an occasion to lead the working class into struggle, enabling it to learn the urgent lesson that militarism and imperialism cannot be surmounted through the gradual triumph of reason and love of peace among the bourgeoisie. Struggle will clarify and firm up among the broad masses the conviction that militarism and imperialism, armaments and war, will not vanish without a most powerful class struggle by the proletariat, without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

This conviction will keep the revolutionary energy of the proletariat from being crippled or undermined, a danger linked to the propaganda of bourgeois pacifism. It would be a severe danger for the proletarian liberation struggle to be disarmed by this propaganda rather than continuing to arm energetically and to struggle onwards. Clear perceptions of bourgeois rule and exploitation, thanks to its power over production of the means of life and death, must not disappear into a mist of pacifist and sentimental hopes. The proletariat must take possession of both in order to free itself from exploitation and subjugation. Given the use of weaponry to forcibly deny its freedom, the proletariat

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17 The German text duplicates number 9 here. This point and the subsequent one have thus been renumbered.

must conquer this freedom through force of arms. Not only the political but also the military apparatus of power must be torn out of the hands of the possessors and reshaped by the proletariat to serve its own interests and historical tasks.

11.) On the basis of these facts and considerations, this Enlarged ECCI session declares that the only effective protection against the threat of war is proletarian revolution, which will overthrow capitalism and thus safeguard the reconstruction of the social economy. This will eliminate not only the conflicts between classes but the conflicts of interests between states. The gathered representatives of 36 nations therefore declare it to be the duty of Communist parties of every country to develop ideologically and organisationally a vigorous revolutionary class struggle to prevent war. The means to this end include:

- (1) Systematic education of the toiling masses, including the youth, regarding the origin and nature of wars.
- (2) Presentation of all issues and decisions of foreign policy, armaments, etc., to the broadest masses.
- (3) Educational and well-organised legal and illegal propaganda among the soldiers and within every type of armed formation.
- (4) Commitment of the will of proletarians, if imperialist wars break out, to use all possible means to halt transport of army supplies and troops at all costs.
- (5) Reinforcement of the revolutionary will of the broad masses to oppose the onset of an imperialist war with all means at their disposal, with street actions, general strike, and armed uprising.
- (6) Creation of legal and underground bodies and structures that assure that Communists of countries where conflicts are the sharpest can work together internationally in unified and energetic fashion.

Regarding the international governmental economic conference in Genoa, this session of the Communist International's Enlarged Executive Committee calls on the producers and exploited of all countries to join in a common front through massive demonstrations to counterpose their revolutionary will to the international bourgeoisie's tortuous efforts to restore the economy. To counter the haggling over their flesh and that of Soviet Russia, the masses must join in raising these slogans:

- (1) Cancel the treaties that ended the imperialist war of 1914–18.
- (2) Reduce all forms of armament.

- (3) Shift the burden of war, reparations, and reconstruction onto the bourgeoisie.
- (4) Hands off the independence of Soviet Russia; re-establish normal political relations with it.
- (5) Extensive support for Soviet Russia's economic reconstruction through both private and government initiatives.

### Resolution on the Near East

*(Safarov reported on the work of the commission on the Near Eastern question. The resolution prepared by the commission was unanimously adopted.)*<sup>18</sup>

1.) Considering the extreme importance of national revolutionary movements developing in the colonial countries of the East, in Asia, and particularly in Egypt and India, the Enlarged Executive Committee invites the Communist parties of all concerned countries to organise a systematic campaign in their press, in parliament, and among the masses for the liberation of the colonies. The British Communist Party in particular is duty-bound to support the revolutionary movements of India and Egypt through a permanent organised campaign.

2.) The parties of France, Italy, and Britain – those directly involved in events in North Africa, Asia Minor, and India – should follow the example of the French party in establishing colonial commissions linked to their executive committees, whose task it will be to carry out systematic propaganda, to maintain regular relations with the revolutionary organisations in the colonies, and to establish direct contact with them. The Balkan Communist Federation will take charge specifically of organising the Communist movement in Turkey.

3.) The Executive Committee invites the parties to publish editions of Communist literature in the indigenous languages of the colonies.

### Resolution on the French Question

*The resolution was adopted. [For the text, see pp. 214–7.]*

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<sup>18</sup> This resolution appears only in the French edition.

## Resolution on the British Question

*(Borodin reported on the work of the commission and distributed a resolution that was adopted unanimously, with one abstention by the French.)*

1.) The economic crisis of Great Britain shows no sign of relenting. The capitalist class continues its attempts to recover at the expense of the working class. There seems to be no way to emerge from the economic crisis other than by ruthlessly cutting wages. In its offensive against the working class, the capitalist class insists on lengthening the working day and is destroying the achievements of legislation and other protective measures. The cost of living has risen by 140 per cent above the prewar level. The result of this is an enormous increase in poverty in Great Britain. Given the current reduction in wages, this means that not only the army of unemployed but the entire British working class is living under conditions of extreme poverty.

2.) How did the working class of Great Britain land in this situation? Some years ago the workers could choose between two political paths. On the one hand, there were the policies of the right wing in the workers' movement – one of compromises, futile negotiations, individual struggles, temporary agreements, Whitley commissions.<sup>19</sup> And on the other hand, there was the course that did not accept compromise, that advanced direct demands of the workers and that negotiated only with the purpose of giving expression to these demands. This course demanded workers' councils and united, direct action in every case.

Significantly, mass strikes such as those of the miners, railway workers, and transport workers all ended in defeat, simply because each union was left on its own. It was from this bitter experience, marked by a total absence of unity, that the Triple Alliance was born. Later, when the Irish transport workers were on strike, again it was the lack of united workers' support in other parts of the country that led to the strike's defeat.<sup>20</sup> During the war, the appeal of leaders of the unions and Labour Party to purchase government bonds led to a further increase in disunity. The history of the years that followed shows a peak in struggles that were again lost by the working class because of a lack of common

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19 The Whitley Council (Joint Industrial Council) was a series of joint labour-management bodies designed to prevent or minimise industrial unrest and class struggle. Originally created in 1916, these bodies were extended nationally in 1919.

20 A reference to the Dublin strike of August 1913–January 1914 that involved 20,000 workers. The strike ended after the British Trades Union Congress rejected the Irish unionists' call for sympathy strikes.

action. The Clyde strike of 1916, in which many arrests took place, failed because the official union movement failed to provide any form of help. The same thing happened with the machinists' strike of 1917. So too it was for the Yorkshire miners: after a splendid and vigorous struggle, success was impossible because of betrayal by other workers. Finally, the miners struggle of 1920 [1921] ended with the collapse of the Triple Alliance; the British working class suffered the catastrophic consequences of its own disunity.<sup>21</sup>

3.) What are the results of the failure of the British working class to form a united front against the bourgeoisie? More than two million are jobless; hundreds of thousands of workers are on short hours. The workers' class organisations are broken and exhausted. Threatened with collapse, they have been forced to halt support to the jobless. For the first time since the armistice, the size of the unions' membership is falling rapidly. The unions' capacity to struggle is reduced more and more. They divide into different federations and hundreds of individual union locals, without the existence of any united power that could resist the capitalist offensive.

The political weapons of the working class are much weakened and incapable of leading the proletariat in struggle against the bourgeoisie. The union leaders, who are also leaders of the Labour Party, busy themselves with fruitless negotiations with the government or limit themselves to empty threats. The Council of Action of 1920 represented the first time in the history of the British workers' movement that the proletariat united in a common front against the bourgeoisie, which was seeking to draw the entire country into a war with the Russian workers' republic.<sup>22</sup> Since then, however, the Labour Party has permitted the workers' ranks to be divided and once again rendered incapable of taking action against the capitalist offensive. Today the working class is not sufficiently united and centralised in either an economic or a political sense to counter the capitalist attacks in a unified manner.

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21 A strike by Clyde munitions workers in Scotland in March–April 1916 was broken by the arrest and deportation of ten of its leaders.

The engineering (machinists) strike of April and May 1917, provoked by government anti-union measures, involved some 200,000 workers, with an estimated loss of 1.5 million working days; the strike lacked official union sanction.

The Yorkshire miners' strike of January 1919 involved some 200,000 workers.

For the 1921 miners' strike and the Triple Alliance, see p. 80, nn. 4 and 6.

22 A national Council of Action was organised in August 1920 to oppose Britain's intervention during Poland's war against Soviet Russia, with the support of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. Local councils of action were then formed throughout the country.

4.) Salvation for the British working class lies more than ever in a united front against the bourgeoisie. The working class must unite for a massive struggle to defend itself against unemployment, wage reductions, lengthening of the working day, and all further attacks on their overall standard of living. The capitalist offensive is not limited to Great Britain alone, and the united front of the British working class must therefore be expanded to include workers in other countries. Preparations must begin right away to unite the working class around a common programme in order to maintain ourselves: work for the jobless, a 44-hour workweek, a secure rate of pay, reintroduction of labour laws, and other protective measures. Along with that, preparations are needed to unite the working class around a common programme. In order to carry out this programme, the workers' movement must unite in the effort to achieve a Labour government in the next general election. If the Labour Party goes to the masses with such a programme it will be successful, by creating a united front of the working class that will assure victory in the elections.

5.) The Communist Party of Great Britain struggles for a united working class. During the efforts of the action committee to block the war moves against Russia, the Communist Party committed all its strength to this struggle. Before the Cardiff trade-union congress,<sup>23</sup> the Communist Party gave broad distribution to the manifestos of the Communist International and the trade-union International, which stressed the need for unity and centralisation of the British workers' movement and establishment of a single general staff of labour.

Since this manifesto, the Communist Party has never ceased its daily agitation for working-class unity. Its entire activity was concentrated on this programme. It sought to bring together the unemployed and the former soldiers in order to integrate their struggle into that of the working class as a whole. They utilised their influence among the workers who are still employed to encourage them to provide assistance to the jobless by refusing overtime and entry into the union (at the Ediswan factory in London). In the trade unions and factory organisations, the Communist Party made efforts to achieve full unity of the workers.

6.) The General Council that was elected at the last trade-union congress in Cardiff does not possess the full authority of a general staff of labour. That would require a considerable centralisation and unification of the workers' movement. In fact, the General Council has since taken an important step in that direction.

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23 The Fifty-third Annual British Trades Union Congress was held 5–10 September 1921 in Cardiff, Wales.

The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International therefore asks that the Communist Party of Great Britain link up with the General Council in efforts to unite the working class around a programme of minimum demands like those it has just drawn up, a programme aimed at achieving a workers' government in the next general elections as the instrument that can carry out such a programme.

7.) The Labour Party is a political amalgamation of the trade unions. It encompasses various political currents in the workers' movement, such as the Independent Labour Party, the Fabian socialists, the Guild Socialists, and the like. But the resistance of the working class to the bourgeoisie's mounting efforts to suppress them demands that the Labour Party admit to its ranks all political currents within the workers' movement. The Labour Party cannot express the concept of unifying the working class on a political level unless it includes the Communist Party, which has long since become a not-inconsiderable factor in the workers' movement.

The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International requests that the Communist Party of Great Britain seek to join the Labour Party, as a step toward unifying the working class in the political arena, especially in view of the coming general elections, in which the goal will be to establish a Labour government to replace the continued rule of a bourgeois coalition. In seeking to join the Labour Party, the Communist Party will reserve the unrestricted right to freedom for its propaganda. In the same spirit and for the same goal, the Communist Party is asked to support the Labour Party in the general elections.

The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International instructs the Presidium to draw up detailed suggestions for the Communist Party of Great Britain with regard to joining the Labour Party and supporting it in the general elections.

### **Resolution against the White Terror**

*(Adopted unanimously.)*

White terror continues to rage in the so-called civilised world. It reaches beyond the classical countries of white terror – Hungary, Finland, the United States, Latvia, and Lithuania – as violent repression is unleashed against the working class of countless other countries. At the very moment when the Enlarged ECCI plenum is meeting, a telegram from Belgrade reports the draconian verdict of a court of bourgeois lackeys against the best sons of the Yugoslav working people. Decades of imprisonment are added to the death

sentences and jail terms decreed in the first massive trial a few weeks ago.<sup>24</sup> A disgraceful law that stands alone in modern history is beating the shackled and bloodied bodies of the Yugoslav proletariat.

In Romania and especially in Bessarabia the government has taken up the practice of torturing and murdering prisoners. Men are placed in the dock and condemned to frightful penalties for the sole crime of having professed their communism at a congress.

According to recent reports from Greece, the Athens government is competing with those of Belgrade and Bucharest in taking measures to crush the new revolutionary movement of Greek workers.

In the Polish republic the old tsarist laws are still in force. Jails are overflowing with political prisoners, and courts condemn dozens every week to years of imprisonment. A new and terrible law will worsen the present reign of terror.

In all these countries – Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania, and Greece – it is not only the bourgeois and nationalist reactionary classes that defend their interests by torturing and killing the best representatives of the working class, the pioneers and leaders of the people's liberation struggle. Above all, the imperialist governments of the Entente intervene through their embassies to embolden their vassal states as executioners. Entente imperialism and especially French high finance has been working for years to transform these states into counterrevolutionary springboards for armed intervention against the Russian Revolution and the spread of proletarian revolution.

At the other end of Europe, in proletarian Spain, which has been bled white, even the hypocrisy of legal punishment is dispensed with in jailing and murdering the heroes of working-class resistance and in mass deportations. Finally, fascism, an illegal white guard of the bourgeoisie, rages in Italy, and the jails are full of revolutionary workers.

The Communist International denounces these facts before the entire world. For workers aware of their dignity and worth, only one response is possible: intensifying the struggle in every country, and above all in those that stand at the head of the world imperialist counterrevolution. We must multiply our efforts tenfold, never forgetting for even a moment that every blow against a contingent of the international proletarian army that goes unpunished strikes against the entire world proletariat.

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24 For the trial of Yugoslav Communists, see pp. 183–4.

Down with the white terror!  
 Long live the solidarity of world revolution!  
 Long live the Communist International!<sup>25</sup>

### The Agrarian Question

A motion presented by Comrade Osinsky for the holding of an international agrarian conference in 1922 was unanimously adopted. [For Osinsky's motion, see p. 210.]

*(A commission charged with preparing this conference was named. It is made up of Comrades Osinsky, Preobrazhensky, Carr, Popov, and Kreibich. This resolution also authorised the Communist fraction of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture to send a representative to this commission.)*

*(The Enlarged Executive Committee also ratified a memorandum prepared by the Communist fraction of the Agriculture Commissariat's institute.<sup>26</sup> The text is as follows:)*

#### 1 *The Agrarian Question and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*

The dreadful food supply crisis gripping Russia underlines, like all the experiences of the Russian Revolution, the decisive importance of the agrarian question for maintaining the dictatorship of the proletariat. This truth is particularly obvious for Russia, where the immense majority of the population (74.6 per cent) is rural. However, we are certainly justified in stating that it will be impossible to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat in any other country of the world that is ravaged by famine and where agriculture is devastated to this extent.

It is thus extremely important that Communists not neglect questions relating to agriculture and of concern to peasants and agricultural workers. A bright light needs to be shone on the goals and methods of our policy. It is not enough to repeat every year that there is an agrarian question and to discuss it superficially and at random in our press. We need work that is organised, permanent, and systematic.

The first preliminary precondition of such work is to develop good general directives capable of being adapted to conditions in different countries. We

25 The perspective of this resolution was codified in November 1922 with the formation of International Red Aid (Russian acronym: МОПР), which defended class-war prisoners worldwide. See resolution of Fourth Congress in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 960.

26 This resolution is found in the French edition only.

need to study internationally the issues of concern to rural proletarians, and poor, medium, and rich peasants: rural production, cooperation, socialisation in the countryside, and the analysis of all facts relating to them. An exchange of views and experiences is needed to enable us to better define our immediate goals.

## 2      *Organisation of Annual Conferences of Agricultural Workers and Communist Peasants*

These are the reasons that have led us to send, via the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia, the following proposal to the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International. It envisages a series of organisational measures for the political and economic emancipation of the rural proletariat under a united international revolutionary leadership and, on this foundation, the resolution of all other agrarian questions.

The primary mission of these organisations will be to lead rural workers in political and economic strikes and then, in common accord with the industrial proletariat, to carry out an insurrection for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The agrarian question must move from the domain of communist theory to that of practical action.

The first effort in this direction must be to convene an agrarian conference during the summer of this year. This conference will discuss and decide on the main subsequent organisational measures. Similar conferences, convened yearly, will act as the Communist International's highest body in agrarian questions. They will have to take up and resolve all the important related issues of programme and tactics. Their decisions will be submitted for the approval of the Communist International's world congresses, or – in urgent matters – to its Executive Committee.

The annual agrarian conference will create an executive body called the International Agrarian Bureau to lead the agrarian sections of the Communist parties between conferences. This bureau will be supervised by the Communist International's congresses and Executive Committee. A permanent delegate of the Commissariat of Agriculture's Communist fraction will take part in its meetings with consultative vote. A member of the bureau will take part in the ECCI.

The guidelines stated here indicate the bureau's role and political function; it will be the task of the first conference to define this more precisely.

However, we wish to draw attention to a function of the bureau that seems to us to be of great interest, namely, revising the parties' agrarian programmes. On this point, the following considerations are relevant:

Schematism is barren in the agricultural domain. Every country's conditions must be examined in detail so that the adopted programme can be more than a stylistic exercise condemned to failure from its first steps.

We should not exaggerate the importance of the final programme, on which there are not significant disagreements, compared to the agrarian work in each country, where the agrarian programme should be studied in its smallest details with respect to the moment of taking power and the initial period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The programme must be as precise as a medical prescription in specifying the measures to be taken in the agrarian field. This is the only way to avoid the damaging oscillations and uncertainties that could lead to a collapse of the food supply. This is all the more true given that in the majority of countries it is necessary that agriculture be headed – if not by good Communist specialists – then by more or less experienced activists.

The bureau's activity will be assisted by the department of agrarian politics in the Moscow Socialist Academy.<sup>27</sup>

Political action by the bureau will be supported by the Socialist Academy's division and will benefit from the practical experience of the Communist fraction of the agriculture commissariat's institute. The bureau will also be aided by its close collaboration with the ECCI, with its parties, and with the annual conferences, which will bring together the most active members of the Communist workers' movement. This will create a system of organisation and work that will enable us to carry out fully our duty to the communist future.

### Motion on Famine Relief and Economic Aid

Based on Comrade Münzenberg's report of 1 March 1922 on the question of famine and economic aid,<sup>28</sup> the Enlarged Executive Committee resolves to continue the famine-relief campaign and to expand it to embrace assistance to the productive economy. The Enlarged ECCI plenum instructs the Presidium to take all necessary measures to carry out these expanded tasks organisationally and technically.

*(Adopted unanimously.)*

*(Motions on the Communist International's internal organisation were also adopted unanimously, as was the following motion:)*

<sup>27</sup> For the Socialist Academy, see p. 210, n. 6.

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 198–201.

### Decision to Call the Fourth World Congress

The Enlarged Executive Committee concurs with the postponement of the congress until October 1922. If it should prove necessary to convene it at an earlier date, the regular Executive Committee has the right to do so.<sup>29</sup>

Some members of this conference have expressed the wish that Comrade Zinoviev should be permitted, in the interests of the Comintern, to move his residence from Petrograd to Moscow. This question was discussed, and objections were made by Comrades Zinoviev and Radek. It was decided to make a request to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party to move Comrade Zinoviev to Moscow if possible.<sup>30</sup>

### Report on the Russian Question

**Kreibich** reported for the commission set up to investigate the complaint submitted to the Enlarged Executive Committee by 22 members of the Russian Communist Party. The Russian party's Central Committee sent a letter to the conference recognising the right of any group of comrades to appeal directly to the International's highest body and stated its readiness to provide it with all necessary information and clarification. The conference then decided to set up a commission to look into this question. The commission held a number of sessions, during which it listened to representatives of the Group of 22 and also to Comrades Trotsky and Zinoviev.<sup>31</sup> On the basis of these discussions it unanimously adopted the following resolution, which is now presented to the Enlarged Executive Committee.

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29 The Fourth Congress of the Communist International was held 5 November–5 December 1922.

30 In 1921 Zinoviev was head of the Communist Party in Petrograd (Leningrad), a post he held until 1925.

31 The Russian Commission, which was formed at the end of Session 12, met on 3 March 1921. According to Allen 2015, p. 233, no official protocol of that meeting was prepared. A detailed summary of Shlyapnikov's report to that meeting, however, along with a reply by Kolarov, can be found in Cachin 1998, pp. 207–14.

### Resolution on the Russian Question

With regard to the complaints of the 22 Russian comrades against the Communist Party of Russia, the enlarged session of the ECCI heard the unanimous report of the commission set up on this question, which consisted of Comrades Clara Zetkin, Cachin, Friis, Kolarov, Kreibich, Terracini, and MacManus. The Executive Committee then came to the following conclusion.

For us as Communists it is neither unexpected nor surprising that the difficult conditions in Soviet Russia have also created harsh conditions for the Communist Party of Russia. These conditions require a particularly high level of unity and discipline and a heightened effort by the party to protect proletarian rule, which the party organises, from both internal and external threats. The New Economic Policy's necessary concessions to capitalism, to the middle and small peasantry, entail a danger that the petty bourgeoisie will enjoy stronger influence in state institutions and the party.

The commission's discussions with representatives of the so-called Workers' Opposition led by Comrades Shlyapnikov and Kollontai and with representatives of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee have shown that the Russian party's leadership recognised these dangers and that of bureaucratism from the outset and has taken up and vigorously pursued a struggle against them, despite enormous objective obstacles.

For the most part, the criticisms of those who signed the letter to the Enlarged ECCI plenum batter down open doors. The letter lacks clarity not only in recognising the causes of the conditions being criticised but also in presenting the ways and means of overcoming them. The conduct of the leading comrades presenting these complaints has not strengthened the party's struggle against the evils arising from this situation or brought new forces into play. Quite the contrary. It has withdrawn valuable forces from this struggle while providing the opponents of communism on the 'left' – the Mensheviks, and even the worst sort of White counterrevolutionaries – with weapons against the party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the specific cases reviewed by the commission, the complaints have proven to be without foundation.

For this reason, the Enlarged ECCI plenum is unable to endorse the complaints of the 22 comrades as justified. It stresses that the conduct of these comrades places them in sharp contradiction to the binding decisions of the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party of Russia on party unity and anarcho-syndicalist deviations.<sup>32</sup> The Executive Committee earnestly cautions these

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32 For the resolutions of the Tenth RCP congress, see p. 183, n. 18.

comrades and draws their attention to the fact that a continuation of the struggle they have initiated brings them into growing contradiction with the Communist Party of Russia, its tasks, and the interests of the Russian proletariat, and would thus drive them out of the Third International. It anticipates that the understanding and Communist training of the opposition comrades will lead them to disciplined work in the party framework, combating together with it the dangers of this situation, which the party perceives just as they do and which must be overcome together with the party. The conference views any act that harms the Communist Party of Russia as harmful to Soviet Russia and the entire Communist International.

The conference expresses its expectation that precisely in this grave situation the Russian proletariat will rally around the Communist Party of Russia more closely and firmly than before to protect and defend Soviet Russia and the world revolution.

*(A discussion followed with contributions by Comrades Alexandra Kollontai, Shlyapnikov, Bobst, Radek, Zinoviev, and Clara Zetkin. Comrades Kollontai and Shlyapnikov presented fully the point of view of the opposition. The resolution proposed by the commission was then adopted unanimously with four abstentions.)*

### Announcements

**Kolarov** (*chair*): Comrade Treint, a congress delegate with consultative vote, informs us that if he had a vote he would have voted for the Executive Committee's theses on the united front.

The Estonian delegation has also stated it favours the majority resolution. So too Lithuania, South Africa, and China.

The chair also proposed to instruct the Executive Committee to send a telegram of greetings to the first soviet congress of the Soviet Republic of Georgia and also to publish the appeal to the working class of all countries drawn up by the Georgian soviet congress. This proposal was unanimously adopted.<sup>33</sup>

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33 On 16 February 1921, Red Army troops entered Georgia in support of a local rebellion by pro-soviet forces against the rule of the Menshevik-led independent republic of Georgia, and by mid-March had completed their occupation of the country. Georgia then became an independent soviet republic linked by treaty with Russia.

The text of the appeal by the soviet congress in Georgia to the enlarged plenum – 'Manifesto of the Congress of the Georgian Soviets to Workers of the World' (included in the German edition of the First Enlarged Plenum proceedings, but not the French) can be found in Trotsky 1922a.

That concludes the agenda.

**Clara Zetkin** proposed that before dispersing, the conference send greetings to Comrade Lenin. (*Loud applause*)

**Zinoviev:** Let me review the decisions taken by the conference. Particularly important was the clarification of the French question and the discussion with the Italian comrades. We must now implement the adopted resolutions, a task that is often difficult and complicated. We have worked as a genuine International. We have subjected our most important sections to a very thorough examination. We are well aware of our deficiencies – both organisational and sometimes political. We will do everything possible to carry out our tasks. And we ask all our organisations to do their part. Despite all the difficulties, we have found the right road ahead, and we will win the majority of the workers. And when we have that majority, we will have won the world. Despite everything, the Communist International is advancing! Long live the Communist International!

*(After the singing of 'The Internationale', the conference is adjourned at about 10:00 p.m.)*

## Theses on the United Front

18 December 1921<sup>1</sup>

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 system, a new imperialist war, or even several such wars, is inevitable. The Washington Conference confirmed that eloquently.

2. 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.

3. 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.

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1 Adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee of the Communist International 18 December 1921. The text here is based on the version in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1164–73. The numbering of the theses has been changed to correspond to the version utilised by the Comintern at the First Enlarged ECCI Plenum.

A steadily growing number of workers are only now beginning to fully appreciate 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 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.

4. The Communist parties can and must now reap the benefits 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, yearn 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, attempting 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 win only if new layers of workers become convinced through their own experience that reformism is an illusion and that compromise on policy is fatal.

5. When conscious and organised protest against the betrayal of the Second International's 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, to place the entire power of the workers' organisations in the service of national imperialism.

Under these conditions, the revolutionary wing had to achieve freedom of agitation and propaganda, whatever the cost. 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.

6. 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 opposite in practice. After the reformist compromisers of Amsterdam failed to organisationally suppress 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.

7. However, profound internal processes are now forcing the diplomats and leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals 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 unify 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 interna-

tional 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.

8. Given this situation, the Executive Committee 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 on this question. In this, the tactics of each Communist Party must be worked out specifically in accordance with the conditions of that country.

9. 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 Committee 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.

10. 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 the entire responsibility for the split in the unified workers' camp on our opponents. The revolutionary section 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.

11. 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, 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.

12. 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 [CGL], who recently carried out open betrayal against proletarian revolution. Nonetheless, the Communist Party is beginning to conduct its agitation using the slogan of the proletarian united front against the capitalist offensive. The Executive Committee 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 Committee of the Communist International is convinced that the Communist Party of Italy, 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 centrists (who

have adopted the guise of communism), while *at the same time* carrying 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 everything possible to involve all revolutionary forces of anarchism and syndicalism in the common struggle.

13. 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.

14. In *Sweden* the recent parliamentary elections led to a situation in which the small Communist fraction can play an important role.<sup>2</sup> 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 Committee 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). That does not 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.

15. 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

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<sup>2</sup> In the September 1921 parliamentary elections in Sweden, the CP won seven seats, out of the 230 in the chamber.

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.

16. 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.

17. In a number of other countries, the question is posed differently because of local conditions. Having explained the general line, the Executive Committee 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.

18. The Executive Committee 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.

While 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 the working class as a whole.

19. The Executive Committee 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 its own hands. During the fif-

teen 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 a 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,<sup>3</sup> 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 own 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 circumstances, time, and location – a large proportion of the best Menshevik workers were won over to communism.

20. Given that the Communist International is advancing the slogan of the workers' united front and of agreements of individual sections with the parties and associations of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, it cannot repudiate similar agreements on an international level. The Executive Committee of the Communist International made a proposal to the Amsterdam Inter-

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3 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.

national 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.<sup>4</sup> The Executive Committee of the Communist International 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 the revolutionary workers' united front.

21. In proposing this plan, the Executive Committee of the Communist International draws the sister parties' attention to the dangers which it may

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4 For example, a 19 October 1921 appeal 'To the Workers of the World. Help the Workers of Spain and Yugoslavia' issued by the ECCI and the RILU Executive Bureau, stated: 'We propose to the Amsterdam International to examine and discuss, conjointly with us, the methods and forms of the organisation of an international proletarian action. We believe that the best answer to the cynic[al] murders and the smashing up of the organisations [of Spain and Yugoslavia] would be a blockade on the part of the proletariat and a boycott of these countries; these must be organised by all the workers' organisations without difference of tendencies.' In *Bulletin of the Communist International*, no. 4 (23 December 1921), pp. 106–8.

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, 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 leaderships be distinguished by ideological clarity.

22. 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.

23. 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 with such working-class forces, who are gradually overcoming their prejudices and moving towards communism. It is all the more necessary to be attentive to them now that the united front of workers against capitalism is becoming a reality.

24. In order to finally determine the course of future work along the indicated lines, the Executive Committee of the Communist International resolves to hold in the near future a meeting of the Enlarged ECCI to include twice the usual number of delegates from each party.

25. The Executive Committee of the Communist International 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.

**SECOND ENLARGED PLENUM**

*7–11 June 1922*

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## Opening; Social Revolutionaries; United Front

*Attendance and voting. Agenda. The trial of the Social Revolutionaries. Defence of Tomasz Dombal. Report on break-up of the Committee of Nine. Remarks on the united front.*

*Speakers: Zinoviev, Próchniak, Radek, Zinoviev.*

### Attendance and Voting

**Grigorii Zinoviev** reads the list of participants.

The list of delegates with *decisive votes* is as follows:

*Austria:* Grün

*Britain:* Bell

*Bulgaria:* Yordanov

*Czechoslovakia:* Jílek, Muna, Kreibich, Šmeral

*Finland:* Sirola, Kuusinen

*France:* Frossard, Souvarine, Sellier, Leiciague, Cartier, Rappoport

*Germany:* Zetkin, Brandler, Eberlein, Heinrich

*Italy:* Bordiga, Graziadei, Gramsci, Ambrogi

*Japan:* Taguchi

*Latvia:* Stuchka

*Netherlands:* Jansen

*North America:* Cook

*Norway:* Friis

*Poland:* Próchniak

*Profintern:* Brandler, Melnichansky, Misiano, Nin

*Russia:* Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Stalin, Kamenev, Pokrovsky, Lunacharsky,

Tomsky, Rudzutaks

*Spain:* Sierra

*Ukraine:* Kon

*Youth International:* Shatskin, Schönhaar, Ziegler, Doriot

The list of delegates with *consultative votes* is as follows:

*Egypt:* Avigdor

*Estonia:* Pögelman

*Georgia:* Tskhakaia

*Germany:* Bartz

*Iceland:* Wallenius

*Iran:* Sultanzade

*Lithuania:* Angaretis, Kapsukas

*South Africa:* Jones

*Uruguay:* Pintos

In total 27 delegations with 60 delegates; 19 delegations with decisive vote.

(*On a motion by Brandler, Comrades Zetkin, Frossard, and Zinoviev are elected as the Presidium.*)

The voting powers of the various countries are arranged according to the following order:

Delegations with four votes each: Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Youth International, Profintern.

With two votes: Bulgaria, Britain, Finland, Netherlands, Japan, Latvia, Norway, Austria, Ukraine, North America, Poland, Spain.

With consultative vote: Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Iran, South Africa, and Uruguay.

## Agenda

(*The agenda was adopted as follows:*)

1. Information on the trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.
2. Berlin conference and the united front.
3. The CP of Czechoslovakia and its problems.
4. The CP of France and its problems.
5. The CP of Norway and its problems.
6. The CP of Italy and its problems.
7. The CP of Germany and its problems.
8. Our relationship with the syndicalists.
9. Report on the March session of the Youth International's bureau.
10. Preparations for the Fourth World Congress.

**Zinoviev** (continuing):<sup>1</sup> In today's papers and the latest reports there is a great deal of information on the *civil war in Ireland*, which has just broken out.<sup>2</sup> You

1 The following sections of Zinoviev's report have been translated from the German archival record.

2 The Irish civil war began in June 1922 between supporters and opponents of the Anglo-Irish

are familiar with the general facts. Once again it is a matter of Britain taking direct armed action. We greet the new Communist Party of Ireland and propose that the British representative, Bell, be given the task of drawing up by tomorrow a draft report on the situation in Ireland, which can be adopted tomorrow in the name of the Enlarged Executive Committee.<sup>3</sup>

Are there any other comments on this point? It appears that there are not. The proposal is therefore adopted.

### The Trial of the Social Revolutionaries

**Zinoviev** (continuing): We come now to the actual agenda. Permit me first to convey to you the decisions taken by the Presidium on the *Trial of the Social Revolutionaries*.<sup>4</sup> These are to be placed before the Enlarged Executive Committee today for ratification. As you know, the Executive Committee decided to take part officially in this trial. It did this for the following reasons:

In its opinion, Soviet Russia is for now the most important country of the proletarian revolution. The Communist International is of course interested in

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Treaty that partitioned the country into a 'Free State', with limited Irish self-government within the British Empire, and six northern counties that continued under direct British rule. The war lasted until May 1923.

- 3 An ECCI statement 'to the workers of Great Britain and Ireland' was published in *Inprecorr*, 20 June 1922. It stated: 'After all the efforts of the English bourgeoisie to maintain its domination by force of arms had been frustrated by the heroic self-sacrificing defence of the Irish people, it was obliged to come to an understanding with the Irish bourgeoisie. For the semblance of an independent Irish Free State, the representatives of the Irish capitalists, Collins, Griffith and Co., sacrificed the fruits of the long and successful struggle, and received in return, as a Judas reward, the right to exploit the Irish workers together with the English bourgeoisie. ... Workers and Peasants of Ireland! You must be fearless and determined in your struggle for the liberation of Ireland, and thus continue your fight for your own emancipation. But you must bear in mind that liberation from the yoke of the English oppressors is only a prelude to the great final struggle for the abolition of the reign of your own exploiters.'
- 4 On 8 June 1922 a trial began in Moscow of forty-seven members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party on charges of maintaining ties with Anglo-French imperialism and being complicit in attacks on the Soviet state during the Russian Civil War. The Soviet government permitted leading members of the Second International to attend the trial and function as defence counsels. At the conclusion of the trial in early August, the defendants were convicted of treason, and fourteen were sentenced to death, although the death sentences were commuted. Defendants who renounced and condemned their activities at the trial were pardoned.

closely following the most important developments that take place in the first proletarian state. What took place on this issue in Berlin during the Conference of the Three Internationals is enough to show that this trial is an epochal event. It will have world-historic significance not only for Russia but for other countries where the civil war is still only beginning.

So there is a decision by the Executive Committee to take part officially in this trial. Our task now is only to decide the form of our representation. The Presidium believes that we should be represented by three comrades who will act in an official capacity. The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals have appointed counsel to defend our opponents.<sup>5</sup> We must now choose the comrades who will present accusations. The Presidium proposes that we select Comrades Zetkin, Muna, and Bukharin.

In addition, we also wish to propose the defence of those former Social Revolutionaries who have now come to understand their former criminal conduct and have either gone over to communism or are in the process of doing so. Two groups must be distinguished in this trial. First, there are the Social Revolutionaries who have in recent years moved more and more to the bourgeois counterrevolution. The second group is made up of young workers who were previously terrorists but have now seen the error of their ways and stand with the proletarian revolution.

We were of the view that the Communist International has the duty of assisting this second group and providing them with a political defence, all the more given that the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, in full accord with the bourgeoisie and the entire bourgeois press, are labelling these comrades as traitors. Indeed, from the point of view of the bourgeoisie and the Second International, they are traitors. They have betrayed the cause of the bourgeoisie. That is precisely why they have moved over to the side of the proletariat.

We propose that the Communist International provide a political defence for this group. We propose that Comrade Semenov be defended by Comrade Sadoul; that the young worker Usov be defended by Comrade Kon, and that Konopleva be defended by an Italian comrade. We had thought of Comrade Graziadei, but he must leave, so we propose Comrade Gramsci among the Italian comrades. That is therefore the second group.

As for the third group, this is the situation: We believe that it is necessary in this trial to clarify the role of the bourgeois states that carried out an intervention against Soviet Russia. The trial will review once more the entire history of

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5 Among those selected to act as defence counsel were Émile Vandervelde, Kurt Rosenfeld, and Theodor Liebknecht.

the Russian Revolution, with all its struggles and wars. It is very important that we throw light on the role of the bourgeois states of Europe that joined with the Mensheviks and SRS in combating the Soviet government.

In this group we propose that Comrade Šmeral take up the role of the Czech Legions that, together with Russian counterrevolutionaries, launched the Civil War on the Volga.<sup>6</sup> Comrades Frossard and Sadoul will highlight the role of France in supporting the Civil War against the Soviet government. Comrade Bell will deal with the role of Britain, and Comrade Yordanov with that of the Balkan states. So that is the proposal made to you by the Presidium, and we ask that you adopt it.

Does anyone wish to speak on this proposal? Does anyone wish to vote separately on its provisions? That is not the case. The motion has been voted on as a whole and adopted.

Comrade Próchniak wishes to present a proposal on behalf of the Polish Communist Party.

### Defence of Tomasz Dombal

**Eduard Próchniak:**<sup>7</sup> Comrades, last autumn the Polish government ordered the arrest of the Tomasz Dombal, a member of the Polish parliament.<sup>8</sup> Comrade Dombal is one of the party's most popular workers in the country and is a leader of the farmworkers' movement in middle and western Galicia. Several attempts had been made through provocations to put him in prison for many years, and thus deprive the Polish farmworkers of their leader. However, for a long time all the government's attempts failed, until they finally achieved their goal through a bare-faced provocation.

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6 The Czechoslovak Legions were Czech and Slovak volunteer units formed within the imperial Russian army beginning in 1914. As World War I progressed, the legions became composed primarily of prisoners of war and deserters from the Austro-Hungarian army, growing into a force that peaked at over 60,000. After the October Revolution, an agreement was reached to evacuate the legions to France through Vladivostok. But in May 1918 they rebelled against Soviet power and linked up with the White armies. The Czechoslovak Legions were finally evacuated through Vladivostok in early 1920, after which they formed the core of the army of the newly created state of Czechoslovakia.

7 Translated from the German archival record.

8 Tomasz Dombal, a member of the Polish CP's fraction in parliament, was tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment by the Polish regime in 1921. He was released in 1923 as the result of a prisoner-exchange deal with Soviet Russia.

A former captain in the Polish army named Novak was arrested and then forced through torture to swear to the following invented facts. First, that Comrade Dombal was leader of the Polish Communist fighting group; second, that he had close relations with the Soviet embassy, which gave him gold, instructions for his activity, and so on; third, that he headed up the provisioning of fake passports, administered the storehouse of weapons, and looked after distribution of Communist publications; and, finally, that he was working with Karakhan, representative of the Soviet republic.

Allegedly, Karakhan had prepared an attempt on his own life, not with the goal that it would succeed but with the intention that it would lead to a worsening of relations between the Soviet republic and Poland.

This provocative testimony was dragged from Captain Novak through torture and starvation over many days. And on this basis Comrade Dombal, a deputy in the Polish Sejm, has been accused of high treason.

Comrades, as you know, the Polish government is headed by Pilsudski, known to us all. Not long ago he was head of the Socialist Party, the PPS, which remains firmly linked to him and supports him in all his moves against the Soviet republic and the Communist movement in Poland. Among the parties of social traitors, the PPS is the one that has done the most against Soviet Russia, and it has taken a disreputable and vicious position on the trial of the Social Revolutionaries. They mounted the noisiest outcry that the SRS were ideal honest fighters for the cause of socialism.

The PPS said not a word in defence of Comrade Dombal, not a word against the provocations that the Polish government organised against him. On the contrary, Dombal rejected the attempt to get him to accept the accusations in court and to walk in the middle of the street with his hands behind his back (the customary procedure in Poland for those accused of crimes). He refused to move and was forcibly dragged along. The PPS's main newspaper, *Robotnik*, wrote ironically that the 'stiff-necked monarch' had been forced to move.

The PPS's role in the trial of the Social Revolutionaries now obligates it to ask the Polish government to grant an opportunity for the Communist International to provide defence council for the parliamentary deputy Tomasz Dombal, whose trial is to begin on 3 July. On behalf of the Communist Workers' Party of Poland I propose that the Communist International appeal to Vandervelde, a defence counsel of the Social Revolutionaries, to ask the Polish government to admit defence counsel of the Communist International in the approaching trial of Tomasz Dombal.

## Report on Break-Up of the Committee of Nine

**Karl Radek:**<sup>9</sup> Comrades, the period from 12 April to the beginning of the deliberations of the three executive committees and on to 23 May when the breach occurred is so rich in political material that, although you are informed of the facts, it is absolutely necessary to critically examine this first attempt at forming a united front, so to speak, from the top, by negotiations with the two other so-called Internationals.<sup>10</sup> Such examination is absolutely necessary in order to study the results of the tactics of the united front that we had decided to adopt. We must ascertain whether the results of this attempt are such as to put the tactics of the united front into question.

Before I say anything about the circumstances that gave rise to the tactics of the united front, I must deal with some facts that we cannot leave out of consideration in our struggle against our opponents. After the split in the Committee of Nine, which made us leave it, the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals declared (and the latter more shamelessly than the first) that tactics of the united front were nothing but an attempt to utilise the international proletariat during the Genoa Conference for the support of Soviet diplomacy. The Genoa Conference, they say, has come to an end and has resulted in the Soviet govern-

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9 Radek's speech is taken from the German archival record. The first page of the speech is missing from that record; the text for this page has been taken from the English archival version.

10 The Conference of the Three Internationals was held in Berlin 2–5 April 1922, with leadership delegations from the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Third Internationals. A list of those attending can be found on p. 366. One of the stated goals of the conference was to schedule a broad international congress of labour that would include all political currents in the workers' movement, as well as trade unions and other mass organisations. The conference did not schedule such a congress due to objections by the Second International.

At the conclusion of the conference, a common declaration was adopted (see pp. 367–8), which created a follow-up body, the 'Committee (or Commission) of Nine'. Composed of three representatives from each International, this committee had the stated purpose of organising the world congress of labour. The ECCI subsequently assigned Frossard, Zetkin, and Radek as its representatives on this committee. The one and only meeting of the Committee of Nine took place on 23 May 1922 in Berlin, at which it fell apart, as Radek describes in this report.

The proceedings of the Berlin conference were published in English as *The Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union: Official Report of the Conference between the Executives, held at the Reichstag, Berlin, on the 2nd April, 1922, and Following Days*.

ment concluding an armed peace with international capitalism.<sup>11</sup> Thus there is no more need for the assistance of the international proletariat. That is why, they claim, we presented our ultimatum and left the Committee of Nine.<sup>12</sup>

I will preface my statement by putting once more to you the various stages of the development of our united-front tactics. You will remember that it was the German CP, driven by its own experiences, which in January 1921 suggested in an open letter to the Socialist parties and to the trade unions to create, by means of an agreement with the non-Communist parties, a united proletarian front for the struggle for our immediate, specific demands. This proposal of the German CP met with a refusal not only from the SPD but also from the Independent Socialist Party of Germany [USPD], an adherent of the Two-and-a-Half International – that born ‘unifier’.

I remind you that in its Third Congress resolution the International welcomed this step, and even said that it could serve as an example for all other countries.<sup>13</sup> We have been discussing this question since last autumn. Already at the end of November the theses that Comrade Zinoviev put before the Executive Committee were widely discussed in our circle. *The preliminary decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was arrived at long before any mention was even made of the Genoa Conference.*

Of course, we do not deny that we hold it to be the duty of the international proletariat to support all big struggles of the Soviet republic. Nevertheless, it is a glaring misrepresentation of facts for the gentlemen of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals to assert that the question of the united front was called forth by the Genoa Conference. We propagated this idea *based on the world situation over the last year, and because we were convinced that the work-*

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11 The conference in Genoa, Italy (10 April–19 May 1922) had been convened to discuss economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe, and explore ways to improve relations with Soviet Russia. However, negotiations broke down over French and British insistence that Russia pay the debts incurred under tsarism before 1914 and fully restore nationalised foreign-owned property.

12 At the 23 May meeting of the Committee of Nine, the Comintern delegation blamed the failure to organise the world congress of labour on the Second International, and presented an ultimatum: ‘If the Second International refuses to convoke the World Labour Congress in the immediate future, the undersigned as the representatives of the Executive Committee of the Communist International withdraw from the Commission of Nine.’ The full declaration can be found in *Inprecorr*, 27 May 1922.

13 The ‘Theses on Tactics and Strategy’ adopted by the Third Congress stated, ‘The VKPD’s Open Letter can serve as a model of a starting point for [united-front] campaigns’ by other parties. See Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, p. 940. For background on the Open Letter, see p. 131, n. 15.

*ing class was compelled to take up the defensive, and that one should therefore endeavour (if at all possible) to win over the sections of workers who do not see eye to eye with us, to a great and united mass action against the advance of capitalism.*

There is no denying, of course, that the Genoa Conference induced us to come to the decision (which otherwise would not have been arrived at so rapidly) to create the united front internationally from the top, before it had been arrived at from the bottom through agitation among the masses in all countries. We said to ourselves: Genoa is different from other conferences, for much is expected from it by the petty-bourgeoisie and also by some of the working masses. Genoa represented the first effort after the Versailles Treaty at a rearrangement of the world's resources. We wondered if we could take it upon ourselves not to make at least an effort, at a time when capitalist diplomacy was meeting again in order to decide upon the destinies of the workers, to draw the attention of the latter to this conference, so that they should not stand around like dumb animals.<sup>14</sup>

Our course of action at the Berlin Conference was based on the decision of the Executive Committee. We considered the Berlin Conference to have a preliminary character. We have no reason to engage in theoretical discussion of the major issues of the workers' movement with the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals in a small, closed meeting.

We believed that we should limit ourselves to proposing *what seemed possible on the basis of these people's own theory, their own officially announced policies*. For this reason, our statement took up the overall issues in the struggle in only a few brief words.<sup>15</sup> We told them that the old unified International has collapsed because of reformist policies that tie the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. And so long as these policies have not been replaced by a class-struggle course, there can be no question of unifying the three Internationals in any way.

We told them that the issue right now is not unity in ideas and politics but *forming a political bloc with specific goals*. We pointed to capitalism's offensive, aimed at the already depressed wages of the working class and against the eight-hour day. We pointed to the wave of counterrevolution in Europe. We referred to the danger that the German proletariat would be used against its will to depress wages internationally and to the economic provisions of the Versailles Treaty.

14 The remainder of Radek's speech is translated from the German archival text.

15 The Comintern's statement at the Berlin Conference, read out by Zetkin, can be found in International Conference of the Executive Committees of Three International Organisations 1922b, pp. 12–18.

We referred to the conditions in the Soviet republic, the product of the first wave of world revolution, which is defended by a Russian working class that has suffered greatly and has the right to call for help. Even the Amsterdam International stated in a recent appeal: If Soviet Russia falls, world reaction will have achieved a great victory over the working class. And we asked the gentlemen of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals: Are you willing to set aside our differences on principled questions, on which a dispute will continue, in order to establish a unified front of the proletariat for immediate goals? You are aware of their answer. They posed conditions, presented by the representatives of the Second International<sup>16</sup> – in this case Vandervelde – and borrowed from the German Reichstag. You are aware of the nature of these conditions. In social terms, the Second International's response amounts to this:

You are appealing to petty-bourgeois so-called socialism of the workers' aristocracy and its leaders in Europe and proposing a bloc for struggle against capitalism. Good, we are ready to join this bloc, but only on the condition that you make concessions in Soviet Russia to petty-bourgeois 'socialism', to the SRS, the Mensheviks, and the separatist currents in the Georgian petty bourgeoisie.

On the face of it, there was a logic in this thinking, but *its content was diametrically opposed to the goals of the united front*. The purpose of the united-front movement, after all, was to defend the gains that the working class had achieved in the world so far. What is the meaning, in this regard, of concessions to the SRS, to the Georgian Mensheviks, and to Ukraine? They signify that Soviet Russia is in a situation where world capitalism must give up on armed intervention against it but continues to carry out a consolidated economic campaign against Soviet Russia with the goal of preventing the proletarian state from obtaining the means needed to rebuild its industry.

Soviet Russia cannot rebuild its heavy industry through its own resources, and given the hold-up in the world revolution, it is forced to adopt a policy of concessions [to foreign investment]. *And in this situation the Second International insists that we are to give economic and political freedom to the parties that openly and clearly raise the slogan 'Back to capitalism!', so that they can become*

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16 The Second International's conditions, as delivered by Vandervelde, were for an end to what it saw as tactical manoeuvres by the Communists, freedom for Georgia and other nationalities within Soviet Russia, and release of Soviet political prisoners. See International Conference of the Executive Committees of Three International Organisations 1922b, pp. 26–7.

*the focal point for attacks on Soviet Russia.* Everyone knows that the Mensheviks and SRS in Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan will not be able to resist the pressure of the working class on their own. They were forced to turn to world capitalism. Petlyura, a Ukrainian so-called petty-bourgeois Social Democrat, attempted to maintain his power with the aid of Entente imperialism. The Georgian Mensheviks, caught between the two fires of revolution and counterrevolution, were compelled to utilise the support of Entente capitalism. It was the same story in Azerbaijan.<sup>17</sup>

The social meaning of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals' conditions was thus the following: If you want us to struggle with you against the attack of capitalism in Western Europe, then world capitalism must get the Ukrainian grain, the Caucasian petroleum, and so on. It would do too much honour to the Second International and the blockheads of the Two-and-a-Half International to imagine that they had a thought-out political plan. The Second International's goal in posing these conditions was simply to sabotage the united front. Thus *Vorwärts* wrote on the day when the Berlin Conference convened, 'A united front with the Communists is impossible. We propose a common front of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.'<sup>18</sup>

The Two-and-a-Half International, as you know, is a notoriously androgynous creature. Yet to some extent it has masses of revolutionary workers in its ranks. It cannot state openly that it does not want to go with the Communists, and it was founded with the slogan of being a bridge between the Second and Third Internationals. So the Second International had to deal with this Social-Revolutionary-Menshevik mishmash. They placed their bets on the hope that

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17 In Ukraine, Simon Petlyura led the bourgeois-nationalist Rada in a war against the soviets that started within weeks of the October Revolution in 1917. A 'People's Republic of Ukraine' was declared in January 1918. That regime was defeated, and soviet power was established for good by early 1919.

In Georgia the Mensheviks were in the leadership of the 'Democratic Republic of Georgia' proclaimed in May 1918. On 16 February 1921, Red Army troops entered Georgia in support of a local rebellion against the Menshevik regime, and by mid-March had completed their occupation of the country. Georgia became an independent soviet republic linked by treaty with Russia,

In Azerbaijan, a soviet regime centred in Baku was ousted in September 1918 by a government composed of right-wing SRS, Mensheviks, and Dashnaks, with support from British and French troops. In late April 1920 a rising by Communist forces overturned the pro-imperialist regime and founded the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

18 The 6 April 1922 issue of *Vorwärts* characterised the common resolution of the Berlin Conference as an 'attempt at duplicity', stating that the conference as a whole made an 'unpleasant impression'.

the Two-and-a-Half International would be compelled – given that it includes the [Russian] Mensheviks – to go with the Second International in putting demands on us that we would have to reject. And thereby the question of the united front, which the Second International greatly feared, would be buried for good.

The Second International's conditions were merely a manoeuvre against the united front in Western Europe, and that made them counterrevolutionary from the outset. Simultaneously they represented an attack on Soviet Russia. Comrades, at the Berlin Conference we had to ask ourselves whether we wanted, through an abrupt rejection of the demands of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, to drive them into each other's arms, or whether we would make concessions that are possible in practice in order to make this hostile bloc impossible, at least for the moment.

The mere fact that we were sitting down together with these people was already a heavy burden on the soul of every Communist. There was an unusually interesting moment at the end of the conference, when it seemed that the Communist International delegates all had something stuck in their throats. Without having exchanged a single word, none of us could bring ourselves to sing together with these people the anthem of the Communist International and the proletarian masses ['The Internationale']. It was really a bit much, given that we knew very well how many thousands of Communists sit in the prisons of the bourgeoisie and the Social Democrats, to be discussing with these people whether the Soviet government should bring to trial men who had organised the murder of Lenin<sup>19</sup> and fought for years against us in alliance with the white counterrevolution and world capitalism.

Our first inclination was, naturally, to talk to them in the well-known style of my friend here.<sup>20</sup> But we did not do that, because we felt that it was obviously an unheard-of provocation –

**Zinoviev:** There's an enormous difference between a speech by Radek and one by Bukharin!

**Radek:** – for Vandervelde to show up here as a representative of the SRS. We wondered whether we could objectively concede to such a demand. And we had to conclude that the answer is 'yes', because during the trial Vandervelde

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19 On 30 August 1918, Fanny Kaplan, a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, tried to assassinate Lenin, shooting him three times and leaving him seriously wounded.

20 Radek apparently gestures to Bukharin.

will be placed under pressure of the facts, and he will not be able to conjure historical facts out of existence, even if he is skilled at taking oaths with two fingers up and two fingers down.<sup>21</sup> The trial will end with a defeat of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.

The second concession that we made was that the SRS would not receive the deserved penalty, that is, they would not pay with their heads. With this statement, we were of course paying a very high price. And Lenin was right to say that people would view this concession as an encouragement to new deeds.<sup>22</sup> But we also believed that given the situation in Western Europe, given the need to unite the masses, we must make this sacrifice for the simple reason that it counters statements that we cannot make a united front with bloodthirsty people – an argument that could have an impact on backward masses. So for this reason we made a very conscious decision to pay this high price.

The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals have now decided to blow apart the Committee of Nine. We may now wonder if this price was paid in vain. But I am convinced that *the very fact that the committee collapsed will now permit the fruits of this price to emerge*. They will not be able to come now and say that the united front of the proletariat in Western Europe was destroyed by Soviet Russia, by the Communists. We made the concessions that were demanded. And our opponent had to destroy the conference crudely with pretexts that no one will now believe.

As you know, the Berlin Conference decided to convene the world congress [of labour] as soon as possible. It merely noted the fact that this could not take place before the end of April. But it did not attach any conditions to convening it after the end of April. The Committee of Nine received an order to proceed directly to the organisation of a world congress.

And what happened? After the April [Berlin] Conference, the Genoa Conference began. Regarding this world political situation, the *Kölnische Zeitung* – known to you all as the organ of capital in the Rhineland and certainly in no way a revolutionary publication – printed a statement about the political situation that unfolded at Genoa, of which it said: *‘Two worlds are struggling there, one that is hungry and one that is well-fed.’* And these words characterise the Genoa Conference. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, an organ of the Two-and-a-Half International, wrote of the conference that it witnessed the first diplomatic duel in history between capitalist and communist principles. It was also an acid test

21 In various Christian traditions, this can be an expression of pious sincerity or the giving of Christ's blessing.

22 Lenin's article, 'We Have Paid Too Much', can be found on pp. 374–7 of this volume.

not only of the bourgeois world's incompetence but also of the fact that *the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals – today as four years ago and during the entire war up to its end – stand on the side of the bourgeoisie.*

I am not referring merely to the fact that all the efforts of the Second International aimed at making absolutely sure that the world congress of labour would not convene during the Genoa Conference, but also that their press indicated daily that they are a thousand times closer to the bourgeoisie than to the proletariat. *Vorwärts* speaks for a party in government that demands of Soviet Russia that, if it pays compensation to the powerful bandits of the Entente for socialisation in Russia, Germany should not walk away empty-handed. And *Vorwärts* was so shameless as to write that the Soviet delegates in Genoa were carrying out a capitalist policy. But it was not just organs of the Second International. It is enough to read *Le Populaire*. One of the directors of this organ told us during the conference that he understands the situation and is in complete agreement with the foreign policy of Soviet Russia.<sup>23</sup> But this paper printed contemptible articles every day, each one worse than the last. When we had separate discussions with France, this paper said that the Soviet government was allying with Poincaré against the proletariat.

We signed a simple peace agreement with Germany, but *Le Populaire* protested against it in the name of European peace.<sup>24</sup> First prize for shamelessness went to the well-known, great, revolutionary leader of the USPD, Crispien, the windbag that we saw here at the [Comintern] Second Congress. Following Genoa, he published an article saying that the seven-months' armistice we concluded with the bourgeoisie was a civil peace [*Burgfrieden*] like that of the Fourth of August 1914 – because the Soviet government committed itself for seven months not to attack the bourgeois world, in return for a reciprocal commitment from the bourgeoisie.<sup>25</sup>

This is reminiscent of the outcry in the centrist press about 'Soviet imperialism' whenever a soldier of the Soviet army budged, as for example when we

23 Jean Longuet was the formal director of *Le Populaire*, while day-to-day leadership was exercised by Paul Faure. Both were delegates of the Two-and-a-Half International to the Berlin Conference.

24 The Rapallo Treaty was signed by Soviet Russia and Germany on 16 April 1922, normalising relations between the two governments and strengthening economic and military cooperation. The 19 April 1922 issue of *Le Populaire* featured a lead article by Léon Blum criticising the treaty, entitled, 'La conclusion du Traité Germano-russe complique la situation européenne' (The German-Russian Treaty Complicates the European Situation).

25 Arthur Crispien, 'Burgfriedan zwischen Bolschewisten und Kapitalisten' [Civil Peace between Bolsheviks and Capitalists] in *Freiheit*, 25 May 1922.

were close to Warsaw or later marched into Georgia. Now we commit ourselves not to march for seven months, and an organ of a party that favoured signing the Versailles Treaty says that this represents a 'civil peace'. For years these people have made charges about 'Moscow diktats' or 'Moscow intervention' and the like. Recall how Haase as a USPD member of government demanded, as a condition for resumption of diplomatic relations, that Soviet Russia undertake not to make any propaganda in Germany.<sup>26</sup> And now, when we are compelled to make this concession in Genoa, *Freiheit* writes that Soviet Russia is against a world congress of labour because it has made a commitment in Genoa not to carry out propaganda abroad.

Comrades, this hysterical reversal by the Two-and-a-Half International at the second [23 May] conference showed that their fire was directed against us from the outset. Moreover, it shows that something must have happened between these two conferences, resulting in this change of approach. As for the Second International, it was against a world congress of labour and the united front from the very outset. I have already quoted what Abramovitch wrote: The British Labour Party and the Dutch Social Democracy face elections, and they fear being compromised because they want a bloc with the bourgeoisie.<sup>27</sup> The Scheidemanns are also facing a significant tax struggle. They fear that if the Social-Democratic workers join with the Communists, a coalition with the bourgeoisie will become impossible. As for the Second International, nothing has changed in this regard. But the shift was blatantly evident in the Two-and-a-Half International shortly before the second conference, when its French party held a separate conference with the British Labour Party. At that meeting they resolved to hold a separate congress of labour in The Hague, in which only the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals would take part.

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26 On 14 November 1918, days after the overthrow of the Hohenzollern monarchy in Germany, Georgy Chicherin of the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs held a discussion over the teleprinter with USPD leader Hugo Haase, the member of the new German government assigned to foreign affairs. In the discussion, Haase essentially rejected the establishment of relations with the Soviet government and expressed strong opposition to Soviet propagandising among German prisoners of war on the western front. A translation of this discussion can be found in Riddell (ed.) 1986, pp. 62–6.

27 Raphael Abramovitch, a member of the Central Committee of the Menshevik Party who had attended the Berlin Conference as a delegate from the Two-and-a-Half International, wrote a letter to his party stating, 'The British Labour and the Dutch Social Democracy are preparing for general elections to Parliament and they do not desire to be attacked in the election campaign for having allied themselves with the Bolsheviks.' Quoted in the ECCI delegation's declaration to the 23 May session of the Committee of Nine, printed in *Inprecorr*, 27 May 1922.

The Longuetists committed themselves to work for this goal with the Belgian and British Labour parties of the Second International. On the day that the second conference took place, 23 May, *Freiheit* published a telegram drawn up by the Longuetists together with the Belgian and British Labour parties to hold this congress without the Communists.<sup>28</sup> They understand that this action already constitutes a decision regarding the Berlin Conference. If they have decided that the content of the world [labour] congress will be decided in a separate congress of the Second International, directed against us, obviously they can no longer favour a unified congress. These facts cannot be talked out of existence by Adler's cannonades of invective.

In my opinion, this situation flows from two facts. Longuet's party is shifting more and more to the right. Longuet did not want to sit under Zinoviev's pistol.<sup>29</sup> He's whipped into line by Renaudel and Blum. Meanwhile, Blum is preparing to set up a Left Bloc in France, an electoral alliance with the bourgeois Radicals. Longuet is now merely tolerated in *Le Populaire*. A strong segment of his party is calling openly for unification with the Second International. What is more, Longuet protested vehemently against 'material dependency on Moscow'. Now it turns out that *Le Populaire* is financially dependent on Vandervelde. And just as they allowed their candidates to appear during the voting in the *départements* as anti-Communist coalition candidates, now – despite their calls for the united front – they do not want to bind their hands.

Recently they have been feeling wind in their sails. The elections gave them a [larger] quantity of votes compared to our French Communist Party.<sup>30</sup> Previously they felt they were an influential group, based on petty-bourgeois forces, and now they are beginning to feel they are a real power. The Longuetists' decision determined the stance of the German Independents. Every German party tries to establish a relationship with France, seeking some point of support in France. The Longuetists are the party of the Two-and-a-Half International in France, and the German Independents are oriented to them above all. The Longuetists' decision determines that of the German Independents,

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28 As *Freiheit* reported, 'In the second half of June a conference of the Second International is likely to take place in The Hague in which both the Amsterdam Trade Union International and the Vienna Union will probably be invited but not the Communist International.' The report came out of the meeting Radek referred to, which took place in Brussels on 17 May between representatives of the British Labour Party, the French SP, and the Belgian Workers' Party.

29 For Zinoviev's 'pistol', see p. 113, n. 13.

30 A reference to the cantonal elections held 14 May 1922. In these the SP received 276,000 votes and 90 seats, compared to 214,000 votes and 31 seats for the CP.

regardless of how much Friedrich Adler pretends that the decision has not yet been taken. They have done an about-face. Comrades, when we arrived at the second [23 May] conference and heard the declaration of the Second International, in which it took a stand against the congress, it was clear that the conference had been blown up.

At the session of the Committee of Nine it was both interesting and significant that Fritz Adler and Wels voted against including workers' delegations [in the world congress of labour]. This preliminary probe was indicative of the decision that had been taken. There was nothing left to do but to draw a balance sheet of the situation and submit a declaration that we will fight for the united front as before. And when the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are compelled by mass pressure to once again sit down with us at a table, we will not reject this – to the extent that it involves genuine struggle.

Based on what I have said, I will now draw my conclusions. One of them relates to our own ranks; the other to how we conduct the struggle with our opponent. It would be unworthy of the Communist International to indulge here in high drama. We must recognise that *we fought for the united front of the proletariat without having a united front of the Communists*. The French and Italian comrades say they are for the united front only out of discipline; they submit to what they regard as a temporary decision that they will attempt to overturn at the next world congress. This disrupted our overall policy. Obviously we could have acted at the session of the Committee of Nine much more effectively if our opponent had not been able to put a spoke in our gears by saying that our French party had declined to demonstrate with them on the First of May.<sup>31</sup> They said, 'How can we believe you are in earnest when Frossard's signature is there on paper, under the resolution, but Frossard has said he signed only under discipline?' Meanwhile, the French Communists' main newspaper carries on a raging struggle against the united-front policy. The Italian Communist Party is, I grant you, not so crass in expression – as you know, Machiavelli was born in Italy – but in reality the efforts of the Executive Committee were not supported with sufficient emphasis.

We must understand what that means. Comrades could well say, even now: Yes, the enlarged session of the Executive Committee did not reflect the relationship of forces in the International. The delegates at the congress will carry out a change. We are sabotaging a decision that does not represent the will of the Communist International. But anyone who can count on ten fingers can fig-

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<sup>31</sup> The French SP had publicly campaigned for a united May Day demonstration in Paris. The CGTU and CP rejected this proposal.

ure out what the situation is in the International. The decision of the Enlarged Executive Committee was taken by an immense majority. Given that situation, the Italian and French comrades, in combating this decision, have been striking blows at their own body.

The Executive Committee will need to make clear, now or in the coming debates, that we do not give a hoot for formal discipline unless it expresses inner discipline that genuinely carries out what has been decided. We can carry on diplomacy with Vandervelde, and when Frossard meets with him we will make no protest if he appears wearing tails. But when it's a question of our work, a matter of carrying out our decisions, we cannot struggle under conditions in which the enemy can utilise every pretext to attack us.

I will now take up the final point. What is the meaning of this collapse of the first attempt to achieve a united front from above through an agreement with the leaders? Many comrades rubbed their hands with glee, saying that after the dissolution of the Committee of Nine – and now that we will not be sitting down together with Vandervelde and his accomplices – the entire united-front policy has turned out to be nonsense. Anyone who speaks like that is a simpleton, as Comrade Zinoviev says in his article on the ultimatum.<sup>32</sup> A genuine united front will come into being when it leads the masses into struggle. So much is clear. Now the question is: How do we go to the masses? Anyone who now says, 'united front from below' misunderstands the situation. For in order to reach the base, to go to the masses of Social Democrats, we must first get an obstacle out of our path. We must ensure that the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals cannot say, 'You talk of united front. Why are you trying to destroy our parties? Why are you not yet conferring with our trade-union leaders?'

We have provided every explanation that was asked of us so that these people cannot say later on that we were responsible for the collapse of the conference and the effort to form a united front. These people have not only shown in practice that they will not struggle for the rule of the working class; they have also flatly refused to work with us, even for the immediate and unpostponable needs of the proletariat. The greater the sacrifices we offered for this united front, the greater the benefits this conference will bring us. We have made the attempt to establish a united front from above, and the masses have seen that this attempt collapsed not because of us but because of our opponents. The struggle for the united front will now begin in every country. *And the break-*

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32 Presumably a reference to 'À quand le congrès ouvrier international?' (When Will the International Congress of Labour Take Place?). It can be found in *Bulletin communiste*, 25 May 1922, vol. 3, no. 22, pp. 420–1.

*down of the Committee of Nine does not mean in the slightest that the gentlemen of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals can succeed everywhere in preventing the unification of the proletariat.*

Here is a very interesting fact: After the Committee of Nine blew up, Severing put a police spy on my heels, so that I was not even able to take my leave from the German party. Meanwhile, the socialist government of Saxony invited the Soviet delegation, which was returning from Genoa, to visit this socialist province. They wanted to prepare a reception for us. We said very good, but the reception should not be in a restaurant but in a workers' assembly. Even then, they responded, 'Yes, we'll gladly do that.' What does this tell us?

In Berlin Wels blows up the Committee of Nine; in Saxony we are invited to Dresden and all the larger cities of the province. Communists in Saxony hold in their hands the decision over whether this Social Democratic–Independent government continues to exist.<sup>33</sup> And the leaders of the SPD and USPD want through this invitation to strengthen their position by showing the workers that, 'Look, we carry on very well even with this devil, the Bolsheviks, and we do not take fright.' After the breakdown, our comrades in Saxony continued the united-front policy.

In closing, I would like to sound a note of warning. Above all, *we should not negotiate with leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals at any cost, but rather negotiate in cases when we can achieve solid results in this field.* And where we do this, we will achieve penetrations into the front of our opponent. Where this policy is not possible, we must carry out frontal attacks, but always through the method of the united front, by pressing to the fore the minimum demands that can attract the masses.

I believe that the Communist International can be content with the results of this transitory episode, which lasted from April to May. Let me add one thing: In the struggle for the united front we should place the emphasis not on the convocation of a world congress of labour but on *specific demands related to the specific situation*, as we will discuss in the next agenda point.

**Clara Zetkin** (chair): We now proceed with the discussion. Comrade Zinoviev has the floor.

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33 While rejecting requests to enter the government in Saxony made by the province's left-wing Social-Democratic leadership, the KPD nevertheless supported it against the bourgeois parties, as well as backing a number of its actions.

### Remarks on the United Front

**Zinoviev:**<sup>34</sup> Comrades, in my view our task is now not only to draw the balance sheet of what has happened but also to think of the future. But to set a truly correct line for the future, we must also briefly review the episode that has just taken place – the first act, so to speak, in the struggle for the united front. Let us start with the question: Did we win? And if so, what exactly did we gain? I believe we can say without any exaggeration that the Communist International did make significant gains in this first act, most of all in the fact that we Communists no longer stand as 'splitters' in the eyes of the masses. That is a fact.

True, our opponents will continue to write that we are splitters. But after six months of struggle for the united front, the average worker no longer sees us as splitters. That alone is a big step forward.

When the Communist International's work began, we were splitters. At the time we had no choice. We had to split the old socialist parties, salvage the best revolutionary forces in the working class, and create an assembly point for the Communist parties in every country. During some stretches of time we had to appear as splitters, and none of us regrets that. There are comrades in France, for example, who now regret the split, but in so doing they reveal that they are only halfway Communist. The split was historically necessary; it was a major step forward.

But two or three years have now gone by. We have formed our parties almost everywhere. We face new tasks, and we must go to the masses and conduct ourselves in a way that ordinary workers can understand. For us the split was not an end in itself but a means toward winning the masses. And in my opinion we are halfway toward achieving that goal. Already we see the beginnings of a new mood among the masses. They must now recognise that for us the split was not an end in itself, and that we are the ones who call for unification of the revolutionary masses around a platform and work for that.

That is what we have won, although it is admittedly a victory whose fruits will not be immediately evident – in elections, for example. We also scored a moral victory during this conference. Radek's speech, for example, was such a victory.<sup>35</sup> We can note that without any presumption.

But this does not at all mean that everything went smoothly for us. Not at all. Here we must see the lessons clearly. The united-front policy was correct and

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<sup>34</sup> Translated from the *Inprekorr* version.

<sup>35</sup> Radek's initial speech at the Berlin Conference can be found in *Official Report*, pp. 30–8. This second speech, given in reply to the Second International, can be found on pp. 65–78.

remains so; we must understand that. However, in considering the end of the first act, perhaps the pace of our struggle for the united front was a bit too fast. That was not our decision, of course; the pace was set by the course of history. But still we need to recognise that fact today. The Genoa Conference was not a Russian initiative; it was an international development. Only a narrow-minded fool could miss that. And we had to do everything in our power to exert pressure on the bourgeoisie gathered in Genoa.

The Committee of Nine is shattered. Was it all in vain? Many comrades will be disappointed, but that will be true only of those who do not understand the united front in terms of dialectics. Even comrades who thought the united front represented an organic link and wanted to rescue the Communist International must understand that now. The question is: What is the united front? It is the struggle to win the masses for communism. In Russia it is said that some people see two miles underneath the ground. There are comrades like this in the French party. Many such comrades say that the united front is opportunism. But as we see, that is not the case.

The form will change. What we had was an episode. We had a Committee of Nine; perhaps we will make attempts in another form. But the united-front policy of struggle for the masses who have not yet been won to communism will continue and take a different form in every country.

We should also not underestimate the importance of the Russian statement submitted to the Committee of Nine. In my opinion it has not been sufficiently utilised in our agitation. After careful consideration of the situation and consultation with sister parties, the Russian party made this very important statement: We are prepared to enter into a united front even if the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals revoke all the promises they made about supporting the Soviet Russian government. The Russian party stated publicly that it does not view this as an ultimatum. On the contrary, it is ready to make concessions to the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals on this question.<sup>36</sup>

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36 The Russian Communist Party had sent a letter to the Committee of Nine stating that 'the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia declares its readiness to strike all slogans referring to the defence of the Soviet Power from the joint declaration – if this [will be] enough to satisfy the Second International. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia considers the unification of the working class in its struggle against the capitalist reaction as the most urgent need of the hour. For this reason the Central Committee does not want to give the Second International any opportunity to sabotage the establishment of the united front of the proletariat.' The letter was read out as part of the ECCI delegation's declaration to the 23 May session of the Committee of Nine, printed in *Inprecorr*, 27 May 1922.

'Please don't save Soviet Russia,' we said. 'It will save itself.' The true proletarians will bring aid to the first proletarian state regardless. So even after all these statements about Russia are removed, the Russian party believes that enough space is left for a common struggle. The Russian questions are important, of course, and are in a certain sense ideological in nature, but we are at present in a period of the global proletarian struggle where we should unite in struggle for the eight-hour day, help for the jobless, opposition to the capitalist offensive. We should be able to utilise this statement in our agitation around the world.

In Berlin the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals accepted the struggle for the eight-hour day.<sup>37</sup> Wasn't that a moral victory for us? Does that mean we can really unite now around the eight-hour day in a consistent way? Not at all. A reformist struggle for the eight-hour day under present circumstances is impossible. In today's conditions, even this very moderate programme adopted by the Berlin Conference cannot be defended in reformist fashion. It is impossible to amalgamate that with consistent reformism, absolutely impossible. For an honest reformist must recognise that in the present period, this economic demand has political consequences.

But this slogan was a truly pathetic manoeuvre, a dishonest move on the part of the reformists. They were actually compelled by the masses to take up this demand, which in present circumstances can take on revolutionary significance.

Now, comrades, what will the future bring? Will we continue to struggle for the united front, and what will become of international Menshevism? It is possible, indeed, probable, that international Menshevism will swing to the left. I am firmly convinced that the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals will be forced dozens of times by the course of history, by the pressure of the masses, to speak in a Bolshevik or half-Bolshevik manner, just as was the case with the Russian Mensheviks for a period of time. Plekhanov said once that they were half-Leninists.

The united front is the product of a given relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The Committee of Nine has been broken apart, but the capitalist offensive continues. The bourgeoisie is fully organised; the workers must defend themselves.

These fundamental factors are present whether or not the Committee of Nine exists. And based on these factors, the struggle for the united front will advance, and we will see swings to the left by the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. The entire objective situation forces these two Internationals,

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37 See the common declaration issued by the conference on pp. 367–8 of this volume.

under pressure of events, to experience further swings of this sort, which does not exclude that at certain moments they may act in an openly reactionary fashion as the sole saviour of the bourgeoisie. We must foresee these variants. Comrade Šmeral said to me that between the immediate demands, which are the starting point for the party's activity in the present period, and the final goal there must be a link. I believe that to be quite correct.

Partial demands are now a starting point for the masses and also for the united front. Anyone who fails to see that will never be able to lead a great mass party. But we retain our perspective for the struggle. We have the small immediate demands, and we have the dictatorship. Should there not be something in between? Between the grey prose of the lesser immediate demands and the poetry of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Should there be a link? This question is cropping up everywhere, and we believe we can tell comrades that, yes, there must be a link.

The masses are now beginning to struggle for small goals. They are not yet Communist, not yet revolutionary enough, not yet ready to struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and to make a revolution. But they do want a perspective that reaches further, a goal that can be achieved more or less at the present time, and I think that we do indeed have slogans that can play this role. The slogan of the workers' government is one of them, and it serves well as a link between two phases: grey partial demands and the sun of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our comrades should grasp this now, including our French comrades.

Consider the situation in countries such as Italy, Czechoslovakia – and we will be speaking specifically about these countries. Such a situation is present there. We must fight against the capitalist offensive and for the eight-hour day, we must fight for small immediate demands. However, the power of the working class is so great, relatively, that we can and should advance demands such as the political call for a workers' government.

A united front by no means signifies what we see before us in Saxony. That is a form of the united-front policy, but it does not coincide with the united front. What we have there is an exceptional situation. Our French friends do not understand that. They consider Saxony and Thuringia to be a kind of ministerialism. The Third Congress permitted that. It is the slogan of the workers' government that serves as a link between our programme of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the small demands around which we can now mobilise the masses.

Granted, this policy cannot be used everywhere. Saxony is an exceptional case. But we should not try to use this quite specific development to obscure the united-front policy. In my view, one of the most important lessons we must

draw from this stage, as has already been said, is not to limit ourselves either to the intense struggles for immediate small and partial demands, nor to the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also to raise the major demands that lie in between, such as, for example, in countries where the working class is sufficiently strong, the slogan of the workers' government and that of workers' control of production.

I must also mention the weaknesses that have shown up during this stage. Friedrich Adler said a month ago, when we called for convening the Committee of Nine, that what we are witnessing is not sabotage but rather a lack of organisational dexterity on the part of the Second International. Comrades, I believe that we must recognise such a lack of dexterity on our own side as well, and that is certainly illustrated by this episode.

We did not succeed in rousing the masses, we did not succeed in really mobilising all the parties, we did not succeed in making our struggle one of the masses in all the factories and mills. And even more, we had to experience the tragic spectacle of the Communist International appearing as something other than a united organisation. As far as I know, that is the first time this has happened in the history of the Communist International. There were times when this or that individual attempted to discredit the Communist International or bring it into disrepute. But here for the first time, after the International had taken its decision, entire parties did not carry out their Communist duty. That is a very important lesson.

The Communist International is a centralised, disciplined organisation. Previously that was our fame, our pride, and our honour; we were not like the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. Well, it is true that we did not face an immediate revolutionary struggle during this period of time. At stake was something much less than an insurrection, and still we displayed great weaknesses in unity. If it happens again that we make such a decision and it leads to such a display of indiscipline, then the Communist International is finished. That must be said. What is at stake here is no trifle, no joke; it is not whether the choice of words was apt or clumsy. The French and Italian comrades must recognise that when the Communist International takes a decision, this must not be sabotaged later on by any of its sections. They must recognise that this can lead to the Communist International being a mere propaganda association and not an organisation of struggle that it was intended to be.

We must recognise this once and for all, and that is an extremely important lesson.

The united-front policy – and we said this in our initial theses – does not merely give us the opportunity to win new masses and to gauge the relationship of forces with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals; it also enables us

to see into the depths of our own party. That is why I believe it is very important to state clearly what has been revealed in this experience. We have truly looked within our sections, as part of an international organisation of struggle. We must admit frankly that we have had some rather unfortunate experiences in this regard. Recall our February plenum, where the united-front policy was approved with a large majority. Only three parties were opposed and even they agreed in a general sense. What was the outcome?

After the decisions made in February, we were no longer engaged in discussion but rather in a campaign – not an armed one, to be sure, but still an important political and international campaign, which was closely watched by the working class and by our enemies as well. And what happened? Individual parties broke away and did not join in this campaign. Instead they undercut it again and again, providing arguments for our enemies. *Vorwärts*, the German Social Democracy, the British, everywhere they were saying, ‘Yes but your French party is not doing this.’ What could we say in reply? And just among us, what they said was true. The French party did undercut our campaign, although from a different point of view.

Just imagine what it would mean if such a tradition did take root in the Communist International, such that we make decisions here and then in reality do something quite different. What would that mean? What would then be the difference between the Communist International and the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals? This would not happen just with the united front, it would happen with more important decisions that are really matters of life and death. We must therefore educate our parties – most of them still new parties – in the spirit that when we take an international decision, it really means something. No other tradition should slip in here. This lesson must not be overlooked. The conduct of our parties in the course of the campaign is of great importance.

In Norway too the party has the support of the majority of workers, not of the working class as a whole, to be sure, but of the organised workers. Out of this situation an ideology has developed, ‘We already have the majority; why do we need the united front?’ And within the party a current has taken shape that is more or less hostile to the united front. The Norwegian party did not, as a party, undercut the campaign. We cannot reproach it, as we do the French comrades, for having come out against it. The Lian case is something special, and I mention it only for information.<sup>38</sup> Yes, such a mood does exist in the Norwegian party, and that is the greatest error that one could make.

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38 For a discussion of the Lian case, see p. 322 in session 4.

They say, 'We already have the majority.' What majority? Do you have the majority of the working class? Not at all. You have the majority of the vanguard, but not that of the working class itself, and the united front is the means to winning the working class. What's at stake here is not the vanguard but the broad working masses themselves. And to the degree that you have their support, it is only through a ballot paper, but not through the struggle for communism.

The French comrades share this point of view, and in the French case it is even more erroneous. They too say they have the majority. What majority? It has not even been demonstrated that they have the majority of the political vanguard. If that were true, it is inconceivable that outright, blatant anarchists – twin brothers of the Scheidemanns – achieved a majority in the revolutionary trade unions. Well, how did that happen? You have a majority in the working class, and still the revolutionary trade unions fall into the hands of these characters? Comrade Frossard promised that after Saint-Étienne it will be different.<sup>39</sup> I sincerely hope that we gain this majority, but for now it is only a hope and not a fact. In Russia we have a proverb: don't count your chickens until the end of autumn – that is, when they are really there. So we will wait and see whether these little syndicalist chickens come running up to Frossard.

Comrades, there is another piece of evidence against our comrades. It turns out that in France, in the most recent elections to the National Assembly, the reformist party of Renaudel received more votes in the North than we did. And then our French comrades come and say they have the majority. They have fallen victim to an optical illusion. The united front is the means to win a genuine majority in the working masses.

Let me turn to Italy. Later on, we will have a detailed discussion. What does the situation there show us? There exists a so-called Labour Alliance [*Alleanza del Lavoro*].<sup>40</sup> When its formation was posed, the Italian party said that they would not take part in the assemblies to launch it because that would mean accepting formation of a united front in the political arena. Now the alliance exists. For now it is ambiguous in nature. The reformists want to reduce it to nothing. But the working masses want to have it as a point of assembly. The first

39 The CGTU's first formal congress would be held in Saint-Étienne from 25 June to 1 July 1922.

40 The *Alleanza del Lavoro* was formed 20 February 1922 by the leaderships of the five major trade unions in Italy – representing social-democratic, anarchist, and syndicalist currents – on the initiative of the railway workers' union, with the task of opposing fascist attacks.

thing we need to do is to have a say in this alliance. But based on the strategy of our Italian party, even though the party leads 500,000 members in the trade unions, it cannot say a word in the Alleanza because it did not join it at the appropriate time.

Now we have to carry out a struggle in Italy for representation of the Communist-led trade unions in the Alleanza. The reformists are obviously not going to agree to that, and so we are going to have to struggle for what we could have obtained at the beginning with no effort at all. We were invited as a political party, but we explained, no, we cannot join as a political party. That is theoretically simply absurd and impossible to justify. How can a Marxist assert that the enormous economic struggle that is now unfolding is of no concern to a political party? First of all, that is indefensible for a Marxist – and also from a political viewpoint. Now, as a result of a false policy, we have landed in a situation where we do not have a single representative in the alliance. How did that come about? Simply because our comrades did not clearly understand the united-front policy. They did not grasp it soon enough, and our Italian friends also displayed a lack of discipline.

How could this happen? They always write us, 'We will act as soldiers of the revolution.' And then they write twenty articles against the united front. They say that it is Millerandism,<sup>41</sup> they arouse the masses against the Communist International, and then they tell us they are its soldiers. That's not discipline; it's the opposite of discipline. Do the French comrades really have such a low opinion of us that they think it's enough to wave the word 'discipline' in our face and we will say, 'What a disciplined party!' When we were in the same party as the Mensheviks – because twenty years ago we were a minority in a united party – we always said that we submit to discipline but we continually undermined the whole situation and we were right to do so.

**Interruption:** But you did not say so.

**Kreibich:** But the Mensheviks said so.

**Zinoviev:** That is a reminiscence; fifteen or twenty years later we can say it. But to act that way toward the Communist International is quite another matter.

Where do we go from here? Is the united front finished now? Not in the least. It's only beginning. The policy is only beginning. It's quite possible that we will

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41 For Millerandism, see p. 174, n. 9.

have to apply this policy for a great many years, until we win the majority of the working class. It will take various forms, and unfortunately I cannot give Comrade Radek any guarantee that he will not have to sit down together with Vandervelde again at some point.

**Radek:** That's why I was so courteous to him.

**Zinoviev:** He behaved very courteously, and Bukharin did so as well, although when they met he was a bit overwrought.

**Bukharin:** He was my once-dead brother.

**Zinoviev:** So anything can happen in this world of woe that we live in. We cannot simply rely on forms of struggle we used in the past, until we have all the workers of the world on our side. It can also happen that the struggle will develop in a different way.

We have begun the struggle for the united front from above and from below. It's quite clear that we were unable to achieve any major gains from above. This campaign is appropriate only for one thing: through the struggle from above we can win the masses from below for the real struggle. We are not going to weep over the collapse of the Committee of Nine; we can manage very well without such a committee, because the real struggle for the united front is only just beginning in all the factories, workplaces, and localities. And increased abuse heaped on us by the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals will provoke us only to struggling even more calmly for the eight-hour day, for all the lesser demands, in order to move later on to the demands for the workers' government and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What we have experienced was a short prologue. The genuine struggle for the united front will now take place in the factories and workplaces where the masses are to be found. The second lesson is the need for inner firmness as we advocate this united front not in words but in deeds. True, parties like those in France and Italy are absolutely essential components of the Communist International. We will do everything possible to hold these parties closely and firmly to the Communist International. But if that is possible only at the price we have paid in this period, it would be a tragedy. The Communist International cannot afford to pay such a price.

Our slogan must now be: Through a genuine united front of the Communist International to the united front of the working class; through this victory over the social patriots to a simultaneous victory over the bourgeoisie.

**Zetkin:** The Presidium asks you whether you want to begin a discussion of these two reports. Since no one asks to speak, I propose that we adjourn this session until 6:00 p.m. and begin the afternoon session with the report from Czechoslovakia.

*(The session adjourns.)*

## Czechoslovakia

*Chair: Zetkin.*

*Speakers: Jílek, Šmeral, Kreibich*

### The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

**Bohumil Jílek:**<sup>1</sup> The fusion congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, where all the national sections of Czechoslovakia unified, took place in November 1921, in accordance with the decision of the Third World Congress.<sup>2</sup> The work was allocated according to the requirements of an international party that needs to become capable of action. New organisations were established, corresponding to the strategic requirements of the class struggle. Hardly had these efforts begun when major wage struggles broke out among the agricultural workers, miners, glass workers, and metalworkers, which embraced the entire country. Right now the party is on the eve of major struggles. Municipal officials are up for re-election. However, since there is much anxiety over the Communists' victory and the defeat of the Social Democrats, an effort is under way to extend the term of the local officials without an election. If this takes place, the Communists intend to protest by resigning from their posts.

The workers are displaying a good revolutionary spirit in all the wage struggles and protest rallies. Their readiness for struggle is growing. However, they lack an effective leadership, and this is particularly noticeable in the trade unions. The federations of agricultural workers, bricklayers, stone workers, chemical workers, and shoemakers are already under Communist leadership. In other unions, Communists are closing in on that goal.

The biggest weakness of the Czechoslovak CP is that it does not yet enjoy direct influence on the working masses – indeed, not even among those organised in the party. We have not yet succeeded even in winning a majority of the members to subscribe to the party's press. The decisions of the Third Congress have not yet been carried out.<sup>3</sup> Neither cells nor working groups have been

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1 Jílek was speaking for the opposition faction within the Czechoslovak CP that was opposed to the leadership of Bohumir Šmeral.

2 For the national unification of the Czechoslovak CP, see p. 74, n. 11.

3 The 'Theses on Tactics and Strategy' adopted by the Third Congress stated: 'The Czechoslovak

organised. We cannot yet report on underground work or agitational and organisational work in the army, because this has not been initiated. Our work is obstructed, in part, by a lack of trained personnel. However, it is also impeded by attitudes that perceive the new situation as a retreat, that do not expect the revolution until fifteen or thirty years from now, and that view the party's major task at this time only in maintaining the apparatus and carrying out propaganda work. They oppose underground work and allow the work of organising Communists in the Legion<sup>4</sup> and former Red Army members to disintegrate.

Financially, members are quite involved in diverse efforts to collect money. Between 1 October 1920 and 1 April 1922, the party collected more than 12 million korunas.<sup>5</sup> Material obstacles often obstructed the party's activity and led to quarrels whose effects were felt in the party leadership.

These quarrels resulted in a decomposition within the party leadership to the degree that one can say that the party has been rendered incapable of action.

The ECCI should devote more attention to the party and exercise a direct supervisory role.

Relations between the party and the Executive Committee need to be strengthened. It is urgent that the ECCI state its opinion on developments in the Czechoslovak CP and indicate the road ahead.

**Bohumir Šmeral:** I must reject the assertion that the party does not yet enjoy direct influence on the masses. As for the charge that underground work is lacking, Jílek himself is immediately responsible for this work, since he was the party's central secretary until March of this year. As for the role of financial difficulties, this is being exaggerated. The entire crisis is not so severe for the moment, but if it is not promptly resolved, it could lead to severe conflicts.

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party now faces the task of attracting broader masses of workers through truly Communist agitation. It must also train its members, both longstanding and newly won, through effective and unrelenting Communist propaganda. It must unite the workers of all nations within Czechoslovakia in a solid proletarian front against nationalism, the main weapon of the bourgeoisie in Czechoslovakia. It must strengthen the proletariat's power, created through this process, during all coming struggles against government and capitalist oppression, and convert this strength into an invincible power. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia will accomplish these tasks all the more quickly if it overcomes centrist traditions and hesitations in clear and determined fashion, pursuing a policy that educates the broad masses of the proletariat in a revolutionary spirit, unites them, and is thus capable of preparing their actions and carrying them through to victory.' In Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, p. 933.

4 For the Czechoslovak Legion, see p. 271, n. 6.

5 The equivalent of US\$290,000 in 1922.

All three tendencies that were still visible at the unification congress are now agreed in principle.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the party has enjoyed truly impressive successes. It is true that the party's strength was somewhat overstated, because it was calculated in terms of the Social-Democratic Party's losses and did not take into account those who lapsed into inactivity after the split. Even so, the party is the largest of all the political organisations that workers join. Moreover, the party's gains were achieved not by vacillating but by carrying out the Communist International's line of march. We note that the party has not committed any major errors that could form the basis for harsh criticism or the formation of a tendency. The theses and resolutions presented to the most recent national conference on general policy, the united front, and the trade unions were adopted unanimously.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, there is an opposition that makes up almost half the leading bodies. We have tried repeatedly to induce this opposition to present its viewpoint precisely. However, we never got it to express itself concretely, and it's very difficult to take a clear position on an opposition that does not take a clear stand. The opposition's discontent arises from a variety of sources, and the Executive Committee conference would do us a great service by determining just what are the opposition's divergent views.

So far, the masses have not been affected by the opposition. However, the danger exists that if personal antagonisms continue to develop they will find expression among the masses. The party leadership is hampered by the fact that it contains three comrades of one current and three of the other. Sometimes the opposition votes against our proposals on minor matters automatically, purely as an opposition. That leads to passivity and impedes discussion and decision making.

### *The Trade-Union Question*

Before the war, 200,000 workers were organised in Czechoslovakia. After the war, they were joined by 600,000 who had previously been uninvolved. Now, as the capitalist offensive sets in, these masses have become impatient. They have the impression that they have been paying their dues for nothing, and there is a strong tendency to leave the trade unions. Those who are discontented are now taking up Communist arguments and using them against the leaders. There are comrades who say that workers want a split, and we must accept such a course if we want to save them from falling into indifference. What is more, the old

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6 A reference to the tendencies at the time of the unification congress led by Kreibich; by Muna, Hula, and Zápotocký; and by Šmeral.

7 A reference to the Czechoslovak CP's national conference of 16–17 April 1922.

trade-union leaders would also be very happy to see a split. Our viewpoint is to oppose any deliberate split, even though – if a split takes place – we can win over a large number of workers.<sup>8</sup>

The united-front policy has served us well in every field of work and led to significant gains. Our party is very strong, relative to the country's size. Still, the country is over-industrialised. It includes almost all the most important industrial regions of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Czechoslovak industry can supply the needs of 65 million consumers, but the country has only 14 million inhabitants. As a result, workers make up a proportionally greater part of the population than in other countries. The bourgeoisie is divided along national lines. The entire task of government rests on the Czech bourgeoisie, which does not even possess the majority of the instruments of economic power, since 70 per cent of capital is held by the Germans.<sup>9</sup>

The country's international role is also contradictory. The Czechoslovak state was created by the military and conspiratorial activities of the nationalist emigration. Today it is militarily dependent on France and can maintain itself only through this military link with France. The state's military interests tie it to the West, while economic needs push it to the East, to Russia. This contradiction reduces even further the foundation of the ruling bourgeois group's power. Social Democrats make up the largest governmental party and main base of support, but this is progressively weakened and destabilised by shocks from below. The bourgeoisie is aware of its weaknesses and does not formally, as a class, take charge of the leadership. The government is headed by two intellectuals who have fairly significant reputations but who are in fact socially rootless and isolated, lack the support of any political party, and do not wield social power.<sup>10</sup>

Under such conditions, workers' parties may well win a majority in the coming elections, and Communists could become the strongest party. Every significant strike shows how untenable the present situation is. During the metal-workers' strike, even the National Socialist leaders were compelled by the pres-

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8 A sharp struggle was then taking place within the Czechoslovak Trade Union Association (OSC) between Social-Democratic and Communist forces. In the summer of 1922 the OSC expelled the Communist-led woodworkers' and chemical workers' unions; left-wing forces were also expelled from other unions. On 26–29 October 1922 the left-wing forces founded the International All-Trade Union Organisation (MVS), which affiliated to the RILU.

9 A likely reference to the population of what became known as the Sudetenland, composed of German-speaking regions of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire that were allocated to Czechoslovakia by the Treaty of Saint-Germain in 1919.

10 A reference to President Tomáš Masaryk and Prime Minister Edvard Beneš.

sure of their opposition to negotiate with us regarding joint leadership of the strike.<sup>11</sup> In the process, they put forward the idea of the workers' parties forming a government. That parliament could be dissolved and sufficient pressure could be exerted to force new elections, thus securing a majority. The party is not prepared to adopt this perspective. The Executive Committee should take up this question, which can arise as a result of the united-front policy, and provide guidance. The question may well be posed urgently in Czechoslovakia in the foreseeable future.

**Karl Kreibich:** The so-called opposition in the party was never clearly defined, even when it was in disagreement with the party leadership or with Šmeral's policies. A degree of disagreement arose just after the Third World Congress, when Šmeral was for understandable reasons passive with regard to forming a unified Communist party, while comrades of the opposition vigorously promoted its creation. These contrasting attitudes led to the oppositional comrades coming to play a historic role in the movement. At the unification congress, a party executive was elected that was constituted in opposition to Šmeral and his so-called current. However, the comrades who thus took the party's leadership into their hands were not always up to the tasks posed in such a critical situation. It often turned out that it was Šmeral who led the party in its external relations, and that in turn became the source of personal antagonisms.

The opposition, of course, arises from objective causes and expresses certain moods. Among the masses, who are increasingly turning away from [bourgeois] democracy but have not yet found the path to [proletarian] dictatorship, there are feelings of some degree of uncertainty. People do not see the link of which Zinoviev spoke that clearly indicates the road from democracy to dictatorship. The uncertainty of the opposition expresses, first, personal inadequacies that arise from certain historical circumstances and also through the errors of Comrade Šmeral; and, second, from uncertainties in the masses and among the ranks.

The masses' uncertainty will necessarily find expression in the party, but must not take hold in the party leadership. A party convention is needed to elect a leadership. This will of course not eliminate the oppositional comrades from the party leadership. They are good Communists who have drifted into

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11 The Czech National Socialist Party was a social liberal party whose best-known leader was Edvard Beneš, simultaneously the country's prime minister and foreign minister at the time.

The Czechoslovak metalworkers' strike, involving 32,000 workers, began 3 May 1922 and ended 2–3 June.

error through force of circumstance; they will once again carry out the line of the Comintern. However, it is not possible that they should hold the majority of the party executive for an extended time. Their opposition expresses, in part, Communist reservations concerning the party's course, but how this applies to trade-union matters is not clear. This is indicated most clearly in the statements of Bolen, one of the opposition's leaders.

The opposition has been created by causes that have now disappeared, but the conflict persists, driven by momentum. We must eliminate this and the personal antagonisms, and that is why a new party convention is needed in order to overcome this crisis.

*(The session adjourns.)*

## Youth; France

*Report of the Youth Executive. Reports on the French question.*

*Chair: Zinoviev.*

*Speakers: Kreibich, Frossard, Souvarine, Trotsky.*

### Report of the Youth Executive

**Kreibich:** I will report on the Youth International's bureau meeting, which took place in March.<sup>1</sup> In my view, the Communist parties are not paying enough attention to the youth. Neglect of the youth organisations poses a serious danger to the entire movement.

As the proletarian revolution waned, political interest among the youth understandably decreased sharply. What is more, the blows of a revived capitalism fall more heavily on worker youth than on the adult working class. In this situation, the Communist youth organisations, which had been counting on a rapid victory of proletarian revolution, must reorient their political outlook and find a new path to the worker youth. This was the task posed at the Second World Congress of the Youth International last year.<sup>2</sup> In addition to determining the new line of march that had become necessary, the relationship of the youth organisations to the newly formed strong Communist parties also had to be defined.

Under these circumstances, the decisions of the Second World Congress of Communist Youth were in many respects more radical than those of the Comintern's Third World Congress. It was a great achievement of the youth executive to succeed, despite all obstacles, in unifying the Communist youth movement around a common line.

The expanded bureau session indicated that the Youth International is well on the road to overcoming this crisis. Only one thing is missing: strengthened support from the Communist parties in every country.

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1 The Communist Youth International convened its Third Bureau Session in Moscow on 18 March 1922.

2 The Second Congress of the Communist Youth International held its inaugural session in Moscow on 9 July 1921, and its formal deliberations took place 14–23 July 1921. (An earlier convening of the congress in Berlin had been dispersed by the police).

As for the united front, the youth organisations displayed the same symptoms as the Communist parties in their respective countries. The expanded session of the bureau took up the united front specifically from the point of view of youth. It concluded that because capitalism's offensive falls with special severity on worker youth, it is absolutely necessary to unite working youth of all currents in a common struggle.

The youth organisations were initially constituted around exclusively political issues, and the transition to work in the economic/trade union arena is therefore difficult. The bureau considered it self-evident that where trade-union youth organisations exist, Communists have to work within them for our goals.

Questions of educating the youth, sports, the youth press, and the struggle against militarism were also taken up thoroughly, along with efforts to counter the youth organisations of our opponents. We took up the Russian youth organisation as a special point. With its 400,000 members, it has a prominent role in the Youth International. The crisis caused in the organisation by the New Economic Policy is now being overcome with help from the Russian Communist Party.

Following the bureau meeting, the French youth held a conference that expressed support for the united front by a large majority. The congress of the Italian youth also demonstrated their full agreement with the line of the Youth International on all the most important issues. In North America, the resistance against legal activity has been overcome in the youth organisation. These achievements show that the Youth Executive has succeeded in carrying out the decisions of the bureau effectively.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, let me stress again the need for increased support of the youth organisation by the Comintern and its individual sections.

### The French Question

**Louis-Oscar Frossard** (reporter): I agree that there is a certain crisis of trust, or at least a state of discontent and disunity. The best means to overcome this crisis is a loyal and comprehensive discussion with the Executive Committee.

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3 The Second Congress of the French Communist Youth was held on 22–23 May 1922. The congress of the Italian Communist Youth was held 27–28 March 1922. The US Young Workers League held its founding convention 13–15 May 1922.

I will take up the issues before the French party one by one, starting with the stagnation of membership recruitment. At the time of the congress of Marseilles<sup>4</sup> the party had 120,000 members, which is all the more impressive given that the unified [Socialist] party never had more than 90,000. This figure fell by March to 60,000. This decline is caused in part by the fact that forces that were hoping for an easy victory or who came to us because it was in vogue dropped away because of the slower pace of events. The split of the trade unions, disunity within the party, and finally the doubling of membership dues – all these factors played a role. There is also a shortage of leading comrades who can hold the membership together. In March a recruitment campaign was launched and by May the membership total was up to 90,000. It will rise still further.

The district elections took place in 2,500 districts, where we put up 400 candidates. They received 500,000 votes. Thirty Communists were elected to the general councils and 40 to the district councils.

The electoral results did not match the hopes that we held for these elections. We must recognise that:

- 1.) Communist influence in the urban centres is stagnating or even, in some localities, declining, while it is growing among the rural workers.
- 2.) In major worker districts of the north, the Socialists enjoy more electoral influence than we do.
- 3.) The National Bloc is now sure to be defeated by the Left Bloc, and this will now take place.<sup>5</sup>
- 4.) The Left Bloc, as an electoral alliance, has an allure against which we must fortify our members.

Our defeat is due to roughly the same causes as the stagnation of our membership. Our progress in rural areas is a victory for our rural propaganda. The Socialists' voting base and electoral gains are due to the wheeling and dealing of the Left Bloc, but there is no denying that their votes in the North come overwhelmingly from workers. In the North the Socialists have a staff of political and trade-union functionaries that stayed with them through the split. We are not yet able to equal that. On the other hand, in Paris and neighbouring areas our situation is outstanding.

All in all, the district elections have revealed our weaknesses. We must recognise that we underestimated the Socialists' strength in some regions.

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4 A reference to the French CP's congress in Marseilles of 25–30 December 1921. The published German proceedings erroneously says 'Versailles'; it is printed here in accordance with the transcript published in *Bulletin communiste*.

5 For the Left Bloc and the National Bloc, see p. 151, n. 6.

Now as to the Fabre case.<sup>6</sup> The Executive Committee has assigned an importance to this case that we consider to be exaggerated. He and his newspaper were brought before the Disputes Commission with instructions to expel him. It is certainly regrettable that the commission's work has proceeded slowly. However, the Central Committee does not have the right to intervene and replace the Disputes Commission. The party's opinion is that the Executive Committee, by applying Article 9, has established a particularly serious precedent.<sup>7</sup> There is an essential principle at stake here, to which the Central Committee cannot be indifferent.

When the Executive Committee reinstated the four members who resigned from the Central Committee, it determined that this had taken place through a 'purely formal vote', which was prepared in the party behind the scenes.<sup>8</sup> It must be said that this preparation did not take place behind the party's back, but openly within its structures.

It was hoped that readmitting the comrades who resigned would halt the tendency struggle. That did not take place. This struggle has continued with increased force, and it will lead to the formation of rival factions, gravely damaging the party.

What the party is being asked to do in the trade unions is to apply the spirit and letter of the resolution already adopted in Marseilles regarding the tasks of Communists in the unions. We must always bear in mind in this work the particular conditions in which the trade unions have developed, which led them to fend off any intervention by the political parties. Before the split [in the CGT], our efforts were directed at preventing the split. But the split took place nonetheless, and we then did everything we could to get trade unions to affiliate to

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6 In December 1921 Henri Fabre was brought before the PCF's Disputes Commission owing to an article he wrote attacking the Comintern. Rather than being expelled, as supporters of the Left had advocated, Fabre was simply reprimanded. The ECCI expelled him in March 1922, a decision not ratified by the PCF until October of that year.

7 A reference to the Comintern Statutes approved at the Second World Congress. The portion of Article 9 that Frossard is referring to states: '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. Such parties have the right to appeal to the world congress.' In Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, p. 698.

8 For the resignation of Central Committee members at the Marseilles Congress, see p. 216, n. 7. On 9 January 1922 the ECCI approved a resolution calling the resignations of the Left from the French CP central committee a 'mistake' and it sought to have them reinstated.

the CGTU.<sup>9</sup> Communists hold very important posts in the CGTU. They lead the transport workers (70,000 members), the textile workers (35,000), the miners (35,000), the public employees (13,000), the chemical workers, street-lighting employees, teachers, small shopkeepers, postal and telegraph employees, and so on. Of the 80 departmental federations, Communists lead 50.

Despite our efforts, we have not yet been able to gain the decisive influence now enjoyed by the syndicalists and anarchists in the CGTU. It has been said that we failed to carry out a polemic with these forces. During the period in which the CGTU was constituted, this polemic would only have led to bitter struggles, which would have been hard for the organisation to bear. The CGTU's constitution and orientation will be determined only at the Saint-Étienne Congress. The trade-union commission of the party has reached an agreement with the *Vie ouvrière* group, which is closest to it, and this will probably be approved by the majority of French revolutionary trade union. Two proposals for affiliation to the Red International of Labour Unions will be placed before the congress. One motion, drawn up by our commission, calls for unconditional affiliation to the RILU; the second motion calls for affiliation on condition that the provision about the RILU's organic link to the Comintern be revised. It is likely that the second motion will be adopted.<sup>10</sup> Given the present situation in the French workers' movement, this success will be of great significance.

As for the united front, it is clear that its principles cannot be seriously challenged. However, two types of considerations argue against its immediate implementation in France. Our party activists do not understand why they are being asked to enter into negotiations with those whom they consider to be their most dangerous opponents. The recent split in the trade unions makes it impossible for the CGTU to carry out common action with the CGT. We have to choose: either we carry out common actions with the revolutionary trade unions without the reformists and the old trade unionists, or, on the other hand, we go with the reformists and Social Democrats and without the revolutionary unions. Since it is not possible to achieve a complete united front, and in order to carry out the decisions of the Communist International while defending the needs of our own politics, we have strived to achieve the revolutionary united front.

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9 The split in the French CGT, which had been developing throughout 1921, was consummated in December 1921, when the CGT's National Confederal Committee voted to expel rebellious unions.

10 At the Saint-Étienne Congress of the CGTU (25 June–1 July 1922), a resolution in favour of conditional affiliation to the RILU was approved, the condition being that syndicalist autonomy be respected.

We do not hesitate to state that we would have strong reservations about setting up a united front with our reformist opponents. Given our party's inadequate preparation, there is a danger that the policy of unity in action would lead to organisational unity. We do not shy away from stressing that the party as a whole has not yet achieved sufficient Communist maturity to undertake such an attempt.

It is not our intention to rebel against decisions of the Executive Committee. We do not want to ruin the party's existence by taking a course of action that is, to say the least, premature.

The party has placed this question on the agenda of its next national congress. In our opinion, the party is duty-bound to seriously modify its earlier decisions. We believe that the party recognises the revolutionary value of the united front, but it asks the International to allow it to adapt the application of this course of action to the possibilities available to the party in France.

The party will in any case conform to the expressed will of the International. We understand that the International's decisions must be carried out in practice in the future, in both letter and spirit, if the International's authority is not to be destroyed.

To conclude, I will take up the charge that the party is lacking in unity. We are very aware that this criticism is well-founded. The party consists of the old unified organisation that was transformed in Tours into a Communist Party. Its members were not closely unified in the past by solidarity forged in revolutionary actions. Affiliation to the Third International does not convert it into a genuine Communist Party all at once. This necessary development can only take place bit by bit and by stages.

The question is how to bring this about. We think that the task in the coming months and especially at the next congress must consist of endowing the French Communist movement with an appropriate political programme.

The next stage can be carried out successfully, however, only if the life of the party is not poisoned by a faction fight, and if the forces most devoted to Communist ideas are firmly united. We are prepared to work, with the International's support, to achieve this agreement.

**Boris Souvarine** (reporter): The party's greatest error has been its failure to carry out the obligations it assumed when it affiliated to the Communist International. True, the party has changed its tone and terminology. It has broken with the bourgeoisie and assumed a clearly combative stance against it. The party stands in unqualified solidarity with the Bolshevik revolution. But that is the totality of what has changed since the Communist Party was formed in France.

The party has remained a propaganda organisation. It holds meetings, it publishes newspapers, it carries out agitation in a rather superficial manner. However, it does not penetrate into the masses, does not draw them into struggle, and does not place itself at their head.

What we do not see here is a new type of proletarian organisation, a new structure of a workers' party. The most serious error, however, is that the party is not even preparing to do this. It has retained the form of territorial branches as they existed in the old party, a structure corresponding to earlier conditions when they served exclusively to sustain electoral efforts. But this does not serve our present needs.

In the trade unions, party members feel they are completely free to act at their own discretion, sometimes even against the decisions of the party and the International. True, Communists now occupy top leadership positions in a considerable number of trade unions – but that was mostly the case in the past, as well. What is noticeable is that comrades who are militants both in the party and the unions are much more unionist than Communist. And the party's indecisive, hesitant, timid conduct is not conducive to changing this situation. The party has also failed to begin forming cells and preparing for future factory councils.

There is no discipline in the party. Anyone can join, and it is difficult to get rid of those who are not suited for it. The Central Committee does not represent the Communist concept of centralisation. It does not have the right of expulsion, because there is an organisation set above the Central Committee: the Disputes Commission. This body has the right to impose members on the party that the Central Committee considers to be politically undesirable. Moreover, the Central Committee of the party does not comprehend the propagandistic and exemplary value of a disciplinary measure decided in minutes in full view of the masses of proletarians, in a case where the matter is politically clear beyond any doubt.

The party's activity does not take up the economic demands of the proletariat. It remains imprisoned in the errors of the old party, standing aside from economic movements, which it leaves to the unions, and limiting itself to what it considers political activity. That is the reason why the party subordinated itself on May Day to the CGTU's initiative,<sup>11</sup> and why a Central Committee member tells the party to cultivate the traditions of Jaurès. By contrast, the

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11 The May Day demonstrations of 1922 throughout France organised by the CGTU were centred around opposing the French imperialist war drive, as well as the imposition of withholding taxes on wages and attacks on the eight-hour day.

party hides behind verbal revolutionary intransigence, talking of the struggle for immediate demands as reformist.

The press does not offer political slogans. On the most burning issues, where workers are awaiting answers from us as Communists, the party offers none. It does not play its vanguard role, it evades any responsibility, it does not engage with the difficult challenges as they arise. This abstention encourages demagogic forces that always have a ready answer even if it is worthless, and that always draft such a reply in a highly vigorous and decisive tone. This situation is the only explanation for the fact that the anarchists, who had completely disappeared from the scene for several years, have now gained exceptional influence.

The party's mentality is unchanged. If you make a criticism, it is said to reflect personal considerations; if you call for discipline, this is called persecution. If the International intervenes, there is talk of ukases [edicts], talk of how the French Communists are not *muzhiks* [peasants], and so on. And the party leadership lets them talk. If you speak of the work in the trade unions, right away there are cries about violation of sacred principles.

There is a reactionary current in the party that questions the decisions of the International, indeed the entire split [at Tours]. And the party leadership gives them free rein. There is also a current of so-called Lefts, a demagogic and disruptive element led by some irresponsible and harmful confusionists, who also enjoy free rein and get their way on important questions. The party leadership refrains from responding to the harmful influence of these demagogues. Instead of championing the concept of the Communist International, the party leadership prefers to pursue a policy of maintaining a balance. It views with approval the appearance of a right-leaning current alongside the extreme Left, because it believes that each one balances off the other. Under such conditions dubious forces can slip into the vanguard party and pursue their corrosive work.

No wonder that the party was unable to come to grips intellectually with the International's proposal of a united front, and indeed that it reacted against this proposal so vehemently. Suddenly we observed right-wing forces posturing as champions of absolute intransigence and as professors of Communist doctrine. People who would never tolerate Communists in their ranks were handing out lessons to the Communist International. The party leadership permitted them to play this role, even as it stood by while people presented the united front as a denial by the International of everything it had done since its foundation.

In view of this situation, the resignations at the Marseilles Congress were simply an expression of opposition to the party's incorrect orientation. And when the Central Committee suddenly regained its vigour in suppressing criticism of the party's orientation, an oppositional grouping began to take shape. Among those who wish to remain true to the undertakings toward the Interna-

tional that the party made in Tours, no one says they are building a faction, and that includes this group. But in order to prevent the formation of factions, the causes that have led to these factional embryos must be removed. And that is what the Executive Committee has tried to do.

There is a faction in the French party that is generally hostile to the International and the Communist movement. There is also a faction that wants to bring the party into full accord with the Third International. Between these two factions is the Centre, which wavers, like all Centre factions, and seeks to play off the other factions against each other. And so the party remains immobile, marking time. The situation is, broadly speaking, similar to that before Tours, except that the relationship of forces is different. That makes a new Tours Congress necessary.

The crisis will be resolved by immediately carrying out all the obligations that have been assumed, all the decisions taken in the interests of the party. If the International wants the party to carry out its decisions, this will certainly be supported by a big majority in the party, and that will resolve the crisis.

The party must now actually do what it should have done immediately after the Tours Congress. The Communist International must indicate to the French party the situation in which it finds itself two years after that congress.

Those who Frossard has just referred to as the 'most serious forces in the party' need to unite in order to lead the party on the correct path, from which it should never have diverged. If that is done, the party will be saved. However, if the Centre continues its policy of isolating the Left and showing favour to the Right, it is certain that at the next world congress the International will have one less party.

**Leon Trotsky:** French communism is in very difficult straits. Not for the first time is this being discussed in an international session. After each stage of our international work, the situation is found to be even worse and even more complicated. The time has come for us to finally take decisive steps.

The French Communist Party has fallen into serious conflict with the International. Resolutions adopted here together with very qualified representatives of the French party were not implemented in France. Commitments made here were not carried out.

Even on the most burning questions, the press of our French party does not present the spirit of the Communist International. The Central Committee of our French party does not adhere in its activities to the guidelines of the Communist International. The largest organisation in the French party, the Seine Federation, represents a completely bizarre, distinct, and autonomous organism. The Central Committee, patched together out of three or four quite

divergent tendencies, utterly lacks homogeneity. In the party publications, we read signed editorials that present personal nuances and tendencies. We do not hear the voice of the party on the most burning issues.

These are the facts, comrades.

The gravity of this situation was expressed by Comrade Daniel Renoult after his stay in Moscow in an article that I have already quoted in the Executive Committee. The article, entitled 'Against Disarming the Revolution' and directed against the united front, says:

The polemic for and against the united front has revived with great vigour. We do not regret this. The abscess must be lanced; the affair must be disposed of once and for all.<sup>12</sup>

So spoke Daniel Renoult, with whom we had thoroughly discussed here all the issues, informing him and receiving information in return.

We too favour settling this matter. Yes, the abscess must be lanced! We have begun dealing with the *Journal du peuple* abscess. We said, for our part, that this abscess must be lanced, and then we will see where the illness is located, who protests, and who cries out. The response we received is that this is an entirely unimportant issue that will be dealt with.

It was not dealt with.

Among those working in the *Journal du peuple* – temporarily, we are told – are some French comrades who accidentally belong to the party Central Committee. Members of the Central Committee like Verfeuil and Méric have continued to work for this paper even after the Executive Committee's decision on expulsion.<sup>13</sup> This is a very serious matter.

Following the Executive Committee's decision prohibiting their work for this paper, two Central Committee members continue their collaboration, and French comrades refuse to grasp the seriousness of this fact. They say it is unimportant. This truly shows a loss of any concept of political proportions.

The *Journal du peuple* reports on everything going on in the Central Committee and the party, naturally in a quite disloyal spirit. Recently Raoul Verfeuil, a Central Committee member, wrote an article saying that Frossard was 'considering the possibility of a regroupment of the forces that were broken apart at Tours.' Well, we have heard Frossard make a categorical statement that he

<sup>12</sup> Renoult's article, 'Contre le désarmement révolutionnaire', was published in *L'Humanité*, 7 May 1922.

<sup>13</sup> For the First Enlarged Plenum decision on *Journal du peuple*, see p. 215–6.

does not envisage any unity with the Dissidents or with a sector of the Dissidents. But we have not seen any denial in *L'Humanité*. We are told that no one reads [Verfeuil's] newspaper, but such news spreads immediately because of its inherent importance.

There are representatives of the right wing in the Central Committee, that is, of pacifism, reformism, centrism, alongside representatives of the Left, and the Centre is also present there. There are other very dangerous tendencies in the Central Committee. The view of Comrade Renaud Jean, for example, is the first step in the direction of the Russian Social Revolutionaries' teachings. Auclair speaks even more clearly. I quote from *L'Humanité*, where Auclair speaks of the economic struggle of youth. In his view, we are imprisoned by a hypnotic fixation on the working class. He writes: 'In a country where peasants make up four-sevenths of the population, the first task is to win the peasant masses.' He then protests in principle against the theses that 'do not offer anything but the advantages of a return to the past and smack of reformism'.

So, reformism is the struggle for the daily needs of the proletariat, and our first task is to win the peasant masses.

That is the theory of the Social Revolutionaries and the reformists pure and simple. And the most dangerous thing is that this 'petty-bourgeois' ideology – after all, the peasants are rural petty-bourgeois – is advanced while cloaking it in revolutionary phraseology.

The latest departmental elections, Frossard tells us, shows that we lost workers' votes in France and won peasants' votes. That is precisely the most dangerous symptom in the party's development. It would be a dangerous sin of omission not to have highlighted this problem of 'peasant' opportunism in good time.

We adopt decisions here with participation of the entire International, including an exceedingly representative French delegation – as we did a few months ago and a year ago. Yet even when these decisions are unanimous, we then read in the French Communist press that the decisions were based on entirely inadequate information, on scraps of articles, and so on. Victor Méric, Auclair, and others are glad to spread these fairy tales. So we must ask the French comrades present here to tell the French workers that they are being deceived in an unprincipled manner.

We read the articles from beginning to end, accepting the risk that we will find nothing within them, as in the pieces by Victor Méric. Our information is not based on the Communist newspapers alone; we also receive reports of French delegates and reports of the Executive Committee's delegates to France. We talked to Frossard, to Cachin, to Sellier, and to Renoult and other comrades. If we want our decisions to possess any degree of authority in France in the

future, we must destroy the entirely disloyal fairy tales that present to French workers the decisions taken here as having been adopted in a thoughtless manner.

After everything that has been written on this question, one must wonder at the great patience of French workers who are not shaking their fists at Moscow.

Verfeuil is glad to talk about the errors committed by the Russian party in its governmental policy, seeking to show that similar errors could well be made in the sphere of international socialist action. But there is a big difference between the governmental errors of a party that was the *first* to take power into its hands and the routine errors, the well-known errors, the numerous and even catalogued errors that the French party has been making for decades.

As to who has a better grasp of the situation in France, this is clear in assessing the strength of the Dissidents. The theses that I prepared for the united-front discussion gave detailed attention to the strength of the Dissidents. I wrote:

Under certain circumstances, the Dissidents can represent a much greater counterrevolutionary factor within the working class than it might seem if we went by the weakness of their organisation, their press run, and the ideological content of *Le Populaire*.

The French delegation has claimed that we occupy a commanding position in the political arena, and that the Dissidents no longer exist. So Cachin, Renoult, and also Comrade Sellier tell us. That is their main argument against the united front.

In the theses I drew up after discussion with a number of friends on the [French party] executive, and not on the basis of my personal outlook, I said that the Dissidents are definitely not a '*quantité négligeable*'. When I consulted with Comrade Zinoviev, he told me, 'It is very hard to deny that the Dissidents represent a real force, even though the French comrades deny this.' I therefore did not propose the theses [to the French CP leadership] but instead published them on my own responsibility and in my name in *Bulletin communiste*.<sup>14</sup>

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14 Trotsky's 2 March 1922 theses were originally published in *Bulletin communiste* 30 March 1922, vol. 3, no. 13, as 'Le Front unique et le communisme en France'. An English translation can be found under the title 'Material for a Report on the Question of French Communism' in Trotsky 1972, 2, pp. 91–109. The quotation Trotsky cites two paragraphs earlier is from point 21 of this document.

Now, however, the facts have demonstrated that my theses were correct. I repeat what Comrade Frossard admitted here, that he and his comrades did not gauge accurately the degree of power held by the reformists among the working masses. In the North the Dissidents gained more votes among working people than we did. As that shows, the most weighty argument advanced against the united front by the French comrades – that the Dissidents represent only a *quantité négligeable* and we don't want to have anything to do with them – is completely false. The comrades were quite wrong.

When comrades say that the differences of opinion between the Executive Committee and the French party are explained by misinformation and thoughtless decisions by the International, this undermines discipline from top to bottom.

At the close of the discussion on the united front [at the First Enlarged ECCI Plenum], Renoult said in this room that we are disciplined soldiers of the International who will submit to its decision, as is our Communist duty.<sup>15</sup> But the same Daniel Renoult lets no opportunity pass to write against the united front, to print quotes against it in his paper from the *Journal du peuple*, and to provoke declarations against it. Is this a case where a member of the Central Committee and of the party delegation sent to Moscow undertook a commitment that he could not carry out because of a hostile atmosphere in the party? No, not at all. Renoult is the initiator of this campaign against us, we who supposedly want to disarm the French proletariat. The explanation of why we want to disarm them appears in the *Journal du peuple*. This paper says that it was not the Comintern that came up with the idea of the united front, but the Russian state, acting under pressure of impoverishment and national needs.

Comrades, under such circumstances, I am surprised that the French workers are willing to continue belonging to our International. I am astonished at their patience. But it is now clear that even in this case, patience has its limits.

There is a logic in all this. For example, a resolution was adopted in the Seine Federation in May that was drafted by a commission including Méric, representing an evident right wing; Renoult of the Centre; and Heine of the extreme Left. This resolution stated that the crisis in the party 'is linked to the often quite abrupt shifts in the line of march determined by the International's Executive Committee. The reasons for these shifts often escape the masses.'<sup>16</sup>

But the crisis in fact broke out before the concept of the united front had been developed. Indeed, one can even say that the drop in membership recruit-

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<sup>15</sup> See p. 172.

<sup>16</sup> The Seine Federation's quarterly meeting was held 7 May 1922.

ment in the French and other parties led the International to develop the concept of the united front, rather than the other way around, because the united front offers an opportunity to shift onto a broader political pathway.

As for the Seine Federation, it is structured on a federal basis. Each unit is represented by a single delegate, regardless of its numerical strength. All members of the earlier French delegation, except for Comrade Métayer, were in agreement that this set-up is inappropriate. Still, the resolution informs us, 'This organisation, imposed on the basis of Soviet principles ... owes its origin to the Russian Revolution.'

True, Soviet Russia is a federation. This federalism at the state level is a necessary concession to certain demands regarding schools, culture, and language, and on the other hand a concession to the national prejudices of the petty bourgeoisie of the country. Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Georgia are independent. But the Communists of these countries are not independent. They are subject to party discipline, just as much as the Communists of Moscow. Our organisation is centralised to the highest degree. Do you think that we would have been able to carry out resistance without this centralisation?

It should be explained to the workers that there is a difference in principle between the constitution of a party and that of a state, and that the first must create the second. Daniel Renoult does not do that, even though he understands it. He admitted here that [the Seine Federation] is a completely unacceptable and unworkable organisation that destroys Communist life in Paris. However, in his resolution he says the opposite, simply in order to be able to join up with the right wing and the extreme leftists against the Communist Left. The resolution condemns the united front – 'neoreformism that certain comrades propose to us as a way of utilising the united front'. 'Certain comrades' are those who are targeted in attacks against the Comintern because they defend the ideas of the International.

In contrast to the united front, the Seine Federation advocates the formation of workers' councils, to which reformist leaders are not admitted, and where the unity of the working class can come into being, as was the case with the Russian soviets of 1905 and 1917. However, at the start we were only a small minority in the soviets. It was very hard for us even to speak there. The majority was in the hands of the reformist leaders. And how will we bring into being soviets from which the reformist leaders are excluded? Can we forbid workers from sending people to the soviets in whom they have confidence?

Further, it is said that 'we are acting like the Russians in 1905 and 1917'. But we are not now in 1905 or 1917 but rather in the interval between those two years. During that period there were no revolutionary soviets in Russia; there were just our organisations and our attempts to achieve unity in action, unity of the

proletarian front. At the moment when the masses receive a historic impulse, they will not be able to avoid a united front in France. It will come into being despite everything and, for you, unexpectedly. You will be forced to come to terms with it without being prepared for it.

Rather than letting events take us by surprise, it is of course better to anticipate this idea, this campaign, rather than trailing after it. The resolution [of the Seine Federation] emphasises that discipline 'should not be understood in a narrow sense by limiting the parties to merely registering the decisions of the Executive Committee'. In other words, discipline is a very excellent thing in general, but not in our house, not in the Third International.

At its close, the resolution expresses the hope that the Fourth Congress will orient to the left and alter the decisions on the united front. So there is a rightist orientation, that of the Comintern, and an orientation to the left represented by Victor Méric, the collaborator of Fabre!

Comrade Frossard presented a rather optimistic prognosis regarding the trade unions. However, I have read an article by Frossard that refers to the party's trade-union policy as a revival of the policy of Jaurès.<sup>17</sup> That concept, however, runs directly counter to the decisions of the International and the Marseilles Congress. The policy of Jaurès was entirely shaped by the situation created by patriotically and nationally inspired reformist socialism, on the one hand, and by anarchist syndicalism on the other. It was not possible to carry out our policy at that time. There was a tacit agreement between the syndicalist forces and the parliamentary socialist party to maintain a division of labour between parliament and the trade unions.

Our task, by contrast, consists of leading the struggle of the entire working class. And we must never say that we have a division of labour, that the trade unions are autonomous. Everywhere, in the unions, in parliament, in the press, we must represent the Communist Party, the Communist will to revolution. We cannot accept the tradition of Jaurès.

Comrade Frossard tells us that Communists stand at the head of important trade unions. But are they guided by the party in this work? There are two factions in the unions, that of Rosmer and that of Monmousseau. The latter current looks back to a long inheritance from anarchism and syndicalism, but nonetheless it is moving closer to us. However, the best supporters of Monmousseau are mostly Communists, members of our party. There are Communists who change their views after they enter the trade unions. They become

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17 The policy of Jaurès was that the Socialist Party and the trade unions were each free to develop their respective organisations without interference from the other.

syndicalists. Will we win the trade-union movement in this fashion, or will revolutionary syndicalism win us over? I do not know. We must put an end to this situation. At the coming Saint-Étienne Congress we must convene the Communist fraction, under the leadership of representatives of the party Central Committee. We must determine our action programme and go up against those Communists who are opposed to affiliation to the Red International of Labour Unions.

Let us take up the united front! In France we are approaching a new era of the Left Bloc. The influence of this bloc in France will assure that democratic and pacifist prejudices once again achieve broad influence in wide layers of the proletariat. That is a fundamental reality. Our movement is advancing through great disruptions. At the beginning of the war, French workers experienced the epoch of patriotic illusions of national defence. Then came the beginning of disillusionment, then the glow of dawn in the 1917 revolution, then victory [in the war] and its illusions, which had a great influence on the working class. Then a new disappointment and the beginning of a brief epoch of revolutionary illusions. I speak of illusions because there was no clear understanding of the revolution. The uprising of the railway workers expressed these revolutionary illusions.<sup>18</sup> And the revolutionary Communist party itself is the best product of this epoch. Since then, there has been a sort of decline, which always follows periods of revolutionary illusions.

That is why we see a crisis of members leaving the party. At the same time, however, a molecular process is at work within the masses, both the petty-bourgeois and the working-class layers: discontent with the National Bloc. And the Left Bloc is now on the horizon. What do ordinary workers think in such a situation? Consider a worker who is not a Communist but who is sympathetic to the party and to social revolution. This worker thinks that compared to the National Bloc, the Left Bloc would certainly have advantages. 'The Communists are wonderful people and as soon as the revolution arrives, I will be with them. But until they have that prepared, I prefer a change. Along with many others, I prefer to vote for Longuet, whose party will form a progressive government.'

This worker is a democrat, but his democratic convictions are shot through with scepticism. He is a revolutionary. But for the moment, his revolutionary character is in waiting mode.

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18 A reference to the month-long strike movement of CGT unions in May 1920 led by the railroad workers, eventually involving nearly 1.5 million workers. In face of severe repression, the railroad strike ended in defeat, with 22,000 workers losing their jobs.

And you French Communists, you say and you repeat: 'United front? No way. We are for the glorious revolution.' And you slip in the idea of the Left Bloc. Is it then a reformist idea for you to say to the workers, 'Against the National Bloc and the Left Bloc, we must counterpose the concept of a bloc of the proletariat. They want a bourgeois government; we, on the other hand, want a proletarian government.' Frossard told us, 'We greet the Left Bloc because it will include the Dissidents, who will thus be compromised, and then we will be their successors and assume their inheritance.' No, that is not our policy!

You tell the French worker, 'March with us and not with the bourgeoisie.' The worker responds, 'Yes, I am a worker, and I do not want to march with the bourgeoisie, but I have confidence in Jouhaux.' You must respond, 'Good, march with him, but take the path we are proposing to you, which is against the bourgeoisie.'

If this worker tries to draw Jouhaux with him, and does not succeed, Jouhaux will be discredited. In this fashion we can win over half or a third of Jouhaux's supporters.

Counterpose to the bourgeois government the idea of a workers' government: here is a concept that is capable of winning over supporters of the syndicalists and anarchists.

Major changes are needed in the orientation and methods of the French party. A clearly defined programme must be worked out, along with theses on tactics, which categorically condemn pacifism, centrism, reformism, and undisciplined behaviour, in order to drive out of the party those who personify these currents. The party must adopt statutes that place the Central Committee in a position to lead it. The Central Committee must settle the Fabre case in a political manner – that is, it must explain to workers that we are dealing a political blow against our internal enemies. The voice of the party must resound through the press. *L'Humanité* must present the guidelines of the International. We can no longer tolerate that a party newspaper, like the one edited by our comrade Daniel Renoult, becomes an instrument for alienating the party from the International.

Under such circumstances, one can also demand that there not be factions in the French party. But if, through the course of events and the party's passivity, a situation arises where, six or twelve months from now, we face a situation where we must choose between a determined right wing and a left wing that is still only coming into being, then the International will have no other choice but to lend its authority to the Left.

This perspective strikes us all as being highly regrettable. The French proletariat deserves to have its party follow a better course. Something similar happened in Italy. France can weigh the lessons of what happened in Italy. If we

were to limit ourselves to repeating the course of events that took place in Italy, what use would there be for the International, which is called on to generalise the experience in a given country in order to enrich the others?

And that is why we must come to agreement with the French delegation on the most important, decisive issues. We must draw up a precisely formulated and entirely acceptable resolution and call for it to be fully applied in every respect.

*(The session adjourns.)*

## Norway

*Chair: Clara Zetkin.*

*Speakers: Friis, Kuusinen, Friis.*

### The Norwegian Question

**Jacob Friis:** Relative to the population of the country, the Norwegian party is the largest in the Comintern. It scored a great success in the most recent elections, winning 29 seats, thus becoming one of the most important political forces in parliament.<sup>1</sup> The left-bourgeois government is dependent on votes from the Communists. Their strength in the political arena, however, contrasts with the weakness of trade-union organisations in the economic arena. Last summer there was a general strike that lasted five weeks; 110,000 workers took part, and it ended in a setback.<sup>2</sup> This strike exhausted the union's defence funds, so that it is hardly in a position to resist the new capitalist offensive. Any struggle in the economic arena faces sure defeat.

In this situation the government introduced a temporary law for compulsory arbitration.<sup>3</sup> There was a division of opinion regarding the value of this law. Some of the comrades thought that in a situation where the trade unions are almost defenceless and, on the other hand, a strong political party was present, the adoption of such a law could weaken the capitalist offensive to a certain degree. Initially, those who defended this viewpoint were a minority in both

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1 A reference to the parliamentary elections of October 1921, in which the Norwegian Labour Party received 21.3 per cent of the vote.

2 The general strike in Norway lasted from 26 May until 6 June 1921. Called by the Norwegian federation of trade unions in solidarity with a strike by seamen against massive wage cuts, the strike involved virtually the entire proletariat of the country.

3 A compulsory arbitration law passed in 1915 expired in April 1920. In the wake of the general strike of May–June 1921, the Norwegian parliament approved another such law, with the support of both the Social-Democratic Party and the NLP. The law empowered the government, in cases that 'endangered public interests', to convene an arbitration court composed of representatives of the unions, employers, and government. All work stoppages during arbitration would be illegal and were subject to steep fines. The decision of the arbitration court was legally binding.

the trade-union executive and the party Central Committee. However, after a lengthy debate, the majority in the union movement favoured such a law, and the party Central Committee aligned itself with the prevailing opinion in the unions. Accordingly, the parliamentary fraction was advised to accept the law for a one-year period, with the express reservation that it should not be utilised for reactionary purposes.

The commissions set up on the basis of this law issued judgments that were worse for the workers than had been anticipated, although opinion in the union leadership is quite divided on this question as well. Under these circumstances, the criticisms of comrades who from the outset had opposed adopting this law became harsher, indeed their severity was directed more against the parliamentary fraction and the union leadership than against the law itself. Even the party's main newspaper carried out this kind of criticism, aggravating the crisis in the party.

As for the united front, roughly the same comrades who opposed the compulsory arbitration law are also against applying the united-front policy. When the Executive Committee's theses on the united front became known in Norway, the crisis I have just described was already under way. The theses evoked strong opposition. Curiously, the comrades who branded them as reformist were those who had been against the theses of the Second World Congress and in favour of those of the Third Congress.

After the theory underlying this policy became more thoroughly understood, the entire central leadership accepted it without objection. The first deliberate resistance came when it was posed for practical implementation, and that was for the May Day demonstrations. The Social Democrats came to us and the trade unions with the proposal of a common demonstration. The party did not respond to this proposal, thus letting the initiative slip out of our hands. Our attempt to win over comrades for consistent application of the united front, which took place in a lengthy discussion in the Kristiania [Oslo] workers' centre, ended in defeat. Our resolution was rejected, and a resolution of Comrade Tranmael was adopted, which sees the united front being achieved through the work of political regroupment carried out by the Norwegian Labour Party. His resolution was adopted by 236 votes against 15.

These comrades are of the opinion that we already enjoy the support of the majority of workers. In the most recent elections, we received 200,000 votes; the Social Democrats, 83,000. There is no question that the feeling for unity is particularly strong among the Social-Democratic workers. Opponents of the united front, however, say that this course of action may well be a very fine thing in other countries, but it is not applicable in Norway. This attitude strongly

interferes with the successes of our Swedish comrades, because the Branting Social Democrats hold against them the conduct of the Norwegian Communists.

The debate on the united front continues. In August a party congress will take place, which we hope will resolve the issue. It will also be possible to raise the workers' government slogan, together with that of the united front. At the moment, in our party, this slogan is understood poorly or not at all.

As for the Lian affair,<sup>4</sup> as chairman of the trade unions he was sent by the union as an expert adviser to Genoa. He did that without consulting the party central leadership. It was decided that when he returned he should be severely censured, since he did this without consultation. If he had asked for the party executive's permission, this would have been granted, since that would have been regarded as a way of supervising the bourgeois delegation and assisting Soviet Russia. His conduct at the Amsterdammers' Rome Congress was correct, as Comrade Rudzutaks, the Russian representative, has confirmed.<sup>5</sup> On his return he stated that he had now finally broken completely with the Amsterdammers. The various trade-union federations are now holding their conventions. Lian's statement aided the victory of Profintern supporters, and the national trade-union congress, to be held during the coming year, will also take a stand against Amsterdam. Given this situation, comrades in the party and the unions would find it hard to understand Lian's expulsion.

**Otto Kuusinen:** Let me stress the fact that Norway is the only country where a bourgeois government exists with the support of the Communists. It would have been unusual for the Central Committee to issue a reprimand, given that it would have given Lian permission for the trip regardless. As for the compulsory arbitration law, comrades say that it is compatible with the theses of the Third Congress. This is a somewhat unusual way to interpret the lessons of the Third Congress. They explained matters as if the Third Congress emphasised the immediate demands of the working class to such a degree that the Communist Party is obligated to defend these interests regardless.

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4 Ole Lian, president of the Norwegian trade-union federation and a leader of the Norwegian Labour Party, had participated in the Genoa economic conference that opened on 10 April 1922, as a member of the Norwegian government delegation. For this he was expelled from the Communist International by the ECCI on 9 May 1922. The expulsion decision was made pending receipt of any objections from the NLP. The expulsion was subsequently reversed on the grounds that Lian's actions had been authorised by the party leadership.

5 The International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam International) held its Second Congress 20–26 April 1922 in Rome.

When the law was previously adopted against the votes of the Communists, the bourgeoisie was compelled to issue milder arbitration decisions. This time, our comrades assumed that by supporting the law, they would be rewarded by arbitration decisions that are more favourable. That was a big mistake. The bourgeois government tricked the Labour Party, and still our Norwegian friends continued their supportive policy toward the government. One of the reasons for adopting the law was fear that rejecting it would lead to ill feeling against our party and would strengthen the Right Socialists. The result was quite the opposite: a great deal of ill feeling against our party.

The Communists' executive body did not issue any direction to its members in the trade unions on this important issue. It did not express an opinion. This is typical.

Of course we are sorry to see the opposition to the united front. It must be conceded, however, that in part it was the supporters of the united front that brought grist to the mill of the opposition. The same is true of the workers' government slogan. If the comrades do not succeed in presenting the workers' government in a such a manner as will lead the working class to understand it as a revolutionary slogan, the fault lies with the comrades and not with the concept. How are comrades supposed to understand this demand when they see that the Communists are not making the slightest attempt to bring down the Liberal government. The bourgeoisie draws great advantage from the Communist Party's present conduct. Revolutionary parliamentarism would be much more costly for them.

As for Comrade Lian, he is an opportunist, and there is no doubt about it. However, there are many opportunists in the party, and expelling him will not make the situation any better. In addition, through his statements and his stance, he helped to win the majority of the Norwegian trade unions for affiliation to the Profintern. Yet even if Lian had taken a stand against the Profintern or had manoeuvred on the issue, some good Communists would have supported him. And that is no small problem.

The 'severe censure' that the Norwegian party Central Committee intended to deliver to Comrade Lian should now be delivered on behalf of the [Comintern] Executive Committee, but it should be directed to the entire Central Committee, and perhaps to the party as a whole. This reprimand has been earned not only by those who have opposed in part the united-front policy but also our friends Friis and Scheflo, who have carried out a mistaken parliamentary policy. We must call a halt to this.

**Friis:** Let me make a correction. It was necessary to accept the compulsory arbitration law because, had it been rejected, the government would have

fallen. It would have been replaced by a right-wing regime that would have taken much more severe measures against the economically enfeebled workers. If it is permitted to support the right-Socialist governments in Saxony and Sweden, then we are just as justified in supporting a government in Norway that carries out bourgeois policies more radical than what would be applied by a Social-Democratic government. The workers would not have understood it if we had applied a radical policy that would have led to the immediate fall of the government.

*(The session adjourns.)*

## France

*Continuation of discussion on the French question.*

*Speakers: Bordiga, Kreibich, Rappoport, Zetkin.*

**Amadeo Bordiga:** The precondition for the French Communist Party to develop truly revolutionary activity is the creation of structures in the trade unions. It's not a matter of immediate and abrupt changes. What's needed is simply the acknowledgment of Marxist principles that govern the relationship between party and trade unions and the development of practical plans for action. Developments since Marseilles reinforce the belief that to some degree the leadership lacks will-power and initiative on these questions.

The report by Comrade Frossard indicates that in his view the platform for agitation around the workers' specific demands arises from a worsening of the prospects for revolution. Actually, the opposite is true. In every situation, including that of approaching revolution, the material interests of the proletariat are the natural foundation for revolutionary action.

To take the most glaring example, consider how Totti, as official delegate of the French trade unions and simultaneously a member of the PCF, took a stand at the syndicalist congress in Italy against those who were for affiliation to the RILU.<sup>1</sup> In the commission set up by the party to deal with the questions of relations between the RILU and the syndicalists, comrades were ready to make major concessions with regard to the link between the Comintern and the RILU, and perhaps also to give way on the issue of mutual representation.<sup>2</sup> The mere fact that such a change was considered is already a serious danger. The Italian delegation regards this as a principled question and would energetically oppose any alteration of this relationship.

The International must encourage the French party to carry out trade-union activity with increased initiative and energy. Otherwise the party is condemned to a sort of revolutionary helplessness.

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1 A reference to the Fourth Congress of the Unione Syndicale Italiana (USI) held in Rome 10–12 March 1922, which was attended by Pierre Toti (Totti), a leader of the French railway union and of the CGTU. Delegates there voted 75 to 18 against affiliation to the RILU.

2 The first congress of the Red International of Labour Unions in 1921 had adopted a resolution on relations between the RILU and the Comintern, calling for reciprocal representation on each other's leadership bodies.

The party must have a structure that corresponds to its Communist character. It must put an end to its complicated disciplinary apparatus.

The united-front policy cannot develop in a beneficial way unless the party utilising it already has relevant experience and has control of an apparatus. We cannot expect the French party to carry out the struggle for a united front successfully so long as it is not able to take in hand its trade-union work. Similarly, the weaknesses that we see in the party must lead the International to advise against the slogan of a workers' government.

The International and the other Communist parties must help the French sister party to emerge from the unfortunate situation in which it finds itself.

**Kreibich:** Some French comrades become a bit nervous whenever they hear the words 'French question'. They look on this as outside intervention in the party. Comintern intervention concerning the party's difficulties is not only in its own interest but also in the interests of all other parties, because all crises have something in common. And every party experiencing a crisis can listen to such a discussion and hear a great many things from comrades of other parties that are instructive. Today's crisis in their party is yesterday's crisis in several other parties.

For the Czechoslovak party, as for all other parties in the countries of the Little Entente,<sup>3</sup> the conditions of the Communist movement in France and the crisis of the French party are of particular significance; the party's errors are thoroughly utilised by our own enemies in the struggle against us.

It must be seen as a defect that the French party has excessively close relations with sections of the bourgeois intelligentsia who sympathise with communism. These sections have an unusually strong influence on the party press.

In Czechoslovakia there is a similar intelligentsia that is enthusiastic about the Russian Revolution. Such a group of intellectuals can perform quite valuable services. It neutralises, disorients, and disorganises some petty-bourgeois layers to which we would otherwise have no access. But they can perform these services only if the party holds them in check and does not permit them to exert influence in the party leadership.

The developments in Czechoslovakia provide a warning of the dangers that arise if the party fails to organise systematic work to win the trade unions. Our delay on this point left our trade-union members without party leadership for a long time, and that is by and large the cause of our present difficulties.

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3 For the Little Entente, see p. 76, n. 19.

As for the united front, the French party and its press have done far too little to explain the nature of the present economic period. In today's economic situation, demands that before the World War signified merely a reform now push capitalism into an acutely awkward situation and can be the starting point for revolutionary struggles.

Yesterday, Comrade Frossard appealed to sentiment in arguing against the united front. He said that hatred against the reformists was so intense as to rule out working together. In Germany and also in Czechoslovakia the Communists have far more reason to hate the reformists, and nonetheless, when the significance of the united front is explained to workers, they can be led to set aside their feelings.

In the February plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee, the French comrades said that the united front would be a marriage with the Social Democrats.<sup>4</sup> Well, what we need is not a marriage but rather a rendezvous with the Social Democrats, which leads to a marriage with the masses.

**Charles Rappoport:** I agree fully with Trotsky on all basic questions.

As for the reports, Frossard skilfully skirted around the serious difficulties, awakening through his speech a belief that everything in the French party was proceeding very well. Souvarine, on the other hand, portrayed the situation in very dark terms. Trotsky presented an assessment that is not pessimistic, but still rather grave.

As for the Fabre affair and his newspaper, more significance is being ascribed to this matter than it deserves.

The underlying reason why the situation is bad is that France remains, in terms of its social and economic structure, a primarily petty-bourgeois country. This has been reflected in the role that the French party has played in each International. In the First International, the French section's role consisted of an eternal struggle between Marxists and Proudhonists. In the Second International it was the French section that raised the question of Millerandism, Jaurèsism, and syndicalism. And it must now be feared that the French party will maintain the same petty-bourgeois character in the Third International as well.

The present difficulties can be explained in part through the development of the Communist Party of France. In the days when the Committee for the

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4 In his report on the united front in session 6 of the First Enlarged Plenum, Zinoviev had argued against the 'marriage' analogy raised in the press by a member of the French CP. See pp. 112–3 of this volume.

Third International was engaged in tough struggles to win the majority of the party, Comrades Cachin and Frossard returned from Moscow and helped the Third International's supporters to achieve an immense victory.<sup>5</sup> However, that created a situation in which the party leadership was held not by the men who had sacrificed everything in their struggle for the Third International, but by the former 'Reconstructors', the former 'Centre' current, who were the central leaders of *L'Humanité* and the party and still play that role today. Supporters of the Committee for the Third International were victorious, but they did not have the personnel to lead the party and were quite fortunate to find the men of high moral and political worth who now lead the party. What is more, this Left, which was quite weak in any case, then underwent a split.

As for the united front, I was in favour of this from the start. Now that there is no longer any prospect of a united front achieved from above, neither Frossard nor the others will be able to combat this concept, which in my view is the revolutionary concept of this epoch.

As for the trade-union question, Comrade Frossard dealt with it masterfully, and he will be able to provide very great services on this question at the Saint-Étienne Congress. However, it is essential to have, in addition to Frossard, an organisation that can speak frankly of how Marxist Communists regard the ties that a Communist Party must maintain with the unions.

To the degree that the Communist Party develops into a revolutionary organisation, it will deprive the anarchist confusionists and professional politicians of any pretext to sow mistrust against the party. The French masses are imbued with a healthy spirit. However, they must have a firmly organised party that can utilise their revolutionary passion.

The Italian comrades have spoken against the workers' government slogan. I am also of the opinion that the slogan cannot be utilised in this form.

Comrade Zinoviev has already explained that the way we proceeded with the united front was premature and that insufficient preparations had taken

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5 The Committee for the Third International, formed in May 1919 as continuator of the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations (formed in 1916), helped campaign for the transformation of the French SP into the CP. Counterposed politically to it was the Committee for the Reconstruction of the International, led by centrist 'Reconstructors' Jean Longuet and Paul Faure.

Cachin and Frossard, leaders of the Centre current in the French SP, were in Moscow during June and July 1920. While there, they attended the Comintern's Second Congress as representatives of the French SP, but without decision-making authority. At that congress they declared themselves in favour of the Comintern's Twenty-One Conditions for Admission.

place in the individual countries. As a result of this situation, the united front was presented, particularly in France, in a form that did not reflect its real content.

I have tried to illuminate the reality of the situation in France. I ask that the French section be treated in a spirit of protection.

**Clara Zetkin:** It was not so much the historical insight of the French party's leading forces – apart from a few figures like Cachin, Frossard, and the Committee for the Third International group – that brought it to the Third International at Tours. Rather the party joined the International under the pressure of broad masses of the proletariat. Under these conditions, two facts were given in France. First of all, when the party joined the Third International, the broad proletarian masses were not yet committed to the party in terms of their understanding, their will, and their readiness for action. They had to be won to communism and educated in that spirit. Secondly, the party itself, in terms of its outlook on principles and policy and its organisation, was not yet in a position to act as a Communist Party.

An enormous labour had yet to be accomplished. And it must be acknowledged that a balance sheet of the French party shows not just entries in the 'debit' column but also quite considerable 'credits', in terms of its positive achievements. It broke off its united front with the bourgeoisie and systematically unified the proletariat in the framework of revolutionary class struggle. It carried out propaganda to unify and educate the broad masses in a revolutionary spirit.

Yesterday Trotsky found fault with the still partially superficial character of the French CP's agitation and propaganda. But this judgment also holds true of other parties affiliated to the Comintern. The intensive propaganda that our French sister party carries out among small peasants is very significant. However, important as this agitation among peasants is, it must be carried out along strictly Communist lines. And in France it is not yet fully Communist.

What has deeply grieved every party affiliated to the Third International is the French sister party's failure on the question of the proletarian united front. We must reproach the French sister party not only for its failure to develop agitation for the united front, but for initiating a struggle against it by presenting the idea of the united front to the masses in a distorted form. The party contended that a proletarian united front signifies organisational unity, even if that is not our intention, because, they say, in France the logic of the situation will be stronger than our intentions. Yet the fact is that the proletarian united front includes conditions that ensure that the masses who come together in common

actions will not be confused on political and organisational issues and that the distinctions on these points will not disappear.

The party and the proletariat were not rightly informed about this. Instead, something different took place. At the plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee here in March, Daniel Renoult, representing the French party, made a solemn promise that the party would submit to the Executive Committee's decision in solidarity and with discipline. The same Renoult has combated the united front in the most vehement fashion, ridiculing it. The party leadership had the obligation of drawing a black line between the party and the statements of Comrade Renoult.

Comrades from France should not forget how much their conduct harmed the united front and the Comintern's campaign. It played a role in developments in Norway, Italy, and other countries. It had a significant influence on the way in which the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals responded to our push for the proletarian united front and, beyond that, in terms of how the Comintern's overall unity and capacity for action is evaluated.

If the French party does not see the need, in the interests of the exploited workers of France, to merge the proletariat into a unified force, superseding the limits of parties and unions, it must do this out of a sense of international solidarity.

The Versailles Treaty is aggravating the exploitation and subjugation of the German proletariat, and this will worsen the conditions of the French working class. For this reason the proletarian united front is absolutely necessary for the French proletariat in terms of both national and international considerations.

As for the trade-union question, it is urgently necessary for the French party to finally take a stand on this, strongly and clearly, and create the necessary structures to carry out Communist and trade-union work in the factories by forming Communist cells in the trade unions. The very fact that Communist work in France's trade unions is so exceptionally difficult makes it necessary for Communists to conduct the struggle to politicise and revolutionise the trade unions with great clarity and determination. Formation of Communist cells must be accompanied by a powerful, systematic engagement of the party in every field for the immediate interests and demands of the broad and exploited masses.

The leadership of our French sister party must also avoid the appearance that it is somehow reaching out to protect the reformist tendencies, the party's right wing, and the anarchist or semi-anarchist confusionists in the trade unions. It must also avoid giving the impression of always extending a velvet glove to the right wing of the party, while always and under all circumstances brandishing a hard fist at the Left.

The so-called Left has not been acting wisely. It is particularly unfortunate and inept that our French friends on the left have from the very beginning shoved organisational questions so strongly to the fore. The party cannot be suddenly converted from the outside into a disciplined organisation. It must grow into this organically through political work and struggle, through its daily needs and experiences. It is not true that the organisation generates revolutionary spirit and action; rather quite the reverse. Revolutionary spirit and will must create the organisation.

For the party to evolve in a healthy fashion, the party leadership must comprehensively supervise its press. One quite often has the impression that *L'Humanité* is not a Communist publication and that *L'Internationale* is sometimes even anti-Communist in character. The press is one of the most important instruments for education and struggle. It cannot play this role if it is marred by occasional and even frequent gaffes that are never followed up with a protest, or with presenting in the party press its fundamental and real point of view. The press must no longer be viewed as a playground for more or less ingenious journalists. The Communist press of France must stop engaging in journalism; it must engage in politics.

The commission established for the French question must act in a truly comradely fashion, with full awareness of the contributions that our French comrades have already made, and firmly confident of their determination to achieve far more in the future.

*(The session adjourns.)*

## France

*Continuation of discussion on the French question.*

*Chair: Zinoviev.*

*Speakers: Brandler, Trotsky, Frossard, Zinoviev.*

**Heinrich Brandler:** I do not agree with Rappoport's view that the petty-bourgeois relationships in France make it impossible to carry out a different policy. The war speeded up the industrialisation of France, and it must be possible to link up with the revolutionary traditions of the working class and create the foundations for a revolutionary Communist movement.

It is possible to perceive in some of the articles of the French Communist press that comrades are resting on their laurels of the past. On the other hand, the party presents itself in day-to-day politics in terms of the successes that it will achieve at some point in the future. However, the party does not engage actively on the issues in which the proletariat is immediately concerned, relinquishing this terrain – with the empty phrase, 'This is opportunism' – to the reformists and the petty-bourgeois/anarchist bunglers. That is the origin of the French party's apparent powerlessness.

The party must learn to link up with daily grievances and make them a point of departure for further revolutionary actions. If it fails in this, it passes from the scene as a genuine revolutionary force.

Comrade Trotsky proposes to the French party a policy of Caesarean section. We cannot help the French party by suddenly insisting on forming fractions and strict fraction discipline right before the Saint-Étienne Congress, and anyone who does not conform immediately will be thrown out the door. That is a purely mechanical operation that does not change anything. We accepted for two years that fractions were not established. So we cannot demand now that Frossard, if he arrives, say, four days before the congress, suddenly insists on such measures.

We can create a possibility for the French comrades to carry out Communist activity by consciously making concessions to them once again – not in a general sense but only on specific issues. We should not expect more of our comrades than what is within the scope of their strength. We should consciously allow them another concession, for a transitional period, with regard to the link between the Comintern and the Profintern. We should exempt the French syndicalists, temporarily, from subordination to the present Communist Party.

We will not be able to convince them to accept subordination to the party until we have a Communist Party in France that inspires among the best working-class forces a conviction that it is a genuine revolutionary party.

Given the Executive Committee's passivity toward the French party, it will not do to jump suddenly to extreme measures. Until now we have sought to influence the French Central Committee through a few internal letters. But the French working masses know nothing of that. These measures will strike the French working masses like a bolt from the blue, for which they are entirely unprepared. If we now discuss the matter thoroughly and publicly, we will be in a position at the Fourth Congress to take firm measures. It will be enough for now if we can ensure that the French masses receive, free from falsification, an explanation of our Communist ideas.

**Trotsky:** In the course of the discussion, too much effort was put into explaining the situation in the French party, when the task is not to explain it but to change it. Our comrade Rappoport, too, erred in his speech through repeated attempts to explain the situation. That is exactly the mentality that characterised the Second International: they explained events as good Marxists and acted as good opportunists. Comrade Rappoport's attitude is a bit fatalistic, and his conclusions are utterly pessimistic.

In his opinion the French party has always played a very unfortunate role in all the Internationals. I do not share this view. During the First International, the French proletariat, through the Commune, wrote a glorious page in history.<sup>1</sup> During the Second International, the French party was similar to the German, although in Germany the same opportunist policies were veiled by a bit of Marxist theory, while in France the same opportunist policy was pursued in a more conspicuous and open fashion, since after all the party was located in a republican country.

And now in the Third International I do not see any reason at all why the French proletariat cannot play a role worthy of the revolutionary consciousness that it gained over the course of history.

The strength of the petty bourgeoisie should not be overestimated. Consider the British Labour Party! There is no petty bourgeoisie in Britain; there is just the big bourgeoisie. And has British socialism been more splendid in the past than that of France? Not at all!

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1 The Paris Commune of March–May 1871 was the first effort to establish a revolutionary workers' government.

In France, just as in Britain and in the most civilised countries in general, the wall of capitalist civilisation looms over the future. The bourgeoisie makes excellent use of these obstacles, and they must absolutely be overcome.

The present crisis is one of preparatory work to be able to utilise a rich past. At the moment it constitutes a barrier, but tomorrow it offers the assurance of an action with a scope unprecedented in history.

Comrade Rappoport moves close to the views of Renaud Jean and Auclair, who for their part refer to the petty-bourgeois peasantry and are continually telling us that peasants make up four-sevenths of the French population. But how then explain the revolution in Russia, where the proletariat makes up a much more insignificant part of the population than in France? In France the proletariat makes up a much greater proportion of the population than in Russia and has a richer past and a higher political level. So the necessary pre-conditions to set up a party are present.

In the past, there was the parliamentary party on one side and syndicalism on the other. Syndicalism attracted the masses because it gave expression to the revolutionary feelings of workers toward parliamentary politics, if in an incorrect manner. It gave the most energetic forces of the French proletariat the possibility of taking the lead within their class.

The syndicalist movement was led by workers. In that respect the party is very different. In the party, workers saw only teachers of eloquence, journalists, and lawyers.

This situation must be changed. The workers must see their own people at the head of the party. To achieve this, there is still a great deal to do regarding the makeup of the Central Committee and selection of electoral candidates. This is a decisive question. Two or three workers, whether skilled or unskilled, can bring a new spirit into parliament or the municipal council, accomplishing much more for communism than dozens of intellectuals. Politeness is a political tool of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie, and this tool must be shattered. To achieve this, we need to include fresh and robust workers in all our structures.

Brandler says, 'You were wrong to tolerate this situation for two years. Now you want to resolve it in an abrupt fashion. Instead of that, I propose that you wait through yet another, third year.' That is the essence of his speech.

So what is it that we are asking for? We ask that Communists in the trade unions act as Communists. We ask that a list of Communist delegates to Saint-Étienne be drawn up and that they be called upon to meet as a fraction of the party. We ask that that you look into and discuss in detail what the Communists should do there. This initial step is absolutely necessary.

It is not true that French workers do not want to see a rapprochement between the party and the trade unions. It is only the trade-union bureaucrats who oppose that, because they fear competition from the party intellectuals.

What do the workers want? The revolutionaries want an instrument for revolution. Some see it in the trade unions, others see it in the party. As soon as these organisations come together – not just in words but with revolutionary goals and an intransigent spirit – the workers will welcome this. As soon as the party appears as a workers' party and gives expression to that concept and that purpose, the clique of bureaucrats will be caught between the physical and the ideological pressure of the masses. If it does not march with the masses, it will be crushed.

The fact that Communists form a fraction does not in the slightest bar a bloc with Monmousseau. In order to change the majority, we will make concessions to syndicalists of the Monatte-Monmousseau type. But we will make these concessions as a party, after we have weighed and examined all aspects of the situation.

In my opinion, Comrade Brandler's assessment is far too pessimistic. The French workers' movement is not so sick that we have to speak in an undertone and take extraordinary precautions. That is not the case. The workers' movement and the revolutionary forces that lead it are in good health and are quite determined. They will do good work, especially with the aid of the International. And that is all that we ask of them.

I have been reproached for focusing attention on the Seine Federation. I have been told that this matter cannot be resolved here because it is local in character. Well, comrades, in my opinion there will never be a revolution in France unless there is a change in the spirit and structures of the Seine Federation. The revolution in France cannot be carried out apart from Paris, and that is why the commission must take up the question of the Seine Federation.

What is needed now is that this time the decisions taken here be binding for everyone. If it is thought that we have insufficient information, please inform us, and we will continue this discussion so that no one will dare to say later on that the International was insufficiently informed. We want to be thoroughly and fully informed.

But once these decisions have been taken, we will insist that they be thoroughly and fully carried out.

**Frossard:** I must say that I cannot take responsibility for the speech given yesterday by Rappoport in defence of the French party, which abounded in revolu-

tionary defeatism. Let me also note that earlier Rappoport, contrary to what he has said here, was against a link-up with the Socialist Party leaders with regard to the united front.

If the picture that Souvarine has sketched regarding the situation in the party is accurate, then those men who are responsible for allowing it to appear and develop must absolutely be removed from the party leadership.

After the Tours Congress, we found ourselves in a situation where we were deserted and betrayed in the centre and in the local federations. Almost the entirety of our usual propagandists and the administrators of our federations left us in the lurch. In this difficult situation, we had to create new structures everywhere in our party, withstand the demands of this difficult period, and also act as administrators, propagandists, and journalists and take responsibility for everything. How can anyone say that the results achieved amount to nothing more than a change in tone in our party – the breaking off of ties to the bourgeoisie, and our determined defence of the Russian Revolution? Really, comrades, the Executive Committee itself greeted with joy the results we have achieved in the letter it sent to our Marseilles Congress,<sup>2</sup> and even the Enlarged Executive Committee in February did much the same.

There are remnants in the party of our reformist and parliamentarist past. Everyone agrees on that. But if the party is to be criticised, these reproaches apply not only to representatives of the party majority but also, in the same way, to those of the minority. That was recognised by our youth, who said at their last congress, ‘The youth leagues know that since Tours it has always been hard to distinguish the activity of a member of the Committee for the Third International from that of a “Reconstructor”’.

We are criticised for not having let the voice of the party resound sufficiently loudly, and for the fact that expressions of rightist opportunism crop up in our press. We have repeatedly printed corrections in *L’Humanité* and presented the position of the party. This also happened regarding the Berlin Conference.

A comment by Daniel Renoult recalled the historical case of how the party was once led from unity in action into organisational unity. He believed that the Committee of Nine established an organic tie between the three Internationals similar to what was created in France in 1899 among the four French socialist organisations.<sup>3</sup> I answered him, saying that he was exaggerating the

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2 The ECCI letter to the Marseilles Congress of the French CP was published in *L’Humanité* 27 December 1921, and in the 14 February 1922 edition of *Bulletin communiste*. Excerpts can be found in Degras (ed.) 1971, 1, pp. 303–6.

3 A December 1899 congress in Paris merged a number of socialist organisations in France, a step along the road to the consolidation of a unified French Socialist Party in 1905.

danger. I referred to the fact that no serious party activist should imagine that the men of the Russian Revolution, in carrying out the united front, want to go back to these old and long-gone organisations.

As for Renaud Jean, he is a new, important, and healthy force in the party. It is quite natural that this propagandist, who is himself a peasant and is cultivating the soil of agricultural workers, perhaps exaggerates their significance. In fact Renaud Jean's entire concern is directed at preventing a return to the situation in which we found ourselves in May 1920, when peasants stood in confrontation with striking workers.

The results of the recent local elections show that this party, which hoped it had won a commanding position among the working masses, has still a great deal left to do. It shows that the Dissident Socialists are still a serious electoral and political factor. To some degree they still represent a proletarian force. As a result, it is not enough to push aside the slogan of the united front in overcoming our present difficulties. We must test out the ways and means that will enable us to win over the masses.

We have not tried to win over the masses on the basis of present-day reality. We have limited ourselves to delivering the same stereotyped speech that we were already giving during the war, and our worker audience was weary of that. They asked more from us. That is why we agree with Souvarine and Trotsky on the need to provide our party with a political programme, and for the party to propose specific goals for the masses.

We can predict that the National Bloc in France will disintegrate, giving way to the Left Bloc. In Comrade Trotsky's view, we should prepare for the Left Bloc and its dangers by announcing to our proletariat the slogan of the workers' government. The implication is that the workers, wavering between the Left Bloc and the Workers' Bloc, would ultimately opt for the latter.

But this would be an extremely dubious situation for our party. If the Workers' Bloc came into being, Paris workers would say: Here we have people who have been cursing at each other and waging ferocious battles against each other for two years. It seemed as if they were divided by an unbridgeable chasm. And now that electoral concerns have come to the floor and seats in parliament are at stake, they have found each other again and are conducting a joint struggle. The worker will think that there is really no point in choosing between the Communists and the Socialists. Such a set-up is not conducive to increasing the authority of the Communist Party and its champions.

It is in the interests of the French Communist workers' movement that a Left Bloc come into being and that through it the Dissident Socialists will be completely discredited. If we pursue the policy of a Workers' Bloc we

will give back to the Dissidents, whether we want to or not, a portion of the authority that they have lost.

Application of the united front in France has now been made much more difficult by the split in the trade unions. It is completely impossible to even conceive of the CGTU leaders undertaking any kind of common action with the reformist union leaders.

The party's activity in the unions is shaped by the fact that twenty years ago there was a split between the union and socialist movements.<sup>4</sup> For twenty years a tradition of autonomy, of full independence, has been developing, carefully encouraged, and held off against any challenge. That was evident at the congress that adopted the celebrated Amiens Charter.<sup>5</sup> A modest resolution proposing a rapprochement with the goal of common action by the political and trade-union organisations was defeated by a majority of more than five-sixths. Even so, we tried to shift the situation in our favour, but some comrades got carried away and made harsh statements about the need to subordinate the union movement to the Communist movement, and this made the situation even more difficult.

In the present situation, just before the Saint-Étienne Congress, we could not conceivably expel those Communists who were not unreservedly in favour of affiliation to the RILU. Delegates at Saint-Étienne will already be bound by the decisions of their organisations, and it is quite impossible to alter these decisions in this manner. On the other hand, we will bring the party members together, organise them, and work to establish discipline among them. The most important thing in Saint-Étienne is to gain affiliation to the RILU, and to see that the men who are in favour of collaborating exclusively with us take over the leadership. If we are successful in that, then we will be able to achieve in the union movement what we have already carried out in the cooperatives, where we have already established corresponding Communist organisations. We were able to do this in the cooperatives because we carried out the struggle there together with the revolutionary syndicalists against the reformists, and that is not the case in the unions of the CGTU.

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4 The year 1902 was when the CGT was organisationally and politically consolidated, fusing with the Fédération des Bourses du Travail (Federation of Labour Exchanges) and adopting a syndicalist orientation. For its part, in 1902 the Socialist Party of France was formed by a merger of several socialist organisations. (Three years later, a party uniting all wings of the socialist movement in France was formed, the French SP, known formally as the *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* – French Section of the Workers' International.)

5 For the Amiens Charter of 1906, see p. 186, n. 2.

We can establish discipline more readily if we do not impose it harshly but rather seek to make the need for this discipline evident to our workers. We have proposed a certain number of measures that can inaugurate a new era in the party. We must have a new political programme; we must carry out a revision of our organisational statutes; we must make it a Communist's duty to carry out orderly and methodical work in the unions. In order to bring more workers onto the Central Committee, we have decided that the majority of the Central Committee will consist of trade-union members. The selection of the men who will be entrusted with leadership of the party will not be left to chance or a choice based on personal sympathy; it must be carried out at the congress by a small commission.

As for our press, we have conserved the tradition of designating ten to fifteen comrades whom we give the pompous name of 'leaders', individuals empowered to write a column containing whatever pleases them and which appears twice monthly on the front page of *L'Humanité*. This practice is incompatible with the requirements of our Communist existence, and we can consider in the commission how to change this practice.

The main requirement, if the party is to develop and flourish, is that we not see the formation of factions.

**Zinoviev:** Anyone who proposes, as Brandler has done, that important decisions be postponed is doing a disservice to the French party. This is a situation where we can be reproached for many things, with but one exception: we have not acted over-hastily. If anything, the opposite is true. In the beginning, we postponed a large number of problems, because the party at that time was really just too new. If we are now using somewhat tougher language, that is because the French party is no longer underage. It has earned the right inside the Communist International to be criticised just the same as other parties, when that is necessary.

The Communist International did everything it could to avoid a factionalisation of the Communist Party of France. Despite the reservations of some comrades, the first decision after the Third World Congress was to dissolve the Committee for the Third International.<sup>6</sup> We have never issued a public reprimand to the majority as we did to the four members of the Central Committee who resigned. No one who is objective can charge the Executive Committee

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<sup>6</sup> The dissolution of the Committee for the Third International, an organisation associated with the Left in the French CP, was publicly announced by Boris Souvarine in an article in the 6 October 1921 issue of *Bulletin communiste*.

with favouring the minority. The fact that the Left is split means that it sees its historical mission in invigorating the entire party and dissolving into it.

We must tell the French workers plainly that the Communist International is not going to favour any minority; it will not approve of a rebirth of factions. The Communist International told the minority quite openly that it was by no means in agreement with every aspect of the conduct of the former Left's leaders. But it says quite candidly that the former Left of the French party has shown that it correctly understands the problems of the Communist International.

The dropping off of the membership total is not in itself a crisis, and is not such a great danger. Sometimes a decline in membership is even healthy. No, the crisis is not the fact that we have lost 10,000 or 20,000 members who were possibly just sympathisers. The crisis lies in the fact that the party is so motley in its make-up and does not feel itself to be a workers' party. A party that does not feel it represents the working class does not have a Communist soul, and in my opinion that is what has led to the party's quite incorrect position on the trade unions. You might say that our comrades in the party are gazing up at the syndicalist Mount Olympus from below: up there are the true proletarians, while we mess with politics, publish newspapers; but the workers are over there.

Our policy of delay regarding the trade unions has led us, since the Third Congress, to take a major step backwards. During this period the influence of syndicalism in the unions has grown and ours has declined.

We must concede that we displayed weakness in letting ourselves be convinced to do without the open establishment of cells in France. In this way we did our French comrades a bad turn. Comrade Frossard said that this policy contradicts a sturdy, twenty-year-old tradition. But the fact that this tradition is so old and so well-rooted is all the more reason for us to combat it energetically. Otherwise a proletarian revolution in France is impossible.

The wavering forces that are close to the Communist Party can be won only if the party stands as a solid organisation, clear on its goals. Our comrades must muster up the courage to confront the syndicalist troublemakers and say, 'Yes, we are going to form cells, because we are the party of the future, our party shows the way to liberating the working class, we are the vanguard of the proletariat.' Anyone who fails to do that is displaying the weakness of his party.

Comrade Brandler says there are no trade unionists in France who advance the Communist line. I do not believe that. I know that there is such a group – the Rosmer group – even if it is still small. The trade unions are the most important arena for our work. If we can smooth the way here, we will have overcome the most formidable of the difficulties. So we must not be timid about this, saying that we are supported there by only a small minority. Instead, we must say that

they constitute the future of the Communist Party of France. The party must take on the task of supporting the comrades close to Rosmer and allying with them.

Now, as regards the press. It must be frankly stated that *L'Internationale* is well on the way to becoming a *Journal du peuple* no. 2. As for *L'Humanité*, in terms of communism it is colourless, to put it kindly. The task is for our publications to become genuine workers' newspapers and to pursue the line of the Communist International. The discussion of the united front in the newspapers should stop. The discussion can be continued in the magazine *Communist International*, and we can have it appear more frequently leading up to the Fourth Congress.

It seems that the Fabre case has not yet been fully settled. Comrade Trotsky said that the case must be resolved politically. Frossard unfortunately did not say how he conceives of doing this. Resolving it means stating openly to the working class what is the substance of this case and expelling the forces that deep in their hearts are in favour of Fabre. We had a similar case in Russia regarding the newspaper that took the name *Tovarishch*. This paper was for a period the main enemy of the Bolsheviks. We dealt with this politically by launching a sharp battle against this paper, explaining to the entire party that it was the focal point of petty-bourgeois ideas.<sup>7</sup>

In the present difficult period of transition, small mistakes can readily become big mistakes and lead to betrayal. We see such a situation in the case of Levi, who now views the Social Revolutionaries as the only representatives of the working class in Russia. We see often now that half-reformists and half-anarchists come together in a sort of synthesis and create a platform against the Communist International. We have no reason to mistrust Comrade Daniel Renoult, but he incorporates this unfortunate synthesis of reformism and anarchism and can carry the entire party with him down this road.

We must create a staff of genuine Communist comrades in the party leadership that understand how to combat reformism and anarchism. We of the Russian Communist Party were born in struggles against authentic anarchists and against the half-reformists who stayed for a period in our party.

We have already had situations in the International's Executive Committee where we had to make decisions regarding the fate of the Italian and German parties. Experiences of the last year show that – apart from minor errors – we

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7 *Tovarishch* (The Comrade) was a St. Petersburg newspaper that appeared daily during 1906–8. While not formally affiliated with any political party, it reflected the views of the left wing of the bourgeois Cadet Party, with contributions from members of the Menshevik wing of the Russian Social Democracy.

carried out the split in Italy correctly. In Germany, a year ago, we had a situation where the Communist International had to take up the situation there almost every week. Delegations arrived, followed by counter-delegations; there were heated discussions; open letters were written. And now we can say without exaggeration that the Executive Committee contributed a great deal to getting our German party out of the crisis and onto the correct path. True, the Executive Committee is new, but it possesses the experience of its fifty parties, and above all of the Russian party, which has triumphed over reformism. So the French comrades must now allow us to take up their issues as well. They should interpret that not as a vote of non-confidence but as exactly the opposite. It's not that we lack confidence but rather that we want to exchange experiences with the French comrades.

And here I must say that the various speeches of Comrade Frossard, especially the one he just gave – without even taking up his first one – do not satisfy us. We understand very well that he is irritated to receive a great deal of criticism. He devotes all his strength to the party and was one of its founders. But we have not heard him present a clear programme. What is needed here is to radically change the party's outlook, even at the risk of losing some comrades in the process. In the German party it was not just a matter of Levi as an individual but also his group, which sought to leave its supporters inside the party and form cells there. It is possible that Fabre and his friends will try to do the same thing in France, continuing Levi's approach, forming cells in the party, seeking to win the press. Frossard said that the present Central Committee must be modified, but he did not say in what way it would be changed. It's not a matter of individuals here but of politics. We must have a Central Committee that is composed of members of the Centre and the Left, whose spear is pointed toward the right-wing pacifists, the poets, the Tolstoyans, and the vegetarians in the party. We had expected of Comrade Frossard that he would say much more clearly what his programme is for the future.

At the beginning of the Third Congress, the Executive Committee firmly rejected some comrades' exaggerated criticism of the French party. The ECCI will do all within its power to assure the normal development of the party. But the French comrades as well must pledge to inaugurate a new era in the party, and not weep if Verfeuil and a whole number of similar types leave the party and enter the wasteland of reformism.

A large number of measures are needed, and if they are not carried out, there is a great danger that the Communist Party of France, which has come into being through so much effort, this great party with its great future, will be lost. It is not at all a matter of thoughtlessly flinging about criticisms, but rather of providing assistance and taking the measures necessary to do that.

**Brandler** (*Personal statement*): I do not want to postpone decisions; I am simply against measures that are mechanical and unworkable.

(*The session adjourns.*)

## Resolutions

*Motion on the Berlin Conference. Report of the Czech Commission. Resolution on the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The Italian question. The trade-union question. The French question. Resolution on the French Communist Party. Resolution on the Norwegian question. Fourth World Congress. Programme Commission. Closing words.*

*Speakers: Brandler, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Frossard, Šmeral, Kuusinen, Zinoviev, Radek, Zetkin.*

### Motion on the Berlin Conference

**Zinoviev:** I propose that the Enlarged Executive Committee approve the activity of our delegation in Berlin and instruct the Presidium to issue a manifesto in the name of those present regarding our policy toward the coming stages of the struggle for the united front.

**Frossard:** On behalf of the majority of the French delegation, I must state that because of our distinctive position on this question we cannot join in supporting this proposal.

**Rappoport:** (*Favours the motion.*)

(*The motion is adopted against the votes of the majority of the French delegation.*)

### Report of the Czech Commission

**Brandler:** The Commission on the Czech question came to a unanimous conclusion. What we have here is not a profound crisis but symptoms of growth. The commission was unable to discover any disagreements within the Czech party on political line. There is a serious danger in the trade unions, where work is proceeding with hesitation and is wavering. We must therefore say that the party must focus all its energies on making good the lag in trade-union work and taking up energetically the struggle to win over the unions.

In addition, not enough work has been done on structuring the party, and we summarise the necessary tasks here.

As for the work of the Central Committee, we have the impression that sections of the committee are sometimes working in parallel and sometimes at cross purposes. The chairperson or general secretary should exert general oversight in order to ensure that decisions are really carried out.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has done nothing to develop agitation in the army, although it has an excellent legal possibility to do so. We call on the party to utilise the possibilities for propaganda in the army and devote more attention to underground work.

The viewpoint developed by Comrade Jílek shows, if only indistinctly, that there is a KAP mood in the party,<sup>1</sup> and its existence indicates that not everything is right in the party. The German experience stands as compelling evidence that wherever we have a serious KAP mood, the line of the party is too passive.

We ask for the adoption of the following resolution.

### **Resolution on the Czechoslovak Communist Party**

The Enlarged Executive Committee has studied thoroughly the written and oral reports of the delegations and has arrived at the following assessment of the situation.

#### **I**

The Enlarged Executive Committee concludes that there are no differences of opinion regarding the party's political stance on the formation of a united front of struggle of the entire Czechoslovak proletariat.

Regarding the criticism voiced by the Jílek-Houser group concerning the party's organisational weaknesses, the Enlarged Executive Committee states the following:

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is a new Communist Party that bears with it, despite the party's substantially correct work, the weaknesses of a Social-Democratic past that have not yet been entirely overcome. The party is organisationally not sufficiently consolidated to carry out all the necessary tasks in a quick and decisive fashion.

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to the ultraleft KAPD (Communist Workers' Party of Germany).

## II

As for work in the trade unions, it remains very weak. The formation of Communist fractions and their work is still in its earliest stages. This must be carried out more systematically and intensively and in a better-organised manner than before. The Enlarged Executive Committee is of the opinion that the party has not done all it could have done in this regard. This criticism is directed not at the leaders of the party committee for trade-union work in the Czech- and German-speaking regions, but at the party as a whole, and particularly its Central Committee.

The inadequacy of efforts to win over the trade unions has reinforced tendencies to question whether this can ever be accomplished and therefore to call for the unions to be split. These tendencies have been reinforced in part by the inadequacy of Communist trade-union work. However, it must also be stated that the current expressed – if in unclear fashion – in the Jílek-Houser group has encouraged the tendency to split the unions. In this way it has impeded purposeful and systematic work to win over the unions.

The party must therefore commit all its strength to pursuing Communist work to win over the unions. It must build fractions everywhere, including in the unions where a Communist leadership already exists, in order to strengthen Communist influence there, as well as in the other unions in order to win a majority. Only when the party grasps the full importance of this work and commits all its forces to carrying it out more purposefully and systematically will it be capable of countering with all its authority the efforts to split the unions. The party must oppose split efforts in the unions energetically and, if necessary, quite harshly. As a general rule, Communist trade unions in Czechoslovakia must place special emphasis on fusing organisationally the Czech and German unions.

The Enlarged Executive Committee considers it urgently necessary, in order to carry out systematic Communist trade-union work, to produce a weekly Czech-language publication, as was decided at the Easter conference, in order to provide guidelines and material for this work. In the unions where Communists have a majority, the newspapers of these unions should be placed at the service of systematic and well-informed Communist trade-union work.

## III

The party's structure must continue to be built in a spirit of strict centralisation. The party must bend every effort to introduce a systematic division of labour

to meet the needs of work in the factories and factory committees, unions and cooperatives, gymnastic and sports clubs, municipal politics and work among small peasants, women's and youth work; as well as to introduce the cell system to strengthen and increase the party's striking power. Political instruction must be provided to the entire party regarding all major events. The fractions and cells must work systematically to politically influence the non-Communist masses in the trade unions, cooperatives, and sports clubs. The entire party must be built as an active organisation, capable of influencing broad layers of workers on short notice and encompassing them, in order to lead them, after thorough preparation and at a suitable moment, in struggle against the capitalist offensive, to banish workers' daily suffering, and to achieve power.

The party must also pay close attention to agitation in the army. The party has not done everything possible to utilise legal opportunities for Communist propaganda among the soldiers. The party must distribute its press aggressively in the army and prepare readily understandable leaflets for soldiers, in which the Communist point of view on specific questions will be made clear to them. The Czechoslovak army, where soldiers have the vote, offers excellent opportunities for such legal propaganda. If this work is carried out skilfully, the party can take a position on every issue, even if it will now and then have to hold back from spelling out the implications for action.

In order to obtain information on our opponents' forces and the measures being prepared in secret against the working class, Communists in the army, the administration, and within opponent organisations need to be drawn together so that a centralised information service can be established.

A postal service needs to be organised in order to maintain the party leadership's ties with party units and link these units with each other for cases in which rail, postal, and telegraph services cannot be used for this purpose.

The party's organisation must be obligated to establish facilities for underground printing to be used if the bourgeois government cancels freedom of the press.

The Central Committee's work must be organised in a unified way and freed from carping criticism over details. The different departments are working too much in parallel with each other rather than together with each other. Political and organisational issues that arise in the departments must be considered and resolved in the Central Committee, all of whose members will share responsibility. Departments must be accorded the necessary freedom of action to carry out these decisions. A Central Committee member must be assigned to supervise the departments to ensure that such decisions are carried out and also to be informed about all happenings in the departments, so that departments can have information about each other's activity.

This supervision does not, of course, imply petty criticism on secondary issues. Rather, it must promote close ties among the departments while promoting and improving unified discussion and decision making.

#### IV

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is a large mass party that already includes the majority of the proletariat's active sector. The party has a correct political orientation toward establishing a proletarian united front and winning the majority of the Czechoslovak proletariat. By overcoming the deficiencies and carrying out the advice noted here, the party will gain the ability to intervene more actively and powerfully, in order to steer the Czechoslovak population toward a Communist future. The breakdown of world capitalism is bringing about conditions in Czechoslovakia that are almost unbearable for the proletariat and the dispossessed population. The more quickly and intensively the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia succeeds in firming up and structuring its organisation, the more quickly it will be able to organise the striking power of the Czechoslovak working class in order to bring it victory over the bourgeoisie.

Moscow, 11 June 1922  
*The Enlarged Executive Committee  
 of the Communist International*

**Brandler** (continuing): Kreibich called for a convention to be convened rapidly in order to free the party leadership from nagging criticisms. The commission opposed this, however. It held that if both sides are committed to carrying out this advice, the convention can then be held after the world congress. By then these tensions will already be cleared away by intensive work, and the convention will be able to devote itself fully to the party's tasks.

*(The resolution is adopted unanimously.)*

#### The Italian Question

**Zinoviev:** Let me explain why the Italian question was not discussed in plenary session. The Italian Commission met in two sessions, in which we came to the conclusion that all the Italian comrades without exception are sincerely committed to carrying out the Comintern's suggestions. The commission therefore

resolved not to discuss this question in plenary session, but rather to instruct the Presidium to resolve the remaining small disagreements with the Italian delegation.

As you know, our Italian sister party was one of the first to take up the struggle for a united front on economic issues. However, it does not want to apply this policy in the political arena. In the discussion we had a feeling that the experience of our Italian party has already demonstrated that it is impossible to make such a distinction. Now our party has responded positively to an invitation from the other workers' parties. We ask that the Italian party now give up its rather weak resistance. It should adopt a united-front policy and, what is more, apply it in all areas of the workers' struggle.

We also call on our Italian party to take up the slogan of the workers' government. We have a situation in Italy right now where neither the bourgeois government nor the reformist workers' parties, who temporarily still have a [parliamentary] majority, are stable.<sup>2</sup> There is an ongoing crisis, which is the result of all the crises. Then there is the creeping civil war, an outrageous offensive of capitalism – indeed overall, objectively, a revolutionary situation – and a deep ferment in the working class.

The Socialists are divided into two groups: one, led by Turati, is for a coalition with the bourgeoisie; while the other, headed by Serrati, wavers back and forth – it opposes an open coalition but has no alternative programme. In this situation the reformists propose a left alliance, that is, a coalition with the bourgeoisie. We tell the Italian workers that Turati wants collaboration with the bourgeoisie, while we want a coalition of all workers.

This is not a matter of some parliamentary combination; it's a question of revolutionary struggle. We do not want an instrument to craft a parliamentary combination but one to gather revolutionary workers for struggle, for the overthrow of the bourgeois government. In Saxony and Thuringia we have such a parliamentary combination. Let us imagine that the elections had led to a situation in one of the Italian provinces that these two groups led by Serrati and Turati had the majority and it was up to us whether a Serrati or a fascist government would be formed there. Of course we would not hand over power to the fascist government, but would use our votes to support such a workers' government.

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<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the coalition government that held power from July 1921 to February 1922. It was headed by Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi, a leader of the Italian Reformist Socialist Party.

Plekhanov once said that propaganda is explaining a large number of ideas to a small number of people, while agitation presents a single idea to a large number of people.<sup>3</sup> The slogan of the workers' government is such a single concept aimed at rallying large numbers of people. We believe that this slogan provides the best means of combating reformism in Italy and rallying the broad masses around our banner. To that must be added the need to take the initiative in the struggle against the fascists and to propose to other workers' parties and groups the establishment of joint committees in every locality to combat the fascists. This does not entail any concession to the Socialists. On the contrary, the united-front policy does not exclude sharpening our struggle. Indeed it can be said that the more successfully it is applied, the more energetic will be our struggle against the Socialists.

The workers' government is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is a pseudonym for a soviet government; one that sits more easily with the ordinary worker. That is why we want to use this formula.<sup>4</sup>

If the Enlarged Executive Committee adopts our motion, this will achieve the best results for our Italian sister party without subjecting it to any difficulties.

*(The commission's motion is adopted unanimously.)*

### The Trade-Union Question

**Zinoviev:** The commission established to take up trade unions and our relationship with the syndicalists considers that the general issue of principle posed here can be postponed until the Fourth Congress. As regards the syndicalists' international congress in Berlin,<sup>5</sup> the commission is authorised to work out guidelines together with the Profintern.

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3 A reference to Plekhanov's 1891 work, 'The Tasks of the Social Democrats in the Famine'.

4 Zinoviev's view expressed here that the workers' government is simply a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat was challenged by a number of delegates at the Comintern's Fourth Congress a few months later, and there was considerable debate on the question. In Zinoviev's summary at the Fourth Congress on the Executive Committee report, he conceded the point and withdrew the 'pseudonym' formulation. See Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 270.

5 An international congress of syndicalists, convened by the Unione Sindacale Italiana and the French CGTU, was held in Berlin 16–18 June 1922. Coming out of this meeting, the anarcho-syndicalist forces convened a congress in Berlin on 25 December 1922, which founded the 'International Working Men's Association'.

## The French Question

**Trotsky:** The resolutions that we have distributed indicate with sufficiently clear strokes the path that the Communist Party of France should take. The proposals for adoption are as follows:

### Resolution on the French Communist Party<sup>6</sup>

The most important task before the coming French party congress is the adoption of a programme, tactics, and statutes in complete accord with the party's tasks in the present epoch preparatory to the social revolution. It is necessary to proceed immediately to elaborate corresponding drafts and to publish them both in the organs of the French party as well as in the organs of the entire International, so that the knowledge and experience of all Communist parties and of the ECCI may be drawn into the discussion and elaboration of basic documents that will assure the complete fusion and combat capacity of the party of the French working class.

#### *The Party's Structure*

*The Central Committee.* The creation of a homogeneous Central Committee, capable of assuring party leadership on the basis of the decisions of international and national Communist congresses, must be carefully prepared right now, and then carried out at the next party congress.

It must be recognised as unconditionally indispensable that more than half of the members of the Central Committee be composed of workers who either devote themselves to party or trade-union work, or are connected by their trade with the life of the working masses.

Preparatory work is needed for this process, including selecting candidates who meet these conditions, checking up on their past and their political stability, and making them known in one form or another to local party organisations. This work naturally falls upon all those members of the present Central Committee who base themselves completely on the resolutions of the Comintern and who want to make sure that they are carried out organisationally.

In a Central Committee with such a composition, the majority of its members will embody the ties between the Central Committee and the local organ-

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<sup>6</sup> Drafted by Trotsky. Translation here is from the French text on the basis of a comparison with the German.

isations, the trade unions, the press, and so on. At the same time a permanently functioning Political Bureau must be selected from among the personnel of the Central Committee. This body will reside in Paris; gather in its hands the leadership of all the party's work; prepare all the necessary material for enabling the full Central Committee to take the most principled and important decisions; and see to it that these decisions are realised in life by the General Secretariat of the Central Committee.

*Discipline.* The Central Committee must be empowered to eject from the party any member or any group, in every instance where this is warranted by the situation and by political considerations.

In cases that require a thorough investigation of breaches of discipline or other acts and crimes against party interests, the Central Committee may refer the question to the Committee on Conflicts and Grievances.

But in cases where the political character of the question is beyond dispute and where the elementary interests of the party demand expulsion, the Central Committee itself acts on the expulsion and its decision can be appealed only to the party congress.

*The Seine Federation.* The Seine organisation is of extraordinary importance to the destiny of French communism and, consequently, to world communism. Proceeding from this appraisal, the International deems it necessary to call upon the Communists in the Seine Federation as well as in our French party as a whole to make a drastic change in the present structure of the Seine organisation.

The federalist principle is completely incompatible with the actual interests of revolutionary organisation. References to the federative constitution of the Soviet republic must be recognised as false to the core, because the organisation of the Communist Party cannot be equated with the organisation of the Soviet state. In all the federated republics the Communist Party is one and the same, unified and rigidly centralised. Communists in the Ukraine, in Georgia, in Azerbaijan and elsewhere are linked with Communists in Moscow, Petersburg and so on, not by elements of federalism but by elements of the strictest democratic centralism. Only thanks to the unity of this centralised organisation of the working class was Soviet Russia able to defend herself in the struggle against her countless enemies. The International categorically warns against the application of the principles of federalism and autonomy inside a revolutionary party which must be the mighty lever of revolutionary action.

To place a committee of a hundred members at the head of party organisation is to actually deprive the organisation of any consistent and firm leadership.

In accord with the organisational principles on which the Communist International is built, the Seine organisation must have at its head a committee small in number, whose members are elected on the principle of democratic centralism and who are unconditionally responsible for the political and organisational leadership of the Seine organisation.

At the same time, in view of the above-mentioned extraordinary importance of the Seine organisation, it must be recognised as absolutely necessary for two or three members of the Central Committee to likewise serve as members of the Seine Committee, either by the election to the Central Committee of corresponding workers of the Seine organisation or by inclusion of Central Committee members in the Seine Committee by a special decision of the Central Committee. This will assure the necessary ties between the leading party centre and its most important organisation.

### *The Trade-Union Question*

The International affirms the great danger to the French working class and especially to the trade-union movement represented by individualistic, petty-bourgeois elements, hostile to the spirit of proletarian discipline and crafty in dodging all organisational control over their activities. In the persons of Verdier, Quinton, and others, we see a type of activist who, under a smokescreen of phrases about trade-union autonomy, organises their own tiny cliques inside the unions and seeks to seize the leadership of the movement, without offering the organised working class any guarantees of correct leadership, let alone ordinary loyalty to the interests of labour.

The activity of petty-bourgeois individualists of this type is all the more dangerous since they, like the Verdiers, Quintons, and the rest, worm their way even into the ranks of our party. While cloaking themselves with its authority but without submitting to its control, they carry on profoundly demoralising work, counterposing the trade unions to the party and poisoning the reciprocal relations between them.

Having exploited for their own ends the hospitality of the party, these elements afterwards cheerfully leave its ranks because the party's ideological consistency, discipline, and sense of responsibility – in a word, the party regime – is alien to the spirit of these poachers upon the labour movement.

The International considers it the unconditional duty of all the advanced and conscious elements of the working class – and above all of the leading bodies of the Communist Party – to wage merciless war against such manifestations and all those who foster them. The party itself must be purged thoroughly and completely of the spiritual brothers of Verdier and Quinton, if any still remain in its ranks.

It is therefore necessary during the Saint-Étienne Congress [of the CGTU] to identify and expose, with the collaboration of the Communist fraction and of its bureau, pseudo-Communists who regard both the party and the trade unions as an arena for the operation of irresponsible cliques. They must be mercilessly ejected from our ranks, so that in the future they will not cause the working class the same incalculable harm they did in the past and do today.

Given that there are Communists, members of the party, inside the trade unions who have remained in the CGT, the party has the unconditional duty to maintain correct organisational ties with these comrades.

Communists inside the reformist trade unions must organise correctly functioning party cells, which maintain close relations with the corresponding party bodies. No matter how relations between the CGT and the CGTU evolve, and independently of the party's support to the CGTU in its struggle against the reformists, the Communists must wage a struggle from the inside to win all the organs of the CGT.

### *The United Front*

The International notes that the press and the leading bodies of the French Communist Party have given completely incorrect information to the party concerning the meaning and importance of the united-front policy. The International simply sweeps aside the superficial judgments of journalists who strive to see it as a revival of reformism, while it is in fact an enhanced method of struggle against reformism.

The attempt to picture the formation of the Committee of Nine as the creation of a leading body standing above the three Internationals stems from a complete misunderstanding of the spirit and character of the Communist International. To do so is to confuse the Communist International with the old and purely parliamentary reformist organisations, whose delegates and representatives climb on the backs of the organised working masses and dictate their will to them. Given the character of the Communist International and the spirit of proletarian discipline, the three delegates assigned to the Committee of Nine were given this assignment only for a specific goal and under the unconditional supervision of the Comintern.

The most glorious page in the history of the French proletariat – the Paris Commune – was nothing other than a bloc of all the organisations and shadings within the French working class, united against the bourgeoisie. Despite the establishment of this united front, the Commune was quickly crushed, above all because this united front did not have at its left flank a genuine revolutionary, disciplined, and resolute organisation, capable of quickly gaining leadership in the fire of events.

In this sense the Commune was a workers' government – a bloc of the working-class parties and groupings, counterposed to the bourgeoisie. As a workers' government, the Commune represented a stage toward the establishment of the socialist order. The class-conscious French proletariat need only profoundly ponder over the experience of the Commune, in order to find in its own heroic past all the necessary arguments in favour of the genuinely revolutionary tactic of the united front, together with the demand for a workers' government that flows from this tactic.

Under the present conditions, the idea of the Left Bloc can cast its spell over a great many workers who have little or no political experience. The French Communist Party must regard this perspective as a very serious danger. To the idea of the Left Bloc, the party must counterpose in its entire day-to-day propaganda the idea of a bloc of all workers against the bourgeoisie. It is self-evident that during elections the party must everywhere run its own Communist ticket, independent of all others.

Only such a policy, carried out persistently in all spheres (economic, political, municipal, etc.), can reduce to a minimum the number of workers who might be sucked into the orbit of the Left Bloc; only such a policy can extend the influence of the party over the circles of workers left untouched by it.

### *On the Party Press*

Raising the political and theoretical level of the mass of party members is possible only if the leading party press breaks completely with the habits and customs of the bourgeois journalistic fraternity. Its columns must be placed at the disposal not of this or that journalist expressing his own personal inclinations, but rather of the party that systematically and purposefully transmits its own thoughts and its own will through its own journalists. To this end, editorials devoted to a principled and consistent elucidation of world events as well as of domestic economic and political life must appear unsigned, that is, not as the opinion of individuals but as the voice of the party itself. The Central Committee through its corresponding bodies must constantly control and supervise the press, assigning it definite tasks that flow from the political situation, and thus assure complete harmony between the work of its press and its own work both inside the party as well as in the political struggle as a whole. In no case can or should there appear under the guise of leading editorials – even if signed – articles that criticise decisions of the Communist International or of the French party that have already been adopted and that must be carried out. If publication of such articles is deemed expedient by the leading party bodies for the sake of completely clarifying a question, then these articles may appear only as discussion articles, accompanied by a precise

presentation by the editorial board of the already adopted party decisions on this question, and by a vigorous defence of these decisions in leading editorials.

### *The Question of Factions*

The International notes that alongside other manifestations of the crisis in the French party, there are indications that factions are being revived.

The extreme right wing of the party, whose point of concentration is the *Journal du peuple*, gained an influence among leading party circles and in the party press far beyond its actual ideological and political weight. The absence of decisive countermeasures by the Central Committee inexorably led to attempts to revive a left-wing faction. The struggle between these two factions is inevitably bound to drain the party's combat capacity and may in the future become a menace to its unity.

The International is profoundly convinced that only the complete consolidation of the crushing majority of the party against the paltry right wing and the vigorous enforcement of all the decisions adopted by the present conference will cut the ground from under all factional groupings.

At the same time, the International strongly urges the left wing, while continuing its defence in the future of the principles of revolutionary communism, to not, under any conditions, crystallise itself into a separate faction. Rather, it should conduct its work within the framework of the common party institutions and organisations, doing everything in its power to promote collaboration with the central core of the party in all practical work and particularly in the struggle against the reformist, pacifist, and anarcho-sindicalist deviations.

### *The Daily 'L'Internationale' and Its Director, Comrade Daniel Renoult*

Comrade Daniel Renoult, director of the Parisian evening daily, *L'Internationale*, and member of the party's Central Committee, took a most active part in the work of the February session of the enlarged ECCI. On all questions, with the exception of the united front, the ECCI reached complete agreement with all the members of the French delegation, including Comrade Renoult.

On the question of the united front, Comrade Renoult, who spoke as the reporter and later voted with the majority of the French delegation against the united-front policy, nonetheless declared most categorically and solemnly that French Communists, as loyal soldiers of the revolution, would submit without reservation to the decisions adopted after a lengthy and loyal discussion.

The obligations assumed by the delegation of the Central Committee remained unfulfilled in their most essential aspects owing to inadequate

energy and decisiveness of the Central Committee itself in carrying them out. However, this conference considers that the most important reason for the failure to carry out the adopted decision and for the tension between the International and its French section has been the conduct of *L'Internationale* and its director.

Flatly contradicting the accepted obligations and his own solemn pledge, Comrade Daniel Renoult, instead of explaining the adopted decisions and calling for their unanimous fulfilment, has engaged in a bitter campaign against the tactic of the united front and against the Communist International as a whole. Not confining himself to a literary polemic, Comrade Daniel Renoult has taken the floor at such authoritative gatherings as the conference of the Seine organisation to appeal for a demonstrative vote against the policy of the united front.

In view of Comrade Daniel Renoult's open violation of his duties as member of the Communist International and in view of his trampling upon obligations he himself assumed and solemnly pledged to fulfil, the conference expresses its disapproval of Comrade Daniel Renoult, in his capacity as delegate of the French party to Moscow and as director of *L'Internationale*.

At the same time, the International instructs the Central Committee and its general secretary to adopt all necessary measures to convert *L'Internationale*, during the months still remaining before the party congress, into an organ that actually carries out the decisions of the Communist International.

### *The Fabre Case*

The expulsion from the party of Fabre and his newspaper is an episode in the struggle against the spirit of intellectual anarcho-journalistic bohemianism. This current consistently assumes, especially in France, all the forms and all the colorations of anarchism and opportunism in order invariably to conclude by stabbing the working class in the back. This is the devil's laboratory from which emerged Briand and Hervé and hundreds of others. The International firmly expects that the Central Committee and the party press alike will explain to the working masses the political meaning of Fabre's expulsion. On this condition alone will the adopted measure prove to be a death sentence to Fabreism in the party. In this way Communist public opinion will gain revolutionary tenacity, in the face of which journalistic adventurers will always and without difficulty be ejected from the ranks of the party.

### *The Coming Party Congress*

The preparation of the next party congress must be conducted under the banner of struggle for the party's ideological and organisational consolidation –

against the tendencies of petty-bourgeois pacifism, anarcho-syndicalism, and verbal revolutionism, against the theories that subordinate the proletariat to the will and maturity of the peasantry and that are thereby directed against the class character of the party, etc. In view of the fact that the foregoing tendencies have already succeeded in introducing extreme confusion into the consciousness of the party, the party press must bring clarity to all these questions, refreshing the party's memory regarding the corresponding resolutions of the Communist International, in particular the Twenty-One Conditions for parties adhering to the Third International.<sup>7</sup> All these decisions must be illuminated by the experiences of recent years or illustrated by examples of literary and political declarations of a number of prominent party workers that are obviously incompatible with these resolutions.

The date for the congress call must be fixed by agreement between the Central Committee and the ECCI.<sup>8</sup>

### *Central Committee Manifesto*

Taking into consideration the need for a profound shift in the internal policy of the French party – which can be realised in life only with the conscious co-operation of the overwhelming majority of its members – the International deems desirable the publication of a corresponding solemn appeal by the Central Committee addressed to the entire party.<sup>9</sup> This appeal will explain the substance of the decisions that the present conference has adopted, in order to inaugurate a new era in the life of the French Communist Party.

### **Declarations before Vote**

**Frossard:** Before the vote, I wish to declare on behalf of the majority [of the French delegation] that it accepts unreservedly the resolutions related to the main tasks of the coming congress, the party's structure, the role of the Central Committee, the revision of the Seine Federation's statutes, administration of the press, party discipline, and the Central Committee manifesto.

The majority also accepts the substance of the conclusion regarding the trade-union question. It cannot, however, approve the motions regarding the

<sup>7</sup> For the Comintern's Twenty-One Conditions for admission, see p. 124, n. 9.

<sup>8</sup> A reference to the upcoming Paris Congress of the French CP held 15–20 October 1922.

<sup>9</sup> The Central Committee's resolutions coming out of the Second Enlarged ECCI Plenum were published in the 3 July 1922 issue of *L'Humanité*.

activity of the party and its Central Committee. It protests strongly and emphatically against the disapproval of Daniel Renoult. In his activity, Renoult has given voice to the viewpoints of a large majority within the party. This majority feels hurt by the disapproval directed against Renoult and cannot in any way agree with it.

We will not submit to the decisions made here out of some kind of automatic discipline or because the Comintern statutes oblige us to. Rather, we know that the International's authority arises from both the thrust of its doctrine and also its revolutionary experiences. Whatever our reservations at this moment, this authority can only have a beneficial effect on all the International's parties, including its party in France.

**Bordiga:** I will vote for the entirety of the resolutions presented by the commission with the reservation that, given the difficulties faced by the French party at this moment, it is not advisable to issue the slogans of the workers' government and the workers' bloc in France.

**Ziegler** [Alfred Kurella]: I do not understand the meaning of Frossard's statement. He has registered a protest against a large number of resolutions, and that means there are many decisions that he will not be acting to implement.

**Brandler:** I will vote for the resolutions, but I ask that the Executive Committee instruct the Presidium to discuss with the French delegation how the Communist fraction at the Saint-Étienne Congress will conduct itself tactically.

**Zinoviev:** A subcommittee has been established to examine this issue, and it will be possible for the Presidium, if the question is referred to it, to take up the matter with the French comrades.

*(The French resolutions were adopted unanimously, with the statement made on behalf of the majority of the French comrades.)*

### Report from Norwegian Commission

**Šmeral:** The criticisms have been taken up in a calm manner because the commission saw concrete indications that the Norwegian party is in the process of correcting these mistakes. The commission has drawn up the following resolution:

### Resolution on the Norwegian Question

1.) In its efforts to begin parliamentary activity in a realistic political framework, the Norwegian Labour Party has to some extent slipped into the path of conditional support to the Liberal government. This policy led to developments such as the trip of Comrade Lian, a member of the party executive, to the Genoa Conference as a government expert; support of the temporary compulsory arbitration law; and support for some of the government's other initiatives.

Such actions are hardly different from old reformist politics. True, they are motivated by concern for workers' interests, but they are ultimately conducive to sacrificing other and more important workers' interests. The Norwegian comrades responsible for these policies have undoubtedly attempted to take into account the interests of the revolutionary class struggle, but the errors they made in practice contradict these interests. The Enlarged Executive Committee is glad to have received an assurance that the Norwegian party has come to the understanding, through its own experience and its own convictions, that the previous parliamentary policies need to be revised. The Enlarged Executive Committee hopes that this will be done as rapidly as possible.

2.) The case of Lian has to be considered in the context of the just-presented facts regarding the previous policies of the Norwegian Labour Party.<sup>10</sup> We note that no protest was raised against the trip by Lian. Thus the entire party supported this step. Given the now-established fact that Comrade Lian cannot be held personally responsible for this move, the ECCI's earlier decision regarding Lian as an individual is annulled, and this personal matter is regarded as finished.

3.) Support for the compulsory arbitration law in the Norwegian parliament was an error.<sup>11</sup> Contrary to what the Norwegian comrades assumed, it did not result in strengthening the fighting stance of the party against the capitalist class. On the contrary, it led to disagreements within the party's own ranks. Given the great difficulties presently faced by the Norwegian workers' movement, the Enlarged Executive Committee appreciates the efforts of responsible Norwegian comrades to protect the workers, through legal measures, from premature and excessively arduous struggles. An irresponsible pretence of radicalism that seeks to expend the workers' fighting power on a daily basis in ill-considered struggles – and from this standpoint opposes any legal protection of working conditions – will under no circumstances receive support from the Communist International.

10 For the Lian case, see p. 322, n. 4.

11 For Norway's compulsory arbitration law, see p. 320, n. 3.

But defence of the workers' freedom of action to struggle against legal restrictions by the bourgeois state is quite another matter. Defending this right is Communists' duty, and in that respect the compulsory arbitration law in question was extremely questionable from the outset. Experiences with compulsory arbitration courts in Norway up to the present have shown that it was a vain hope that the advantages of protection through compulsory arbitration laws would be greater than the disadvantages of sacrificing their freedom of action. The Norwegian comrades have now come to this understanding through their own experience. The previous defenders of this temporary law have now pretty much entirely recognised this, and none of them favours its renewal. In that framework, the Enlarged Executive Committee sees no cause to intervene in this matter.

4.) Support of a bourgeois government contradicts united-front policy, first because it stirs up mistrust among revolutionary workers toward the Communist Party, and, second, because it reinforces the trust of backward layers of workers in the bourgeoisie. In short, it is not conducive to drawing together the working class as a unified anti-capitalist force. The united front should be utilised in Norway, as everywhere, in struggle against all bourgeois parties and all capitalist layers. The task is to gather together the broadest masses of the proletariat and, to this end, to challenge both the Social Democrats of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals and also the syndicalists, etc., to ally with us to carry out the struggle for common demands representing the most important immediate interests of the working class.

There is no doubt that prospects are excellent in Norway to achieve successes for the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat through this policy. Of course, this is not meant in the sense that conscious right-wing socialists and syndicalists would become transformed into genuine fighters in the revolutionary class struggle. No, we do not need to give way to such illusions. On the contrary, many of their leaders will surely sooner or later expose themselves to the united front as deserters, betrayers, or wavering cowards. But the great majority of their supporters can be won through our earnest appeal to common struggle and through these struggles themselves to become loyal and effective allies of the proletarian revolution. Moreover, the predominance of our Norwegian sister party within the workers' movement of its country provides a stronger assurance than in many other countries that application of this policy for proletarian unity will not undermine the independence or the revolutionary leadership role of the Communist party.

Nonetheless, in Norway, as in some other countries, the united-front policy has provoked a left-radical anxiety and an unclear opposition. The opposition considers that officially addressing our party's appeal to the Social-Democratic

party or a syndicalist organisation would be an indecent form of 'organisational collaboration'. But actually that does not need to be the case. Successfully applying the united-front policy requires that, when the crucial immediate interests of the proletariat require that workers' organisations act together, the Communist Party has the political courage to turn to the opponent workers' organisations, carry out discussions with their leading bodies, and in some circumstances even create a temporary alliance to carry out common actions – all without detracting in the slightest from the party's organisational or political independence.

Proceeding further along these lines, our party should be prepared, under certain circumstances, to form an alliance for struggle aiming toward the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the formation of a ruling bloc composed of representatives of all workers' parties and other organisations. This alliance can take part in a workers' government, in order then through this intermediate stage on the road of further development of the revolutionary class struggle, to arrive at the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Courageous and purposeful application of this policy, without in any way diminishing its criticism of the non-revolutionary workers' leaders, will give our party the best chance to expose fully and graphically their inconsistency and betrayal and to separate them from their worker supporters. A Communist opposition that, motivated by confused, left-radical timidity, repudiates and disrupts this revolutionary Marxist policy and shakes workers' trust in their own party leadership's application of this policy, does an unforgivable disservice to the proletariat in its effort to carry through the revolutionary class struggle successfully.

5.) The Enlarged Executive Committee instructs all Norwegian Communists to take a stand at the coming trade-union congress for immediate affiliation to the Red International of Labour Unions.<sup>12</sup>

6.) The Enlarged Executive Committee demands that the decision taken previously to change the name of the main newspaper [*Social-Demokraten*] and many other papers of the Norwegian Labour Party be carried out at once and without delay.

### *Executive Committee of the Communist International*

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12 The next congress of Norwegian trade unions, which opened on 4 March 1923, voted to affiliate to the RILU.

**Kuusinen:** I would like to add that the commission, of course, could not endorse the Norwegian comrades' previous parliamentary policies. Especially where the compulsory arbitration law is concerned, there was agreement that the Norwegian comrades committed an error in adopting this law. The commission's opinion, however, does not signify support for the opposition, which is thoughtlessly and irresponsibly sacrificing the capacity of workers' organisations for struggle through repeated ill-considered conflicts and, for this reason, rejects any legal measures to defend existing working conditions.

The commission is pleased to report that the Norwegian comrades have come to the conclusion that much of their previous parliamentary policy was not correct.

Less gratifying is the opposition to the united front. This opposition is all the more damaging in that there is no country where the united front has such great prospects as in Norway.

We must call on the party to have the political courage not to shrink from taking the step of appealing to the right-wing socialist or syndicalist organisations.

We also note that despite our decision the party's main publication is still called *Social-Demokraten*.

**Zinoviev:** In my view, the commission's proposals are the minimum that is required. I ask that the name of the central organ be changed in very short order.

*(Zinoviev proposes that the report of the German comrades be accepted as a written text. This is agreed.)*

#### Fourth World Congress

**Zinoviev:** The question of the Fourth Congress was discussed by the Presidium in the presence of many Executive Committee members, so that it would be possible for us here to adopt it without discussion.

We propose that the Fourth Congress begin on 7 November, the fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, in Moscow.<sup>13</sup> We propose the following agenda:

- 1.) Executive Committee report.
- 2.) The Comintern's line of march.

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13 The Fourth Congress was held from 5 November to 5 December 1922.

3.) The programme of the Comintern and of the Communist parties of Germany, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, the United States, Japan, plus one each of the Scandinavian and Balkan parties.

- 4.) Agrarian question.
- 5.) Red International of Labour Unions.
- 6.) Educational work.
- 7.) Youth question.
- 8.) Eastern question.

As you see, point 3 will be one of the most important. Our largest parties have not yet formulated programmes. It is high time that they determine their programmes and apply the Comintern's principles to their countries. We will choose a Commission on Programme here today that will draw together all materials, assist the concerned parties, and perhaps also draft a text for the Comintern. We believe that it will be a big step forward to prepare this now and then have it approved by the congress.

As for the agrarian question, the Executive Committee has already named a commission that will carry out the preparatory work.

Regarding preparations for the Fourth Congress, the Presidium is of the opinion that the group assigned to this should not be too large but also not too small. It should not be limited to members of the Central Committees; workers from the largest districts of the largest parties should also take part in it.

Congresses of the national parties should take place after the Fourth Congress. It is best that the International as such keep the initiative and decide the most important principled issues that will then be taken up by the national congresses. In cases where an exception must be made, the Executive Committee will come to agreement with the affected parties.

**Eberlein:** We should note that in order to have a well-prepared congress, parties need to send the Executive Committee reports not only on the political situation but also on the organisational status of each section.

**Radek:** I propose the following Commission on Programme:

*Russia:* Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Radek.

*Germany:* Clara Zetkin, Thalheimer, Ludwig, Meyer.

*France:* Frossard, Cachin, Souvarine, Paul Louis, Rappoport, Renaud Jean.

*Italy:* Bordiga, Graziadei.

*Czechoslovakia:* Šmeral, Kreibich, Burian, Skalák.

*Finland:* Kuusinen.

*Hungary:* Kun, Rudas, Varga.

*Bulgaria:* Kabakchiev.

*Norway:* Friis.

*Latvia:* Stuchka.

*Austria:* Strasser.

*Poland:* Warski.

*Japan:* Katayama.

*Britain:* MacManus.

*United States:* Cook.

*(The proposal for this commission is adopted.)*<sup>14</sup>

### Closing Words

**Clara Zetkin:** To summarise the Enlarged Executive Committee's activity, I would say that the crises of many parties that have been taken up here are growing pains. We experience the conflicts that occurred here as a process of growing together of the Third International itself. This coming together cannot take place without conflict and occasional clashes.

The Communist parties of every country stand together in true solidarity and are more determined than ever to unite all their efforts in the Third International.

During this difficult and dangerous time of revolutionary development, they will stand together with Soviet Russia. The more that enemies band together against Soviet Russia, the more resolute will be our call: For Soviet Russia! Long live the Third International! Long live the world revolution!

*(The session closes with the singing of 'The Internationale'.)*

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<sup>14</sup> The Programme Commission initiated a discussion at the Comintern's Fourth Congress, held in its Sessions 14 and 15. A resolution was adopted by the congress calling for continuation of the discussion. For the congress discussion there, see Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 479–527. For the adopted resolution, see pp. 631–2 of that volume.

# The Berlin Conference of the Three Internationals

## 1 Attendance<sup>1</sup>

### *From the Second International*

DELEGATES: Camille Huysmans, Émile Vandervelde (Belgium), Thorvald Stauning (Denmark), Otto Wels (Germany), Harry Gosling (Britain), Ramsay MacDonald (Britain), Tom Shaw (Britain), Tsereteli (Georgia), Willem Vliegen (Holland), Gustav Möller (Sweden)

GUESTS: Henri de Man (Belgium), Adolf Braun (Austria), Gerhart Lützens (Germany), Viktor Schiff (Germany), Ernest Bevin (Britain), Marguerite Cox (Britain), William Gillies (Britain)

### *From the Vienna Union*

DELEGATES: Arthur Crispian (Germany), R.C. Wallhead (Britain), Paul Faure (France), Jean Longuet (France), Bruno Kalnin (Latvia), Friedrich Adler (Austria), Otto Bauer (Austria), Julius Martov (Russia), Robert Grimm (Switzerland), Karl Čermak (Czechoslovakia)

GUESTS: William Dittman (Germany), Alexandre Bracke (France), Adrien Compère-Morel (France), Berl Locker (Poale Zion), Shlomo Kaplansky (Poale Zion), Raphael Abramovich (Russia), Alexander Schreider (Russia)

### *From the Third International*

DELEGATES: Clara Zetkin (Germany), L.O. Frossard, Rosmer (France), Bordiga (Italy), Sen Katayama (Japan), Kosta Novaković [Stanič] (Yugoslavia), Warski [Adolf Warszawski] (Poland), N. Bukharin (Russia), Karl Radek (Russia), Bohumir Šmeral (Czechoslovakia)

GUESTS: Bujanowicz, Voja Vujović (Yugoslavia)

### *From the Italian Socialist Party*

REPRESENTATIVE: Giacinto Menotti Serrati

GUESTS: Adelchi Baratono, Domenico Fioritto

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1 From *Official Report*, pp. 6–7, compared against the French edition of the congress proceedings, International Conference of the Executive Committees of Three International Organisations 1922a, pp. 8–9.

Ten delegates were allocated for each International. Other members of each executive committee were admitted as guests.

## 2 Common Declaration Adopted by Conference<sup>2</sup>

The Conference is agreed that, however desirable the unity of the class-conscious organisations of the proletariat may be, at the present moment the only thing that can be done is to hold deliberations between all the sections represented at the Conference for the purpose of common action towards a concrete goal. The Conference, therefore, proposes that the Executives should agree to the setting up of an Organisation Committee of Nine, which shall undertake preparations for further conferences of the three Executives, as well as conferences on a wider basis, to include parties which are not affiliated to either of the three International organisations. Each Executive is free to appoint as it thinks fit the three representatives to whom it is entitled. In this Organisation Committee no majority resolutions will be allowed, its task will be to express the general point of view of the three Executives as far as this is declared.

The Conference recommends that this Organisation Committee should try to bring about conversations between the representatives of the Amsterdam Trade Union International and the Red Trade Union International, to consider the question of how the maintenance and restoration of trade union unity of front can be secured, nationally and internationally.

The Conference notes the declaration of the representatives of the Communist International that the forty-seven Social Revolutionaries who are to be tried will be allowed any defenders they wish; that, as already announced in the Soviet press before the Conference, no death sentences will be inflicted in this trial; that, as the trial will be public, representatives of all three Executives will be allowed to attend, to listen to the proceedings, and will be allowed to take stenographic reports for the information of their affiliated parties.

The Conference declares that all the three Executives have expressed their readiness to collect and examine the material to be submitted by the different sections on the question of Georgia. The Conference authorises the Committee of Organisation to draw conclusions from this examination, and to present a report to a later conference of the three Executives.

The Conference notes that the representatives of the Second International have declared that they do not consider it possible to hold a general conference in April, that is to say, at the same time as the Genoa Conference. The Conference, however, agrees in principle upon the necessity for calling a general conference as soon as possible. The Executives undertake to inform their affiliated Parties of the progress which the idea of a general conference has made

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2 From *Official Report*, pp. 83–5.

during the Berlin negotiations, and they will give their representatives on the Committee of Organisation full power to conclude favourable negotiations for the calling of a general conference.

As the organisation of the general conference is impossible this month for the reasons above stated, the present Conference declares that it is an imperative duty, in view of the advance of international imperialist capitalism to demonstrate the united will of the international class-conscious proletariat. The Conference, therefore, calls upon the workers of every country to organise great mass demonstrations, with as much unity as possible, during the Genoa Conference, either on the 20th of April, or where this is technically impossible, on the first of May:

For the eight-hour day.

For the struggle against unemployment, which has increased immeasurably on account of the reparations policy of the capitalist powers.

For the united action of the proletariat against the capitalist offensive.

For the Russian Revolution, for starving Russia, for the resumption by all countries of political and economic relations with Russia.

For the re-establishment of the proletarian united front in every country and in the International.

### 3 Declaration of the Third International<sup>3</sup>

After much hesitation, the delegation of the Executive of the Communist International has resolved to agree to the joint declaration submitted by the Vienna Union. Their hesitation was due primarily to the fact that the Second International refused to adopt as the watchword for the workers' demonstrations the annulling of the Versailles Treaty. In this respect a great international meeting of workers has shown itself far behind intelligent Western European Liberals. This leads us to believe that the Second International is not really willing to fight against the danger of a fresh Versailles Peace at Genoa, that it is not really prepared to use every weapon against the capitalist offensive.

The delegation of the Executive of the Communist International has, nevertheless, resolved to agree to the joint resolution, although the attempt to convoke an International Labour Conference during the Genoa Conference has failed, owing to the opposition of the Second International.

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3 From *Official Report*, pp. 88–9.

In spite of these serious considerations, the delegation of the Executive of the Communist International has agreed to the resolution, because of its desire to further, and not to obstruct, the slightest advance in the direction of the united front. For this reason it has renounced at this preliminary conference the demand for an enquiry into the murder of Rosa Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Jogiches, and Leviné, and other events which took place during the civil war in Germany. For this reason it has forborne, at this preliminary conference, to throw light upon the part played by the Social-Democratic parties in the persecution of the Communists in Latvia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, and reserves the right to demand from the Committee of Nine the appointment of a commission of inquiry into these and similar cases. For this reason it has forborne, at this preliminary conference, to demand from the German Social-Democratic Party the release of the proletarian militants in Germany. For this reason, too, it has forborne, at this preliminary conference, to demand an inquiry into the attitude of the Labour Party towards Ireland and the colonies, and reserves to itself the right to raise all these questions later on. For it is convinced that unless there is a break with the policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie, which is at the root of all this trouble, a real united front of the working class will be impossible.

The delegation of the Executive of the Communist International has resolved to agree to the joint declaration, and to the first feeble steps towards the united front expressed in it, in the firm conviction that the pressure of events will compel the working masses to battle, and will teach them to force their reformist leaders to change their policy if they do not wish to be pushed aside by the working classes.

## Lenin on the Berlin Conference

### 1 Letter to Bukharin and Zinoviev

1 February 1922<sup>1</sup>

We must consider beforehand what people, preferably those with a ready tongue, are going to represent the Comintern at the conference with the II and II½ Internationals. We must also consider beforehand the basic questions of tactics and strategy to be employed at this meeting.

The list of questions to be dealt with at the meeting should be considered beforehand and drawn up in agreement with each of the parties attending the meeting. On our part we should include in this list only questions that have a direct bearing on practical joint action by the working masses and touching on matters that are recognised as indisputable in the official press statement of each of the three participants. We must explain at length the reasons why we confine ourselves to such questions in the interests of a united front. In the event of the yellow fraternity raising mooted questions of policy, such as our attitude to the Mensheviks, the question of Georgia, etc., we should adopt these tactics: (1) declare that the list of questions can be drawn up only by a unanimous decision of all three participants; (2) declare that in drawing up our list of questions we were guided exclusively by the desire for unity of action by the working masses, which unity could be achieved immediately even under existing deep-seated political differences; (3) declare that we fully agree to questions such as our attitude to the Mensheviks, the question of Georgia and any other questions being raised by the II and II½ Internationals, provided that they agree to the following questions being raised: (1) the renegade attitude of the II and II½ Internationals to the Basel Manifesto;<sup>2</sup> (2) complicity of these same parties in the murder of Luxemburg, Liebknecht, and other Communists of Germany through the bourgeois governments which those parties support; (3) a similar attitude of these parties to the murder of revolutionaries in the colonies by the bourgeois parties which the II and II½ Internationals support, etc.,

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<sup>1</sup> *LCW*, 42, pp. 393–4.

<sup>2</sup> For the Basel Manifesto issued by the 1912 congress of the Second International, see p. 153, n. 8.

etc. We should prepare a list of these and similar questions beforehand and also prepare beforehand theses and speakers on various important questions of this nature.

We must find occasion to declare officially that we regard the II and II½ Internationals only as inconsistent and vacillating participants of a bloc with the counter-revolutionary world bourgeoisie, and that we agree to attend a meeting on the united front for the sake of achieving possible practical unity of direct action on the part of the masses and in order to expose the political error of the II and II½ Internationals' entire position, just as the latter (the II and II½ Internationals) have agreed to attend a meeting with us for the sake of achieving practical unity of direct action by the masses and in order to expose the political error of our position.

## 2 Letter to Politburo Members on Draft Resolution of Enlarged ECCI Plenum<sup>3</sup>

23 February 1922

I move the following amendments to the draft resolution sent in by Zinoviev concerning the Comintern's participation in the planned conference of all the workers' parties of the world.<sup>4</sup> After the words: 'unity of action among the working-class masses which could be achieved immediately, despite fundamental political differences,' the phrases following this should be deleted up to the words: 'that the working-class masses demand unity of action'. The phrase beginning with these last words should be recast as follows: 'the class-conscious workers, who are perfectly well aware of these political differences, nevertheless, together with the vast majority of the workers, desire and demand unity of action on practical issues most urgent and close to the interests of the workers. There can be no doubt about this now in the mind of any conscientious person' and so on.

My second amendment is that the phrase beginning with the words: 'all controversial issues to be avoided and questions that are not open to argument to be brought into focus' should be amended as follows: 'and while postponing for a time the more controversial questions and bringing into focus the less con-

3 *LCW*, 42, pp. 400–1.

4 For the resolution of the First Enlarged Plenum, see pp. 222–4 of this volume.

troversial, both sides, or rather all three international organisations taking part in the conference, will naturally count on the ultimate victory of their points of view.'

My chief amendment is aimed at deleting the passage which calls the leaders of the II and II½ Internationals accomplices of the world bourgeoisie. You might as well call a man a 'jackass'. It is absolutely unreasonable to risk wrecking an affair of tremendous practical importance for the sake of giving oneself the extra pleasure of scolding scoundrels, whom we shall be scolding a thousand times at another place and time. If there are still people at the enlarged meeting of the Executive who have not grasped the fact that the tactic of the united front will help us to overthrow the leaders of the II and II½ Internationals, these people should have an extra number of popular lectures and talks read to them. It may be necessary to have a specially popular pamphlet written for them and published in French, say, if the Frenchmen have not yet grasped Marxist tactics. Finally, it would be better to adopt this resolution, not unanimously, but by a majority (those who voted against we would afterwards put through a special, thorough, and popular course of enlightenment) than run the risk of spoiling a practical affair for the sake of a few political youngsters who tomorrow will be cured of their infantile disorder.<sup>5</sup>

### 3 Letter to Politburo Members on the Directives for the Comintern Delegation to Berlin Conference<sup>6</sup>

14–15 March 1922

I propose

p. 11 (2nd part) (re changing attitude towards the Mensheviks) should be thrown out.

We cannot speak of this even provisionally just now.

In my opinion the directives should be amended this way:

- AA) If you wish to raise the most controversial questions, i.e., those that evoke the greatest hostility of the III International towards the II and II½ Internationals, then we agree on condition
  - (a) that the list of questions be arranged with us

<sup>5</sup> Lenin's proposed amendments were adopted by the RCP Politburo on 23 February 1922.

<sup>6</sup> *LCW*, 42, pp. 406–7.

- (b) ... and the most detailed rules of procedure in discussing the rights of the III International; these rights to be safeguarded in greatest detail, etc., etc.
- BB) We, on our part, propose raising *only* the least controversial questions with the aim of attempting partial, but joint action by the rank and file of the working class.

If they accept AA, we shall insert: a general appraisal by us of the II and II½ Internationals, the *sum* of our accusations against them, etc., etc.

Further: on 25.III, i.e., at the preliminary meeting, our delegates should be extremely discreet, *so long as* there is still hope of achieving our purpose, i.e., enticing all 3 Internationals (the II and the II½) into a general conference.

We should not make a break at once because of its *composition*, and in any case we should not break without getting in touch with Moscow, unless it is something glaringly mean, *absolutely* intolerable.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4 Letter to the Politburo with a Draft of Directives to Comrades Travelling Abroad<sup>8</sup>

17 March 1922

In view of Comrade Radek's trip abroad, and *Comrade Sosnovsky's, too, I hear*, – in view of the fact that a *flair for diplomacy is not one of the strong points* of these most valuable and important workers, I propose that the following directive be issued by the Politburo:

'The Politburo impresses upon all comrades travelling abroad that the present moment calls, on the one hand, for the greatest restraint in utterances and talks about the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and, on the other hand, for a relentless struggle against and the greatest distrust towards them (as the most dangerous *de facto* accomplices of the White Guards).'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Lenin's proposals were approved by the Politburo and by the ECCI on 17 March 1922.

<sup>8</sup> *LCW*, 42, pp. 407–8.

<sup>9</sup> The Politburo adopted Lenin's proposal on 18 March 1922.

## 5 We have Paid Too Much<sup>10</sup>

9 April 1922

Imagine that a Communist has to enter premises in which agents of the bourgeoisie are carrying on their propaganda at a fairly large meeting of workers. Imagine also that the bourgeoisie demands from us a high price for admission to these premises. If the price has not been agreed to beforehand we must bargain, of course, in order not to impose too heavy a burden upon our Party funds. If we pay too much for admission to these premises we shall undoubtedly commit an error. But it is better to pay a high price – at all events until we have learned to bargain properly – than to reject an opportunity of speaking to workers who hitherto have been in the exclusive ‘possession’, so to speak, of the reformists, i.e., of the most loyal friends of the bourgeoisie.

This analogy came to my mind when in today’s *Pravda* I read a telegram from Berlin stating the terms on which agreement has been reached between the representatives of the three Internationals.

In my opinion our representatives were wrong in agreeing to the following two conditions: first, that the Soviet Government should not apply the death penalty in the case of the forty-seven Socialist-Revolutionaries; second, that the Soviet Government should permit representatives of the three Internationals to be present at the trial.

These two conditions are nothing more nor less than a political concession on the part of the revolutionary proletariat to the reactionary bourgeoisie. If anyone has any doubt about the correctness of this definition, then, to reveal the political naïveté of such a person, it is sufficient to ask him the following questions. Would the British or any other contemporary government permit representatives of the three Internationals to attend the trial of Irish workers charged with rebellion? Or the trial of the workers implicated in the recent rebellion in South Africa?<sup>11</sup> Would the British or any other government, in such, or similar circumstances, agree to promise that it would not impose the death penalty on its political opponents? A little reflection over these questions will be sufficient to enable one to understand the following simple truth. All over the world a struggle is going on between the reactionary bourgeoisie

<sup>10</sup> *LCW*, 33, pp. 330–4.

<sup>11</sup> A reference to a January 1922 strike in the South African goldfields that by March had developed into an armed workers’ rebellion. The uprising was suppressed by troops, with more than 10,000 arrested.

and the revolutionary proletariat. In the present case the Communist International, which represents one side in this struggle, makes a political concession to the other side, i.e., the reactionary bourgeoisie; for everybody in the world knows (except those who want to conceal the obvious truth) that the Socialist-Revolutionaries have shot at Communists and have organised revolts against them, and that they have done this actually, and sometimes officially, in a united front with the whole of the international reactionary bourgeoisie.

The question is – what concession has the international bourgeoisie made to us in return? There can only be one reply to this question, and it is that no concession has been made to us whatever.

Only arguments which becloud this simple and clear truth of the class struggle, only arguments which throw dust in the eyes of the masses of working people, can obscure this obvious fact. Under the agreement signed in Berlin by the representatives of the Third International we have made two political concessions to the international bourgeoisie. We have obtained no concession in return.

The representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals acted as blackmailers to extort a political concession from the proletariat for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, while emphatically refusing, or at any rate making no attempt, to induce the international bourgeoisie to make some political concession to the revolutionary proletariat. Of course, this incontrovertible political fact was obscured by shrewd bourgeois diplomats (the bourgeoisie has been training members of its class to become good diplomats for many centuries); but the attempt to obscure the fact does not change it in the least. Whether the various representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are in direct or indirect collusion with the bourgeoisie is a matter of tenth-rate importance in the present case. We do not accuse them of being in direct collusion. The question of whether there has been direct collusion or fairly intricate, indirect connection has nothing to do with the case. The only point that has anything to do with it is that as a result of the pressure of the representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, the Communist International has made a political concession to the international bourgeoisie and has obtained no concession in return.

What conclusion should be drawn from this?

First, that Comrades Radek, Bukharin, and the others who represented the Communist International acted wrongly.

Further. Does it follow from this that we must tear up the agreement that they signed? No. I think it would be wrong to draw such a conclusion. We ought not to tear up the agreement. All we have to do is to realise that on this occasion the bourgeois diplomats proved to be more skilful than ours, and that next time,

if the price of admission is not fixed beforehand, we must bargain and manoeuvre more skilfully. We must make it a rule not to make political concessions to the international bourgeoisie (no matter how skilfully these concessions may be concealed by intermediaries, no matter of what sort) unless we receive in return more or less equivalent concessions from the international bourgeoisie to Soviet Russia, or to the other contingents of the international proletariat which is fighting capitalism.

Perhaps the Italian Communists and a section of the French Communists and Syndicalists, who were opposed to united front tactics, will infer from the above argument that united front tactics are wrong. But such an inference will obviously be wrong. If the communist representatives have paid too much for admission to premises in which they have some, even if small, opportunity of addressing workers up to now in the exclusive 'possession' of reformists, such a mistake must be rectified next time. But it would be an incomparably greater mistake to reject all terms, or all payment for admission to these fairly well-guarded and barred premises. The mistake that Comrades Radek, Bukharin, and the others made is not a grave one, especially as our only risk is that the enemies of Soviet Russia may be encouraged by the result of the Berlin Conference to make two or three perhaps successful attempts on the lives of certain persons; for they know beforehand that they can shoot at Communists in the expectation that conferences like the Berlin Conference will hinder the Communists from shooting at them.

At all events, we have made some breach in the premises that were closed to us. At all events, Comrade Radek has succeeded in exposing, at least to a section of the workers, the fact that the Second International refused to include among the slogans of the demonstration a demand to annul the Treaty of Versailles. The great mistake the Italian Communists and a section of the French Communists and Syndicalists make is in being content with the knowledge they already possess. They are content with knowing well enough that the representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, and also Paul Levi, Serrati, and others, are very shrewd agents of the bourgeoisie and vehicles of their influence. But people, workers, who really know this, and who really understand its significance, are undoubtedly in the minority in Italy, Britain, the USA, and France. Communists must not stew in their own juice, but must learn to penetrate into prohibited premises where the representatives of the bourgeoisie are influencing the workers; and in this they must not shrink from making certain sacrifices and not be afraid of making mistakes, which, at first, are inevitable in every new and difficult undertaking. The Communists who refuse to understand this and who do not want to learn how to do it cannot hope to win over the majority of the workers; at all events, they are hindering

and retarding the work of winning this majority. For Communists, and all genuine adherents of the workers' revolution, this is absolutely unpardonable.

Once again, the bourgeoisie, in the person of their diplomats, have outwitted the representatives of the Communist International. Such is the lesson of the Berlin Conference. We shall not forget this lesson. We shall draw all the necessary conclusions from it. The representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals need a united front, for they hope to weaken us by inducing us to make exorbitant concessions; they hope to penetrate into our Communist premises without any payment; they hope to utilise united front tactics for the purpose of convincing the workers that reformist tactics are correct and that revolutionary tactics are wrong. We need a united front because we hope to convince the workers of the opposite. We shall put the blame for the mistakes on our Communist representatives who committed them, and on those parties which commit them, while we shall try to learn from these mistakes and to prevent a repetition of them in the future. But under no circumstances shall we thrust the blame for the mistakes of our Communists upon the proletarian masses, who all over the world are facing the onslaught of advancing capital. We adopted united front tactics in order to help these masses to fight capitalism, to help them understand the 'cunning mechanism' of the two fronts in international economics and in international politics; and we shall pursue these tactics to the end.



**THIRD ENLARGED PLENUM**

*12–23 June 1923*

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## Opening; Executive Committee Report

*Attendance. Agenda. Election of commissions. Report of the Executive Committee and Presidium.*

*Speakers: Neurath, Zinoviev.*

*(The conference of the Enlarged Executive Committee was convened in the large Andreyevsky Hall at 7:00 p.m.)*

**Neurath** read the attendance list. Of the 25 Executive Committee members, the following are present: Zinoviev, Lévy, Zetkin, Hoernle, Bukharin, Radek, Šméral, Neurath, Gennari, Gramsci, Schüller, Shatskin, MacManus, Höglund, Scheflo, Kuusinen, Kolarov, Stirner, Katayama, Safarov, Andrews.

The following delegates of the different sections have arrived:

France: Thibaut, René, Rosmer.

Italy: Urbani, Martini, Negri, Saitta, Rossi.

Germany: Böttcher, Walcher, Ewert.

Czechoslovakia: Zápotocký, Beuer.

Britain: Stewart, Gallacher, Jackson, Pollitt, Brown, Newbold.

Russia: Lunacharsky, Pyatakov, Piatnitsky, Lozovsky.

Spain: Aparicio.

United States: Amter, Trachtenberg.

Austria: Koritschoner, Frey.

Netherlands: Jansen.

Denmark: Laursen.

Sweden: Ström.

Norway: Tranmael, Hofmo.

Canada: Johnson.

Lithuania: Angaretis.

Latvia: Stuchka, Berzin.

Switzerland: Wieser.

Yugoslavia: Vladetić.

Poland: Maciejewski, Krajewski.

Japan: Aoki.

South Africa: Jones.

Finland: Laukki, Manner.

Estonia: Vakmann.

Ukraine: Manuilsky.

Iran: Sultanzade.

Turkey: Gafurov.

Youth International: Gyptner, Michalec, Paasonen, Flieg, Furubotn.

In addition ten comrades from Britain have been invited to the British conference.<sup>1</sup>

*Zinoviev is elected chair of the conference. Also elected to the Presidium were Trotsky (Russia), Zetkin and Böttcher (Germany), Thibaut (France), Šmeral (Czechoslovakia), Gennari (Italy), Gallacher (Britain), Tranmael and Höglund (Scandinavia), Amter (United States), Kolarov (Balkans), Roy (India) and Katayama (East). Neurath was elected as political secretary of the conference; Heimo as technical secretary.*

*Zinoviev conveys the decision of the Executive Committee to designate Comrade Lenin as honorary president of the Communist International. The Enlarged Executive Committee welcomed this decision with enthusiastic applause.<sup>2</sup>*

*The Enlarged Executive Committee approves the agenda proposed by the Presidium, as follows:*

### Agenda

- 1a.) Report of the Presidium.
- 1b.) Practical measures to carry forward the campaign for the united front.
- 1c.) Fusion of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. Reporter: Zinoviev.
- 2.) The world political situation. Reporter: Radek.
- 3.) Struggle against fascism. Reporter: Clara Zetkin.
- 4.) Trade-union and factory-committee issues. Reporters: Lozovsky and Walcher.
- 5.) The limits of centralism in the Comintern (discussion with the Scandinavian comrades). Reporter: Bukharin.
- 6.) The workers' movement in Britain.
- 7.) Preparatory work on the Comintern's programme. Reporter: Bukharin.

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1 Coinciding with the June 1923 enlarged ECCI plenum, a conference was held between the British CP and Comintern leaderships to investigate reasons for the slow development of the British party. The meeting focused on the trade unions and the work of building a left-wing opposition within them.

2 After several smaller strokes in 1921 and 1922, Lenin had suffered a severe stroke in March 1923 that left him incapacitated. He died on 21 January 1924.

- 8.) Issues relating to the national sections.
- 9.) The fifth anniversary of the Communist International and the national congresses of the sections.
- 10.) Motions.

A Political Commission has been established to review the resolutions on points 1, 2, and 3 of the agenda, concerning the united front, the world political situation, and the struggle against fascism. The commission has 21 members and is composed of Comrades Zinoviev, Trotsky, Bukharin, Pyatakov (Russia), Lévy, Souvarine (France), Böttcher, Hoernle (Germany), Neurath, Šmeral (Czechoslovakia), Kolarov, Vladetić (Balkans), Tranmael, Höglund, Scheflo (Scandinavia), Maciejewski (Poland), Aoki (Japan), Pollitt (Britain), Gennari, Saitta (Italy), Laukki (Finland), Shatskin (Youth International).

Elected to the commission on the fifth agenda point, 'Limits of Centralism in the International', were the following comrades: Bukharin, Zinoviev, Radek, Pyatakov (Russia), Zetkin and, as alternates, Hoernle (Germany), Kolarov (Bulgaria), Šmeral (Czechoslovakia), MacManus (Britain), Kuusinen (Finland), Urbani (Italy), Souvarine (France), Katayama (Japan), Maciejewski (Poland), Shatskin (Youth International).

Elected to the commission on preparatory work for the Comintern programme were the following comrades: Bukharin, Radek, Pyatakov, Trotsky (Russia), Šmeral (Czechoslovakia), Kuusinen (Finland), Falk (Norway), Kolarov (Balkans), MacManus (Britain), Zetkin (Germany), Maciejewski (Poland), Gennari (Italy), Katayama (Japan), and Varga.

For point 8 of the agenda, 'Issues concerning the sections', the following commissions were established:

*Italy:* Souvarine (France), Trotsky, Lunacharsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin (Russia), Zetkin, Böttcher (Germany), Beuer (Czechoslovakia), Kolarov (Bulgaria), Koritschoner (Austria), Amter (United States), Falk (Norway), Schüller (Youth International), Krajewski (Poland), Aoki (Japan), Rákosi, Manuilsky.

*Balkans:* Neurath, Šmeral (Czechoslovakia), Frey (Austria), Gennari (Italy), Hoernle (Germany), Lévy (France), Gallacher (Britain), Radek, Piatnitsky (Russia), Scheflo (Norway), Kolarov (Bulgaria), Michalec (Youth International), Vladetić (Yugoslavia).

*Austria:* Neurath (Czechoslovakia), Walcher (Germany), Wieser (Switzerland), Vladetić (Balkans), Radek, Piatnitsky (Russia), Höglund (Sweden), Gyptner (Youth International), Jansen (Netherlands), Gramsci (Italy), Lozovsky (Russia).

*Switzerland:* Stewart (Britain), Walcher (Germany), Neurath (Czechoslovakia), Stirner (South America), Lozovsky (Russia), Negri (Italy).

*Netherlands:* Hofmo (Norway), Manner (Finland), Radek (Russia), MacManus (alternate: Jackson) (Britain), Zetkin (Germany), René (France), Trachtenberg (United States), Stuchka (Latvia).

*Denmark:* Kobetsky, Pyatakov (Russia), Manner (Finland), Ström, Tranmael, Scheflo (Scandinavia), Jansen (Netherlands), Stuchka (Latvia), Ewert (Germany), Krajewski (Poland), Ivon Jones (South Africa).<sup>3</sup>

*Cooperatives:* Khinchuk, Meshcheriakov (Russia), Serra (Italy), Zápotocký (Czechoslovakia), Hoernle (Germany), Lévy (France).

*Women question:* Kuusinen (Finland), Kolarov (Balkans), Zetkin (Germany), Smidovich, Piatnitsky (Russia), Neurath (Czechoslovakia).

*(The conference proceeds to the first agenda point, and Zinoviev takes the floor.)*

### Report of the Executive Committee and Presidium

**Grigori Zinoviev:** Six months have gone by since the last congress. There is much that we understand better now. New political questions have arisen. We must examine to what degree the decisions of the Fourth Congress were correct and how they were carried out. The economic situation has shifted in the capitalists' favour in a number of countries. The United States is experiencing a boom; there has been an improvement in Britain and France; Central Europe is still shattered, as before; a crisis is beginning in Japan. The international situation is dominated at present by the tension between Britain and Russia. The new turn in Britain occurred not because Russia grew weaker, but because of its growing strength. The capitalists were mistaken regarding the New Economic Policy.<sup>4</sup> They thought it was the beginning of our capitulation, that the Communists would set their course toward their own destruction. But our situation improved. Russian grain appeared on the world market. Never before have we enjoyed such undivided support from the workers as now. This may well mark a new chapter in the capitalist states' attitude to us.

Fascism is on the march. We have just experienced the events in Bulgaria.<sup>5</sup> The king provides legal cover for the putsch. This can happen in any reversal in which the king is 'erroneously' not removed. We need to examine fascism from

3 The German text erroneously identifies Jones as being from 'South America'. The text here is in accord with the version in *Inprecorr*.

4 For the New Economic Policy in Soviet Russia, see p. 201, n. 4.

5 A reference to the right-wing coup against the government of Aleksandar Stamboliyski of the Bulgarian National Agrarian Union that occurred three days earlier, with the support of King

an economic point of view. You cannot stick every development under a single hat. Fascism in Italy is going through a transformation. The danger of war has grown, and the situation could become acute overnight.

The unification of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals has taken place in Hamburg.<sup>6</sup> Is it really necessary to debate with these people? Even from a reformist point of view, the new International has failed. It has no line. It contains only two parties of any importance, the German Social Democracy and the [British] Labour Party. There was a time when Kautsky was against accepting the Labour Party into the Second International. Has the party become any better in the interim? No! But the Second International has become worse. That is why the Labour Party can call the tune there. The Second International's organisational statutes bar governmental ministers from belonging to its Executive. That is, they say to the minister: when you become a thief, you cannot belong to our honourable association, but when you are let out of prison you can belong to it again.

These people do not need any International. What they need is to put on a show internationally. Will this make an impression? Will the meeting in Hamburg strengthen the forces of our opponents in any way? Perhaps yes, in some countries and for a quite short time. Some of our French friends say that the Hamburg Congress could perhaps have a certain impact on some of the backward workers. Please bear in mind the unification of the Social Democrats in Germany.<sup>7</sup> Then too some comrades exaggerated the importance of this unification, believing that it represented almost a new epoch of the German workers' movement and would significantly increase the Social Democrats' power. Hardly a year later, everyone recognises that this unification did not strengthen German Social Democracy in the slightest, but rather weakened it. The crisis within German Social Democracy was never so great as it is now. German Social Democracy now calls almost no mass meetings. Its activity in the Reichstag is similarly unusually bland. It even lacks the unfortunate consistency that these

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Boris III. A separate report and resolution on the Bulgarian coup is presented in Session 15 of this plenum. See pp. 637–49.

- 6 The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals fused at a congress in Hamburg 21–25 May 1923. The merged organisation was known officially as the Labour and Socialist International. For the German-language proceedings of the Hamburg Congress, see Labour and Socialist International 1923.
- 7 The SPD and the rump USPD (the minority that had opposed unification with the Communists in October 1920) held a joint congress in Nuremberg on 24 September 1922 to fuse their two parties. Initially calling itself the United Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the fused party soon reverted to calling itself the SPD.

people displayed when they were more unified internally. I am convinced that we will now see the same phenomenon on an international scale.

Even in Hamburg, during the congress itself, the few participants that still possessed a spark of honesty made no secret of the fact that the Second International has no future. In terms of the interests of our Communist parties, it is a gain for us that the Two-and-a-Half International no longer exists as an independent organisation. The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals apparently came together in Hamburg with the specific purpose of speeding up the process of internal decay taking place in their ranks.

These six months have clearly demonstrated that there is no International other than the Communist International. We do not yet have the majority of the world's working class. That is unfortunately a fact. Still, if there is any international workers' association that is honestly working to unite our forces internationally, it is solely the Third International. It is enough to think of the farce that took place in The Hague, where the Amsterdamers competed in shamelessness with the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.<sup>8</sup>

It is sufficient to compare this to the two conferences that we held in Essen and Frankfurt to take up the Ruhr question.<sup>9</sup> The fact is that for the first time

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8 An International Peace Congress was held in The Hague 10–15 December 1922. The congress was organised by the Amsterdam International, together with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, to discuss how the international working class could combat the dangers of a new imperialist war. The meeting was attended by some 700 delegates representing trade unions, cooperative societies, Socialist parties, and pacifist organisations. Radek, Kollontai, and Lozovsky attended as representatives of trade unions in the Soviet Union.

9 The Essen Conference took place 6 January 1923 in Essen, Germany, to oppose the imminent French invasion of the Ruhr. Attending it were the Communist parties of France, Germany, Britain, Belgium, Italy, Holland, and Czechoslovakia, along with the Communist Youth and the RILU. The conference formed an International Action Committee and called for French workers to actively protest the invasion, as well as encouraging propaganda work within the French occupation army.

The Frankfurt Conference took place in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, on 17–20 March 1923. The meeting was held to discuss the French occupation of the Ruhr, and the fight against war and fascism. The nearly 250 delegates included representatives from Germany, France, Italy, Britain, Soviet Russia, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria, Bulgaria, India, and Switzerland. In addition to Communist parties, there were representatives from unions and other workers' organisations. Although the SPD and USPD leaderships turned down a request to participate, 29 representatives from local units of these parties did so. Representatives from the ECCI, the Communist Youth International, and the RILU also attended. The conference elected an International Action Committee of 21 members, and called for mass demonstrations and revolutionary action in the fight against war and fascism.

since the war, two great parties in the heart of Europe – the German and the French Communist parties – were not only in principled agreement but were working hand-in-hand to carry out a great political campaign in practice. This campaign was not strong enough; we did not succeed in beating down the bourgeoisie. We were not able to carry out a major strike or even a major demonstration, but nonetheless the fact should not be underestimated that two large Communist parties worked together hand-in-hand at a decisive moment with the full support of Soviet Russia. I am convinced that many honest Social-Democratic workers who followed this gained the impression for the first time that our international organisation is the only one making efforts to organise the international struggle against the bourgeoisie. At a moment when two large European powers were seizing each other by the throat, two large Communist parties of these countries were collaborating in full fraternal solidarity. This can be called, with no exaggeration, a great historical achievement. It shows that our International is the only vehicle of struggle of the international proletariat.

These events also brought to light other factors showing that the Communist International is really beginning to become a unified Communist world party. What does that mean – a world party? It absolutely does not mean, as a few scattered comrades suppose, the liquidation of our national parties. No, it means only that at moments when history demands truly international action, the Communist International will organise this as a unified party. It means that at such moments the Communist International will bring its parties together and direct their energies in a manner consistent with the demands of the international struggle. I do not want to spend too much time on this question and will therefore not claim that the historic struggle carried out by the German and French Communist parties during the months of the Ruhr crisis showed that we already have a Communist world party. What it did show, however, is that we definitely already have the beginnings of such a Communist world party. At an important historical turning point, we threw the full weight of our international organisation onto the scales. That is a fact.

The bourgeoisie is not at all hesitant to act as a unified class. That was shown most clearly by the German bourgeoisie in connection with the Ruhr crisis.<sup>10</sup> Let me remind you of the recent events and the notorious manifesto of representatives of the German bourgeoisie, which recalled the 'glorious' tradition of Thiers. This was an appeal to the French bourgeoisie to come to the aid of

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10 On 11 January 1923 sixty thousand French and Belgian troops invaded and occupied the Ruhr region of Germany – the centre of its steel and coal production – in an attempt to exact war reparations following Germany's failure to pay them under the terms of the Versailles Treaty. The occupation lasted into 1925.

their German relatives by sending troops, just as the Versailles butcher Thiers did in the past.<sup>11</sup> Yes, comrades, when the bourgeoisie appeals to the traditions of a Thiers, it is hardly a crime for us to recall the best traditions of the First International.<sup>12</sup> In the coming stage we must concentrate our forces more and more and act in the same way as a united, Communist world party.

[*The United Front*]<sup>13</sup>

Let us move on to the question of united-front policy. In my opinion we have already overcome the difficulties and obstacles that stood in the way of carrying out this policy. Consider what is happening now in the French workers' movement. Not only our Communist friends but also the revolutionary syndicalists are now carrying out the united-front policy eagerly and energetically. That is truly cause for satisfaction. The very comrades who only a few months ago wanted to throw out the entire united-front policy have now learned to apply it in outstanding fashion.

In my view, there is still a principled question in this field that needs to be clarified. This question is often formulated by our friends as follows: What is the united front? Is it merely a tactical manoeuvre, or does it represent a sincere desire for unification with the Social-Democratic workers? In my opinion it is wrong to pose the question in this way. However, in order to clear the final obstacles from the path of carrying out this policy, the present session of the Enlarged Executive Committee must take up this question in full and clarify it.

What is actually the purpose of the united-front policy? Is it merely a tactical manoeuvre or does it represent a sincere effort to unite with the Social-Democratic workers? We reply to this question with another question: During the first years of the Comintern's activity, during 1918–19, was there anyone among us who did not sincerely strive for a rapprochement and alliance with the Social-Democratic workers? No, not at all. From the very first day of the Communist International's existence, we all intervened consistently for unity with the Social-Democratic and non-party workers.

Now a further question: Did we then introduce the united-front policy during the years 1920 and 1921? No, we did not do this. If you take the first period

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11 Radek's report on the world political situation in Session 7 discusses in detail the appeal made by German bourgeois officials for French assistance in suppressing the working class. See pp. 490–1.

12 The First International (International Workingmen's Association), led by Marx and Engels, had campaigned in defence of the Paris Commune and in solidarity with the victims of the counterrevolutionary terror.

13 Subheadings in this report have been supplied by the editor.

of the Comintern's existence as representing, for example, the period up to and including the Second Congress, you see that our approach was this: Yes to a rapprochement and alliance with the Social-Democratic workers; no to the united-front policy.

What does this tell us? It shows that the question is quite a different one. It is not an issue of whether we have sincerely sought a rapprochement with the Social-Democratic workers. We always strove for that and we will always seek it. The simple reason for this is that we always seek the unification and consolidation of the entire working class, which is the only serious precondition for us to achieve the reality of victory.

What, then, is the united-front tactic? What is new in this policy that we began to prepare in 1921, formulated in 1922, and now, in 1923 are pursuing full speed ahead? What new element was added to it? What was added is something that we can call a tactical manoeuvre. Here it is necessary above all to go into the question of 'masses and leaders'. With regard to the Social-Democratic, syndicalist, and non-party masses of workers, we were always in favour – from the first days of the Communist International's existence – of a rapprochement and alliance with these masses in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. As for the leaders of the Social-Democratic parties, however, we have in reality carried out a turn on this question, a turn that has arisen fully and entirely from the overall relationship of forces. What is at issue here?

In a word, here is what is at stake: Up to and during the Second Congress we were all full of hope that the proletarian revolution would proceed significantly faster, that it would be much stronger because of the disintegration of bourgeois society brought about by the war, that the revolutionary mood of the masses, their impatience, their anger would make it possible for us to appeal to the masses directly, over the heads of the Social-Democratic leaders, drawing the masses to us in a struggle against the bourgeoisie. That was our hope. That determined the line of the Communist International up to the Second Congress. This was not a mere fancy; our hope rested on many facts in the situation of that time.

But what happened was quite different. Following the Second Congress, a different point of view gained ground in our ranks. We saw that the process was not taking place that quickly. The anger of the masses was great, but still this mood was ebbing. It became clear that the bourgeoisie was still firmly in the saddle and that the Social Democracy was based on much broader masses than we had supposed. In a word, it became clear that the world revolution was developing much more slowly than we had hoped. And in view of all this, we had to set aside our hope that we could appeal to the Social-Democratic working masses over the heads of their leaders.

One thing remained unchanged for us: We had to achieve at all costs close relations with the Social-Democratic workers. But we concluded that the means to achieve this goal must change. It would not be possible for us to draw the Social-Democratic masses to us over the heads of their leaders. We therefore had to seek to expose these leaders in the eyes of the masses. We must proceed against these leaders step by step, perhaps for years, and then we will reach the point where a large proportion of Social-Democratic workers finally recognise what these Social-Democratic leaders really represent. And that provided the impulse for this new policy of the united front.

What was then the nature of this tactical manoeuvre? It consists of continually appealing to people, although we know from the outset that they do not want to go with us and cannot do so. We appeal to the Social-Democratic central committees, and we must do so. In doing this, we are well aware that these Social-Democratic general staffs do not want to enter into a struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie and will not unite with us. If anyone has the slightest doubts on this point, these are clearly disproven by what took place after Hamburg. The tactical manoeuvre consists, in a word, in appealing to the political command of the Social Democracy, although we know very well that this command is, in reality, pursuing quite different goals and does not want to fight together with us. That is the situation.

This is why I say that posing the question as to whether the united-front policy is a tactical manoeuvre or a sincere desire for unification with the Social-Democratic workers is clumsy and wrong. We wanted to unite with every Social-Democratic worker in struggle against the bourgeoisie and we still do. But to achieve this, given the relationship of forces since around 1921, we must turn to the Social-Democratic central committees, to the Social-Democratic leaders, even though we know very well that these people do not want to struggle against the bourgeoisie. That is the tactical manoeuvre in the strict sense of the word.

Is a tactical manoeuvre of this type a permissible means of struggle? Is it morally permissible? Is it acceptable? There is not a single serious Communist who will say that it involves anything impermissible. It is nothing more than one of the means of organising the working class. Our class is strong enough numerically to win the struggle, and its failure to do so up to this point is due entirely to the fact that the influence of Social Democracy in the proletariat is still so strong.

At this point some comrades may say, 'Yes, that may well be true. But why do we need to say that out loud and thus make the struggle of the Social-Democratic leaders against us that much easier?' Comrades, I am unconditionally in favour of every ruse of war in the struggle against an irreconcil-

able enemy, but only provided that it does not demoralise our own army. Take for example the French Communist Party. As you recall, until quite recently there was enormous confusion around the united-front question in this party. Could the crisis in the French party be overcome? Could this party be put back on its feet politically and shown the correct path? We had to say not only to the leaders of this party but also to the French workers, including the syndicalists, that our aim was to win over the Social-Democratic workers and to expose the Social-Democratic leaders to them as, in reality, followers of the bourgeoisie and not the working class. That's why we turned to people like Renaudel and Jouhaux. If we had left any of this unspoken, if we had failed to explain the entire significance of the united front to the French comrades, we would not have won the French Communists and even less the French syndicalists for the united-front policy. That applies not only to France but to all workers who are with us. We cannot take even a single step without the Social-Democratic leaders attempting to slander us with lies, distorting the meaning of our actions. For that reason alone, we must not shy away from explaining our tactical manoeuvre fully and directly. The conscious minority that stands with us must understand the path in its entirety; otherwise we will never win a majority.

And that is not all. We must not overlook the dangers that are linked to the united-front policy. We spoke of that back in 1921 in our initial theses.<sup>14</sup> In my opinion, the more success we have in realising the united-front policy and the deeper we now penetrate the Social-Democratic masses, the greater these dangers will be. We must not shrink back from this. Boldly forward, into the broadest masses! We have nothing to fear. Our parties have already learned a great deal in this arena, but we should not forget the dangers. Not long ago, Comrade Trotsky wrote the following in an article entitled, 'Attentiveness to Questions of Theory':

The united-front policy and the struggle for transitional demands now being taken up by the Communist International is absolutely necessary for the Communist parties in bourgeois states in the present preparatory period. But we must not close our eyes to the fact that this policy holds unquestionable dangers that the Communist parties may lose their cutting edge and even degenerate completely if the preparatory period stretches out too long, and if the daily work of the parties in the West is

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14 See point 21 of the ECCI theses on pp. 262–3.

not stimulated by active theoretical work that embraces the dynamics of the underlying historical forces in their full magnitude.<sup>15</sup>

That is entirely correct. I endorse every word in this passage. The dangers flowing from the united-front policy are great and will become even greater as we press forward. We are very often asked, 'Why do you talk so much about a tactical manoeuvre; why reveal our secrets to the enemy? Why not avoid the Social-Democratic leaders and avoid revealing our secrets?' Comrades who talk like that have no conception of what is actually involved. Once again: don't overlook the dangers tied in with the united-front policy. The policy itself is correct beyond any doubt. It is characteristic of this entire period. However, the dangers of losing our edge and even of degeneration of our parties absolutely do exist. We said that in 1921, and we must repeat it today.

It is quite understandable psychologically that comrades who carry great practical responsibility and are engaged in daily small battles with the Social-Democratic leaders are inclined to gloss over the fact that our present policy has a tactical nature – like a manoeuvre – and assume that it is better to keep silent about this side of the question.

Let me reveal to you a little secret, comrades. Many of our good friends, even in the German party, suspect that I, rogue that I am, talk so much about the tactical side of the matter because I am really a hidden opponent of the united-front policy. That of course is ridiculous. I am absolutely in favour of the policy; I refer you to my theses of 1921. At the time, to be sure, I did have some reservations. In 1921 much was not yet clear. The transitional periods from the Second to the Third Congress and from the Third to the Fourth Congresses were not easy. At the time, we all hoped that we could vanquish the bourgeoisie immediately and bring the Social-Democratic workers to us over the heads of their leaders. Yes, the transition was difficult. We had to go through an intense struggle with ourselves. But already at the Third Congress the matter was settled. Now, however, there can no longer be any wavering regarding the effectiveness of the united-front policy. Still, we must be aware of the fact that when we appeal directly to the Scheidemanns and Renaudels, it is not because we have the slightest belief in these people. Rather we do this as a

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15 The article by Trotsky that Zinoviev quotes from, dated 4 May 1923, was included as an introduction to *Problems of the International Proletarian Revolution*, and can be found in Trotsky's *Sochineniya*, vol. 12. (The article is available online in Russian at <http://www.magister.msk.ru/library/trotsky/trotm221.htm>) Thanks to Daniel Gaido for research assistance.

working-class vanguard in order to carry out our task with respect to the rear-guard and show the workers, through a living example, the reality of leaders such as Scheidemann and Renaudel. The main factor here is that these people actually do still have the support of significant masses.

Let us consider Hamburg once again. When you consider what happened there, you can only wonder how it is possible that even now significant masses are running after this shabby gang of racketeers. That is exactly why explaining the influence of these Social-Democratic leaders is no small matter; it's a learning process. When we talk of tactical manoeuvres, this is not in the sense of something petty or fraudulent or, as Marx once said, something dirty-Jewish.<sup>16</sup> It involves a broadly conceived political manoeuvre by the vanguard of the world proletariat. There is nothing here that is unnecessary, artificial, or petty. Our comrades and front-line workers who have to cope with the Social Democrats must accept it as part of the bargain that when we invite them to join a united front, these people will respond with quotes from the speeches of Comrade Lenin and other of our leaders commenting about how for us the united-front policy includes elements of a tactical manoeuvre. Our answer is quite simple. Tell these gentlemen that in the end everything depends on them. All they have to do is accept our proposal, and by that act alone our manoeuvre is wholly undone. They need only join with us in realising the united front, and they will then have no need to talk about manoeuvres.

But we absolutely must not fail to show our own comrades the dangers that are linked to the present policy. Let me say again that we would never have won over the revolutionary syndicalists of France to our side without laying out the entire line of march from the first step to the last. Now, however, we have won them. And that is a great success, which has historic significance. The best forces of French syndicalism are working side by side with us to carry out the united front. These are the same comrades who not so long ago still viewed the united front as a fundamental expression of parliamentarism and diplomacy. Now, however, they have recognised this to be a matter not of petty diplomacy but of tactics for the world proletarian vanguard. And when they realised this,

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16 A reference to Marx's 'Theses on Feuerbach'. In the first thesis, Marx states: 'In *The Essence of Christianity*, [Feuerbach] therefore regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and defined only in its dirty-Jewish form of appearance. Hence he does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary", of "practical-critical", activity.' (In *MECW*, 5, p. 6.) Marx's reference to Jews counterposes the economic ('practical') role to which Jews had been relegated for over a millennium – involved in such 'dirty' matters as merchant trade and moneylending – with the more exalted ('theoretical') tenets of religion.

the most serious forces among the syndicalist workers thought, 'Well, why not? Let's go with the Communists.' In a war like the one we are waging against the bourgeoisie and their agents, tactics are absolutely necessary.

So you see, this question is closely tied to that of the problem of 'masses and leaders'. Understanding that point removes the final obstacles in the path of carrying out the policy successfully.

Even during the Fourth Congress we foresaw and predicted that our Profintern would score significant victories. This prediction has been borne out. Everyone now sees the Profintern advancing from success to success. However, please recall, comrades, that hardly a year ago a current appeared in the ranks of our best German comrades that held the Profintern to have been born prematurely.<sup>17</sup> Forming our own international trade-union organisation was an error, they said, and the Profintern should be wound down. Now, after a short period of development, we see that the Profintern has become the first bulwark of communism. The recent international conference of transport workers was an unquestionable success.<sup>18</sup> The Profintern's recent successes are due to the fact that Social-Democratic masses who still formally adhere to the old party are already with us in spirit. These Social-Democratic workers still lack determination, unity, and the revolutionary energy that often arises from the desperation that characterises critical revolutionary situations. They are still biding their time, hesitating, and wavering. They still believe it possible to achieve something along the old, worn-out Social-Democratic path. But their hearts are already more with us, and they become more convinced every day of the correctness of our position. I believe that events in the international movement will soon permit us all to experience the truth of the Marxist philosophical thesis that 'quantity changes to quality'. Such a time is approaching. No one is able to say how far away it is in terms of months or years. Still, the ferment is now clearly under way within the Social Democracy, and the time is no longer distant when it will lead to completely new and extremely important events. One of these days we will see entire sections of the Social-Democratic party breaking loose and entire trade-union federations coming over to us. Current developments are driving toward this day. And at a certain moment we will achieve these successes relatively easily, like ripe fruit falling to the ground.

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17 For the view that the RILU had been created prematurely, see p. 189–90, n. 6.

18 On 23–24 May 1923, representatives of the International Transport Workers' Federation – affiliated with the Amsterdam International – met in Berlin with the All-Russian Trade Union of Railway Workers, Transport Workers and Seamen to discuss organising a united front against fascism and reaction.

There is no doubt that the united-front policy is correct. We must continue to apply it. It has already achieved positive results in various countries. As the condition of Social Democracy becomes more desperate and the wavering in its ranks grows more marked, we will carry through our policy all the more firmly, consistently, and energetically. We already see that the Amsterdamers' executive committee is locked in a tedious debate over whether Fimmen should be expelled or not.<sup>19</sup> We note that different groups among the Amsterdamers had to agree on a meaningless resolution because they did not dare take up the Berlin decision of the international transport workers' conference and reject it. All this indicates that the disintegration of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals has entered a decisive phase. This indicates that we must be all the more decisive and consistent in carrying through the united-front policy.

Let me now address the situation in the most important sections.

[*France*]

The French party has experienced a significant recovery since the Fourth Congress.<sup>20</sup> It had to undergo serious surgery, but this showed that the core of the party was healthy. The party has firmed up; its membership has increased; its press has grown. However, the party is still lacking with regard to the correct method of initiating political campaigns. It does not display sufficient political initiative, energy, and understanding in this regard. As Communists we are very impatient. We do not have a great deal of time. Our French comrades must hasten to make good what they have neglected in this regard.

I must also devote some comments to certain childhood diseases of the French party, and specifically with regard to so-called 'worker imperialism'. I do not know if you are aware that one of our best friends in France has discovered the existence of 'worker imperialism'. When our friend Bukharin made use of some 'offensive' formulations in a speech at the Fourth Congress, the entire international Social-Democratic press began a fierce and raging cam-

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19 Eduard Fimmen, the secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam International), had advocated more aggressive working-class opposition to the Ruhr occupation, supporting united-front actions and collaboration with the Soviet trade-union movement. Fimmen's position led to calls for his dismissal by right-wing forces within the Amsterdam International, and he was forced to resign in November 1923.

20 The Comintern's Fourth Congress devoted two sessions to the French question (sessions 28 and 29), with Trotsky as reporter. Coming out of this, the congress adopted several resolutions that went over specific steps the French party needed to take. Its 'Organisational Resolution on the French Section' can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1013–16. The 'Political Resolution on the French Question' can be found on pp. 1123–32.

paigned against 'Bukharin, the red imperialist'.<sup>21</sup> This led to two reactions. Some of our comrades remained excessively quiet about this campaign. In France, by contrast, we witnessed the opposite extreme, in the person of Comrade Treint. In response to the social patriots' demagogic manoeuvre, Comrade Treint declared that – why not? – we are not only for Bukharin's policy on offensives but we are also for 'worker imperialism'.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly, this 'discovery' comes close to the realm of leftist disorders. It consists of saying that it is quite legitimate to use force against the bourgeoisie until it has been defeated internationally. But we have long possessed another term to express this notion, namely, the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Unfortunately, however, Comrade Treint insisted on the term 'worker imperialism' and attempted to demonstrate that a theoretical question was at stake here. He attempted in all seriousness to convince us that the best traditions of Guesdism, Marxism, Bolshevism, and Communism demanded precisely this 'worker imperialism'.

As you can well imagine, comrades, this business of 'worker imperialism' was grist to the mill of the French bourgeois press for many months. Despite his best intentions, Comrade Treint himself made the struggle of our opponents against us that much easier. I hope that Comrade Treint, now that he is out of prison and is once again breathing fresh air, will break with this false conception. There is not and cannot be any worker imperialism. What we are fighting for is the dictatorship of the proletariat. Why would we have any need of this accursed word 'imperialism', which reeks of blood? It belongs not to us but to the bourgeoisie.

As for the practical implementation of the united front in France, some shadings of opinion have become apparent in the party, quite similar to the dispute over tactical manoeuvres or the sincere desire to move closer to the Social-Democratic workers of which I spoke previously. Disconcerting as it may be, the

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21 In his report to the Fourth Congress on the question of the Comintern's programme, Bukharin had insisted that, 'We should establish in our programme that every proletarian state has the right to red intervention.' See Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 496–7.

22 Albert Treint, a leader of the French CP, had formulated this concept in an article published in *L'Humanité* on 5 January 1923 entitled 'Socialisme de guerre et communisme de guerre'. He wrote: 'The Red Army is not a national army; the Red Army is a class army, the army of the working class. Like the working class, it does not know borders. Imperialism, yes! To conquer the means of labour, the factories, the mines, the steel mills. ... Imperialism, yes! To give the wealth to the workers, the class that produces the wealth. Imperialism, yes: worker imperialism, red imperialism. What is communism ... if not worker imperialism conquering all the world's wealth from the parasites.'

same Comrade Treint who has the honour of discovering worker imperialism is also making another error. He asserts that if we propose a united front with the French Social Democrats, we cannot at the same time polemicise against them sharply. The question was somewhat unexpectedly raised in the ranks of the French comrades of whether the united-front policy could be combined with discourteous polemics against the social patriots. I do not know whether this seemingly straightforward issue involves something serious or whether the disagreements are only a minor matter.

By and large, however, we have every reason to congratulate our French sister party on its successes. The difficulties that the French Communist Party had to overcome were monumental. Let us not forget that many recognised leaders of the party's earlier period went over into the enemy camp. Let us also not forget that the overall situation in France is not very favourable for communism. Frossard and company walked out of the party through one door<sup>23</sup> at the very moment that the best figures of revolutionary syndicalism, led by Comrade Monatte, came in through the other. This is not a matter of individual figures but of something far more important. We certainly hope that this process of recovery will be concluded rapidly, and that we will soon have a large party in France that is truly capable of struggle.

### [Germany]

Now a few words regarding our German party. You have read in the press that an important conference took place recently between German Communists and the Comintern Executive Committee.<sup>24</sup> This conference made a series of extremely important decisions, which had already been approved by the Communist Party Zentrale. In my opinion, the comrades that still doubt whether we really need a unified and centralised world party should be persuaded by the example of Germany. The German Communist Party is large, embracing at least a quarter million members. This party is growing larger with every day

23 Frossard's letter of resignation from the CP was published in *Le Populaire*, 4 January 1923. He went on to help found the Socialist-Communist Union.

24 The KPD's response to the Ruhr occupation and the intensification of the class struggle in Germany in 1923 served to heat up a factional conflict within the party, between its majority and a leftist opposition. To counter the danger of a split, the ECCI convened a three-day conciliation conference in Moscow in May 1923. Brandler and Böttcher attended from the party leadership; Ruth Fischer, Arkadi Maslow, Ernst Thälmann, and Gerhard Eisler represented the opposition. Zinoviev, Trotsky, Bukharin, and Radek attended from the ECCI. A resolution agreed to by all sides at this meeting was published in *Die Rote Fahne*, 13 May 1923, and can be found in IML-SED 1966b, VII/2, pp. 301–9.

and is more and more a political force of the first rank not only in Germany but in Europe as a whole. This party, founded by such outstanding fighters as Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, has a heroic tradition, of which the entire International can be proud. And this party does not consider it to be in any sense demeaning, in every case of serious disagreement, to send its representatives to the Comintern Executive Committee, requesting that it make the final decision.

So we ask: Is it good or bad to have an international proletarian organisation that can resolve disputes of this sort? The German party is literally under enemy fire. Given the present high degree of tension in Germany, it carries the greatest responsibility. It is unable to lose itself in years or even months of internal conflict. It has no right to do so. Does that mean it is bad to have a Communist International that can help the Communist Party of Germany in three days to dispose of serious disputes that the party, on its own, might take three years to resolve? Is it really bad when every Communist worker of Germany can say, with full conviction, that once decisions have been taken in Moscow through the Comintern Executive Committee, they embody the experience of the world's entire Communist proletariat? And say, further, that these decisions are therefore correct, and I voluntarily submit to them? (*Applause*)

[*Italy*]

I now come to Italy. Already during the Fourth Congress the Comintern Executive Committee understood that our main enemy in Italy was Mussolini. However, the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, led by Bordiga, took a different position. The Italian delegation maintained that the main enemy was not Mussolini but rather – as before – Serrati. We pointed out that the about-face in Serrati's stance was the result of a major evolution experienced by the Italian workers' movement.<sup>25</sup> We said that all our forces should reorganise in order to carry out the unification of the Communist Party with the best forces of the Socialist Party and then proceed as a common front in the struggle against fascism, against Mussolini. The response [from the PCI] was unchanged: Serrati is still the enemy and we will continue our previous struggle against the Socialist Party. Of course, said our friends including Com-

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25 The 'about-face' in the Italian SP, led by Serrati, was registered at the PSI's Nineteenth Congress in Rome held 1–3 October 1922. At that gathering, Turati's reformist faction was expelled by a vote of 32,106 to 29,119, thus eliminating a major obstacle to the party's rapprochement with the Comintern. Further, the congress declared itself in favour of unconditional affiliation to the Comintern and fusion with the PCI. This decision caused a crisis in the PCI, where most party leaders opposed such a fusion.

rade Bordiga, if you compel us to unify with the Socialists, we will of course be disciplined and not block this unification, but we will protest against it most energetically.

Comrades, we are all revolutionaries here, not bureaucrats. We are very well aware what is involved in the unification of two mutually hostile parties. It requires sincere desire. Mere 'discipline', without such an inner spirit, will not be capable of achieving such a unification. To carry it out successfully, you must understand why it is needed and work for it with a will. It was therefore clear from the start that we would encounter enormous obstacles in our path. Nonetheless, the Communist International decided that this unification should be carried out unconditionally, and that our forces should be quickly redeployed in order to take up a common struggle against fascism.

How, then, did events develop? The situation was such that not only a month but even a week counted for a great deal. However, our Italian comrades did not merely lose weeks; they lost precious months. They did literally nothing to carry out the decisions taken. Because of their sabotage, we had to delay comrades here for several months, and the unification did not take place. Indeed, in reality everything was done to prevent the Fourth Congress decisions from being carried out.<sup>26</sup>

Let me emphasise once again that the leading Italian Communists are very dear to us, speaking personally; they are all highly valued and excellent comrades, in terms of their personal devotion to the cause. Without any doubt, they are one of the best groups in the Communist International. They are splendid people, revolutionaries who do not shy away from any sacrifice. However, in terms of theory the dominant 'school' among them made very serious political errors from the start and continues even now along these lines. We saw this only too clearly, and it must be stated frankly that if things continue like this our Italian friends, despite their readiness for sacrifice and their great energy, will through their own efforts bring their party to destruction.

How did this situation come to be? At the very moment that the irreconcilable wing of the Italian Communists sabotaged unification with the Italian Maximalists,<sup>27</sup> the latter current's right wing did the same thing. Serrati was

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26 At the Comintern's Fourth Congress in November 1922, the fight for a PCI-PSI fusion was endorsed, and efforts were made to convince the PCI leadership to carry it out. The Fourth Congress resolution on this question can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1138–42.

27 Since before World War I, the majority in the PSI had been known as 'Maximalists' because of their insistence on the importance of the 'maximum' demands in the Social-Democratic programme dealing with the achievement of socialism.

jailed; there was a wave of white terror.<sup>28</sup> Under such circumstances, an ordinary worker could only conclude that if they joined with the Communists they would be immediately arrested or simply shot down. Given all this, the sincere supporters of the Communist International in the ranks of the Maximalists suffered defeat. *Avanti* is now in the hands of opponents of the Communist International. Nonetheless, at the Italian Socialists' last congress, supporters of the Comintern obtained 43 per cent of the votes, and their influence is growing day by day.<sup>29</sup> The question before us is: How do we proceed now? We will discuss that in detail in a special commission. I believe that we must above all create strict organisational guarantees that the Italian Communist Party will carry through the Comintern's decisions on unification with the Italian Socialists not only in a formal sense but in their essence.

When it became clear that enemies of the Comintern had obtained a momentary majority in the ranks of the Maximalists, we had to take a step backwards. Since it was not possible to carry out an immediate unification, we had to rest content with the proposal of a united front, the formation of common action committees, and the like. But at this precise moment our irreconcilable Italian Communists said no, we insist on the immediate implementation of the Fourth Congress decisions on unification. In other words, precisely at the moment when the unification became impossible, the Italian Communists turned into enthusiastic supporters of unification. It goes without saying that we cannot take this seriously. We must form a Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, whatever the cost, that will provide a genuine assurance that Comintern decisions will be carried out.

The second question, which is more difficult, is how we will relate to the present Socialist Party of Italy. Our Communist comrades criticise me personally for the fact that two months have now gone by since the Italian Maximalists' most recent congress, where Nenni and Vella won out, and the Comintern is still silent. They ask us what this silence signifies. Comrades, we were silent deliberately, because we wished to wait for the present plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee. It's not a simple matter. In terms of the political characteristics of individual leaders of the present majority in the Socialist Party of

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28 Serrati was arrested by the fascist regime on 1 March 1923.

The white terror in Italy consisted of widespread extralegal attacks on unions, workers' centres, labour newspapers, and individual workers' leaders. Eventually trade unions and the workers' movement were legally suppressed, with their leaders arrested.

29 The PSI's Twentieth Congress in Milan on 15–17 April 1923 rejected the perspective of fusion with the PCI, by a vote of 5,361 to 3,908.

Italy, we are well aware that they are principled opponents of the Comintern. They are centrists and semi-centrists. But there's more to it than that. The key point we must weigh is whether the recent Maximalist congress – representing a membership now reduced by the white terror to 9,000 – provides us with the final word regarding the Socialist Party. In my opinion, this is absolutely not the final word of the Socialist Party. It is only an episode in an extended and difficult struggle. It has resulted, firstly, from the major political errors committed by our Communist comrades, and secondly, from the impact of Mussolini's terror and the temporary discouragement among Socialist workers. We must not forget that, apart from Nenni and Vella, there are tens of thousands of Socialist workers who are with us body and soul.

For example, consider *Avanti*. I absolutely cannot imagine that the hundreds of worker groups that collect pennies at a time to print *Avanti* do so for the sake of the handsome faces of Nenni and company. On the contrary. They are accustomed to their newspaper and their party and are convinced that these are not in any way in conflict with the Comintern. We have no reason to hold Nenni in high regard, but we have every reason to respect and trust the Italian workers who are members of the Socialist Party. And that is why we should not accept the outcome of the recent Maximalist congress as their final word on the question. Let me say again: This is only an episode. All we need to do is to arm ourselves with patience and work diligently to carry out the policies of the Fourth Congress. What we earlier could have achieved in two months, if our Italian friends had not made such errors, will now take perhaps two years.<sup>30</sup>

Based on what I have said, it seems to me appropriate to admit the Italian Socialist Party to the Comintern, as it is, as a sympathising organisation. I am well aware that when many of our particularly impatient Italian Communists hear what I have just said, their hair will stand on end. Nonetheless, what I am proposing is inevitable and necessary. Even Nenni and Vella themselves secured the adoption at their recent congress of a resolution stating they are for the Third International in principle and only want to retain their old name of 'Socialist Party'. They do not want exaggerated centralism and demand broad autonomy in 'their' affairs, and so on. We know very well that these sentiments do not represent the real opinion of the PSI's present centrist leaders; in actuality they are resolute opponents of the Comintern. But they are forced to say these things because they know that the workers are on our side. The proposal that they join the Comintern as a sympathising party will compel the centrist leadership to show their true face. If they reject this, that is their problem. If

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30 The pro-Comintern wing of the PSI, led by Serrati, joined the Italian CP in August 1924.

they accept the proposal, then it is of course tied to the proposal for immediate formation of a united front with the Italian Communists enjoying the Comintern's moral support.

The practical steps of the PSI's present Central Committee leave no room for illusions. This group of 'me-too socialists' pushed things through the congress at a moment when our best comrades were in prison and the raging white terror was at its peak. They utilised their narrow majority to settle accounts with all supporters of the Comintern. They began by expelling the youth federation as a whole. And even though more than 40 per cent at the congress were Comintern supporters, not a single one of them was included in the Central Committee. That is telling evidence of how they utilise their majority, even if it consists of only 1½ votes. And these same people write about democracy, resisting exaggerated centralism, and so on. Nonetheless, we are making the proposal I just presented. Socialist workers will be unconditionally in favour of it. We can be confident in the outcome.

[*Norway*]

As you know, the Norwegian question played a rather substantial role at our Fourth Congress. We have viewed the Norwegian Labour Party as one of the Comintern's best proletarian parties, and we stand by this view. In terms of its composition, the party is, for the most part, a genuine workers' party. It holds the support of a majority of its country's working class, and it was one of the first parties to join the Communist International. Norwegian workers thereby rendered the International a great service. For this reason alone we consider it our duty to do everything we can to resolve the dispute, as much as possible, in a peaceful way.

We have sent a whole series of our best comrades to Norway in order to reach an understanding with the Norwegian comrades as rapidly as possible. Nonetheless, no such agreement has been reached. The Norwegian comrades have adopted, by a margin of two or three votes, a decision that in fact deviates from that of the Fourth Congress. Moreover, as principled opponents of centralism and eager partisans of inner-party democracy, they made immediate use of this vanishingly small two-vote majority to take a large number of decisive measures. Their party congress in Kristiania [Oslo] adopted an intemperate resolution in a quite federalist spirit, full of half-reformist concessions and half-syndicalist ideas.<sup>31</sup>

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31 The Norwegian Labour Party congress in Kristiania (Oslo) was held 24–28 February 1923.

What was then to be done? We had a thorough discussion, not once but many times. Let me reveal to you a secret. Personally, I was in favour of responding immediately with a public and rather severe criticism of the decisions taken in Kristiania. I even drafted a letter in this spirit, but the 'right wing' of our Executive Committee, with Comrade Bukharin in the lead (*Laughter*)<sup>32</sup> won agreement not to reject my draft outright but to postpone it for a time. Given that we were only one month away from the Enlarged Executive Committee plenum, I accepted the idea that it was better to wait. So I capitulated to the 'right wing', thinking, 'All right, it is better to wait.'

But seriously, comrades, the situation is simply intolerable. In fact, it is the first time that a large and major proletarian party has rejected the decisions of the Fourth Congress, even though it was well represented there. Moreover, it has done this demonstratively, in a resolution whose every sentence, from a Marxist point of view, is incorrect. That is no exaggeration. Every line of this resolution contains at least one blunder in matters of principle. The Norwegian majority is defending forces in the party that are hardly likely to stay long with the working class. I am thinking of the notorious *Mot Dag* group.<sup>33</sup> There are of course serious and sincere comrades in this group who are with us out of conviction, but there are also forces that strongly remind you of the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* hotshots – nothing less and nothing more. These people are beyond any doubt only sympathisers. You yourselves have read the article by Professor Bull in the third issue of our bulletin. You will all agree that this is anything but communism and Marxism.

The time has come to have a comradely discussion with our Norwegian friends. You are all familiar with the letter that the ECCI sent out in preparation for the present Enlarged Executive Committee plenum.<sup>34</sup> We have already

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The resolution referred to, adopted by a vote of 94 to 92, can be found on pp. 110–11 of the congress proceedings (Norwegian Labour Party 1923).

The Resolution on the Norwegian Labour Party approved by the Comintern's Fourth Congress can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1091–2.

32 The ironic laughter here resulted from the fact that Bukharin at the time had a reputation of being one of the most left-oriented leaders within the Comintern.

33 *Mot Dag* was a publication launched in September 1921. The group around it was initially independent of the Norwegian Labour Party, but its members – largely students and intellectuals – joined the party as a group in March 1922, raising criticisms of party and Comintern positions.

34 The Presidium's call for the Third Enlarged ECCI Plenum, listing the proposed agenda, was published in *Inprecorr*, 5 May 1923. The agenda point 'Discussion with the Scandinavian comrades re the limits of centralism within the Comintern', was 'necessitated by

talked of the limits of centralism and stated plainly that we are agreeable to making concessions on this question. We are fully aware that it is a very ticklish and difficult business. We are accused of mechanically applying to the Third International the organisational methods of the First International.<sup>35</sup> That is simply false. We have never said that. Certainly we want to carry over to the Third International the best revolutionary traditions of the First International. But it is of course impossible to mechanically imitate its organisational forms.

A genuinely centralist international organisation can be created only over years. This can be done, of course, only through the voluntary discipline that each party assumes. If it should turn out that, based on presentations by sincere and significant groups in different places, we have really gone too far toward centralism, I will be the first to say, 'Good, we will take a step backwards; we will proceed more slowly.' But this must be demonstrated in practice. The question was often posed in the ranks of the Norwegian and sometimes also the Swedish parties, as if the Fourth Congress's call to build a unified international Communist party meant nothing other than simply the destruction of the national parties. But that is total nonsense. Please tell us where it has happened that the Executive Committee intervened in a fashion that curtailed the freedom of action of any party. If anyone can point out a single incident of this type, I pledge in advance that we will admit our errors openly and propose a revision of the Fourth Congress decisions.

But I maintain that no one can point to a single case along these lines. It is absurd to talk in these terms. In fact, we have been too passive in giving leadership to the practical work of our sections. All the examples that have been singled out are trivial matters: that this or that reporter in this or that country

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the fact that the majority of the Norwegian and Swedish comrades are labouring under the misapprehension, that the decisions of the IV Congress imply some super-centralism which makes it impossible for the national Sections of the Comintern to settle their most important inter-Party questions with sufficient independence. Although these comrades represent only a very small minority in the Comintern, the latter will endeavour to convince them of the correctness of the decisions of the Congress. Moreover it does not raise the question with the object of arriving at new formal decisions, but only for the sake of discussion, hoping in that way to get rid of all misunderstandings.'

- 35 As Zinoviev stated at the Second Comintern Congress, 'The First International was a highly centralised institution. It even tried to lead every major economic strike from one centre.' In Riddell (ed.) 1991, *2WC*, 1, p. 294. Specifically, Zinoviev may be referring here to the decision of the First International's 1872 congress to give its General Council the power to suspend branches, sections, and federations up until the next world congress.

gave a stupid report. Such a thing may well be true, but does that really mean we do not need a Communist world party? No, comrades, it is absolutely necessary to have a Communist world party. We will struggle for it for years, and step by step we will bring it into existence.

I strongly request that the Norwegian and Swedish comrades who wish to make requests along these lines do so precisely and in writing, saying clearly exactly what they want to have changed. They should no longer permit individual comrades to mislead the worker masses by saying that the Comintern wants to destroy the individual national parties. This claim has sometimes been made in the Norwegian party press. Instead of promoting the grand concept of a unified Communist world party, attempts have been made there to discredit it. I ask you, comrades, is there really any idea that could possibly be more inspiring, attractive, and beautiful than that of forming a genuinely unified Communist world party? Surely one would think that this great and grand concept would exert a great attractive power on us all. I simply cannot understand why it has failed to score this success among some of our Norwegian comrades. What could they possibly find attractive, if not this concept?

Some of the Norwegian comrades are against the principle of electing the ECCI at the congress rather than composing it of delegates from the individual parties. As regards the practical side of the question, we can say with certainty that the composition of an Executive Committee elected at the congress itself will always coincide 90 per cent with one that is formed of delegates from the individual parties. No one can possibly demonstrate that election of our general staff by the congress is in itself impermissible. So I believe that the Norwegian comrades now owe us an explanation. They must say explicitly what changes they desire. That will indicate the scope of our disagreements.

[*Sweden*]

As for our Swedish comrades, we have disagreements with a section of this party roughly similar to those with the Norwegian party. There has not been any heated discussion, but there is no doubt that leaders of the Swedish party have committed the same error that we see in Norway.

As regards centralism, I have no cause to discuss this once again in relation to the Swedish party. But there is one question that I must take up specifically with regard to the report on our Swedish section. That is, strange as it may seem, the question of religion. Do not be surprised, comrades; things are often like that. You start by criticising super-centralism. You want to alter a little dot on the 'i' in the statutes. And suddenly things develop in such a fashion that you're discussing religion and the Lord God Himself. I have no idea why this happened, but precisely at this moment Comrade Höglund has written an article on 'Com-

munism and Religion'.<sup>36</sup> I tell you truly: if I did not know the comrade to be a veteran revolutionary Marxist of high merit, I would have assumed that he was really ridiculing the Communist Party.

Comrade Höglund puts forward in all seriousness the viewpoint that religion should be a private matter with regard not only to the state but also to the party. This issue was debated and resolved in the German Social Democracy fifteen years ago,<sup>37</sup> but for Comrade Höglund it has still not been resolved. I would have been very happy to read out the entire article for you, and I advise you all to read it. Then you will see what is at stake here.

Religion should be a private matter for the Communist Party. From a Marxist point of view, that is a glaring contradiction. In our Russian party we often expel individuals, even those who fought for five years on the front lines, simply because they were married in a religious ceremony. However, Comrade Höglund, an educated Marxist, writes curious articles of this sort.

I do not mean to imply that other parties should expel members who have not yet made a final break from religious prejudices. The Russian party exists in the special conditions of a besieged fortress. But to elevate religion into a private matter with regard to the party amounts to ridiculing the traditions of revolutionary Marxism. I could cite many statements of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and other teachers of ours, who express indignation and contempt for Social Democrats who defend the notion that religion is a private matter for the party. I will spare you these quotations, but surely it is part of communism's ABC to demand of the bourgeois government that religion be a private matter where the bourgeois state is concerned. In this we are pursuing political goals: we want to deprive the bourgeoisie of the possibility of utilising religion as a means of

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36 An English translation of Höglund's article can be found in Rosenberg 1990, pp. 236–8.

37 The expression that 'religion is a private matter' comes from the German SPD's 1891 Erfurt Programme, a document looked to by Marxists around the world in the years prior to the Russian Revolution. In response to opportunist interpretations of this statement at the time, Engels commented that religion was indeed a private matter, but only in relation to the state (Introduction to *The Civil War in France*, *MECW*, 27, p. 185). In Lenin's 1909 article, 'The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion' (*LCW*, 15, pp. 402–13), he elaborated on this question in response to a discussion that had arisen in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, pointing out, 'The opportunists distort the question to mean that the *Social-Democratic Party regards* religion as a private matter'.

It is unclear, however, which discussion in the German Social-Democratic Party Zinoviev is referring to that occurred in 1908. Debates touching on religion, secularisation of the state, and the SPD's materialist outlook took place at the 1908, 1909, and earlier SPD congresses, but these did not focus specifically on the question of the party's attitude to religion.

oppression against the working class. As for ourselves, however, as a Marxist party that stands on the foundation of historical materialism, we are obviously atheists. We do not permit any ill-considered campaign against the church, but we must obviously conduct methodical Marxist anti-religious and materialist propaganda. There is no doubt that this must be done in an extremely careful and skilled manner. Even today I must say to our Georgian comrades, 'Be patient. Why so fast? Why are you hurrying so excessively to close churches and monasteries in Georgia?'<sup>38</sup> You must carry out anti-religious propaganda much more skilfully and prudently than that.' Obviously we conduct propaganda differently in the city than we do in the village. But to elevate religion to a private matter vis-à-vis the party, that is simply outrageous.

I do not know whether this question is current in Sweden right now, and if so, to what extent. I find it completely incomprehensible what political goal Comrade Höglund intended to achieve through his article. If he thought that articles of this type would help to educate the Communist Youth of Sweden, well, I don't congratulate him for that. Let me say again that it is incomprehensible to me how he comes to pose the question this way. I merely note a simple fact. To start with, Comrade Höglund was somewhat discontented with our supposedly exaggerated centralism, and then this almost religious miracle takes place, and he publishes the article that I have cited. In my opinion we should wrap up this episode as quickly as possible and wipe it out of the International's memory.

### [*United States*]

Now a few words about our American party. During the Fourth Congress there was a big dispute over whether it should be legal or not. The dispute was intense. One wing of the American comrades accused the other of liquidationism because of their claim that a legal party was possible. The Comintern Executive Committee, after a detailed study of the question, spoke out in favour of creating a legal party in the United States.<sup>39</sup> Some months have now passed, and we can confirm with great satisfaction that this decision was absolutely correct. Today we have a legal workers' party in North America, the so-called

38 An anti-Soviet guerrilla revolt in Georgia in 1922 led to the closing of some 1,500 churches and monasteries as a measure of self-defence.

39 The discussion on this question at the Comintern's Fourth Congress can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 114, 215–16, and 259. A summary of the debate on the matter in the Fourth Congress's American Commission can be found in Palmer 2007, pp. 157–64. For a first-hand account of the commission debates, see Cannon 1973, pp. 64–72.

For the formation of the legal Workers Party of America, see p. 88, n. 2.

Workers Party, which has gained considerable influence among the working masses. Of course, we have no guarantee that comrades like Foster or Ruthenberg will not face prosecution or land in jail. Obviously, persecution will continue; there will be further losses. Nonetheless, we have succeeded in founding a legal party.

[*Japan*]

The same dispute has arisen in the Communist Party of Japan. Comrade Aoki, one of the best workers of Japanese communism's new generation, is present at this plenum. He agrees in principle with Katayama, but he has just arrived from Japan and therefore conveys a particularly precise picture of the currents within the Japanese Communist Party. At present we are in disagreement on the question just raised with this comrade and with a significant part of the Japanese party.

These comrades are convinced that only an illegal party can exist in Japan. They do not want to consider foundation of a legal party. The arguments we hear from them are quite the same as those voiced six months ago by a number of our best American comrades. I concede, of course, that we are much less familiar with conditions in Japan than Comrade Aoki. Nonetheless, we know that there is strong political ferment in Japan right now. A significant part of the bourgeoisie stands in sharp opposition to the prevailing regime. The concept of a rapprochement with Soviet Russia has become among the most popular ideas in Japan. One wage struggle follows another, and a giant strike wave surges across the country. Given all this, how can we suppose that an attempt at legalising the Communist movement is doomed to failure? I can hardly believe this to be true. We will therefore insist that our Japanese comrades turn their full attention to the experiences of the American party and make corresponding efforts to found a legal Communist Party in Japan.

*(The session adjourns for some minutes. When it reopens, Comrade Zinoviev continues as follows.)*

[*National Question*]

It is our intention to take up two questions in special detail. We believe that there are two questions in which the traditions of the Second International are still alive in the Third: These are the national question and that of our relationship to the peasantry. Even as late as the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of Russia,<sup>40</sup> we had to note that a piece of the Second International had

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40 The Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) was held in Moscow 17–25 April 1923.

carried over to the Third International on this question. We do not hesitate to say that. It seems a little strange, given that, as we all know, the Third International is none other than the antithesis of the Second International, its deadly enemy. But we must understand that the Third International did not fall from heaven all gift-wrapped. By and large it emerged from the womb of the Second International, primarily from the old Social-Democratic parties. So it is understandable that we have unfortunately taken over from these parties this or that bit of poison. We need to be alert regarding such ideological survivals from the Second International in order to wage a determined struggle against them and wipe them out in short order.

The Second International, as you know, recognised the concept of 'self-determination of the peoples', but only on paper. Its parties never interpreted this slogan in a truly revolutionary fashion. On the contrary, when the imperialist war began in 1914, they simply betrayed it. Our negative criticism in this regard is very strong, but as for carrying out the revolutionary position on the national question, our parties remain for the most part very weak. That does not mean that we need to add anything new, theoretically, to the resolutions of our Second Congress.<sup>41</sup> That is not the case. What we need is to really carry out in practice the decisions we have taken. Let me give you a few examples from our sections to show just how weak our propaganda is on the national question.

Consider first the *British party*. We are going to have a special British conference here whose aim is to energetically raise the level of our British comrades' work. When this meeting concludes, we will probably be able to hear a report from it. Our new British party still has many deficiencies, but its greatest political weakness, in my opinion, is found on the national question, where it is paying an excessive tribute to the traditions of the Second International. In a country like Britain, where the colonial and national question plays such a preeminent role, this is quite impermissible. Consider India; consider Ireland. Our British party is not carrying out any spirited propaganda on these two essential questions. From time to time we read an article about them in the British Communist press, or we encounter this or that memorandum, but we do not come upon any vigorous political campaign, any genuine understanding in this field. Indifference, passivity, and in the best of cases verbal radicalism: these are the characteristics of our British party's work in this regard. The hot blood of communism is not yet flowing in its veins. The British Communist

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41 The 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions' adopted by the Comintern's Second Congress can be found in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 1, pp. 283–90.

Party must finally learn to grasp that such a stand on the colonial and national question is nothing other than a survival of the Second International.

Now let's take the *German party* and examine its stance on the Ruhr question, as it is posed at present. There the national question is one of the most important points in dispute between the party majority and the so-called left opposition.<sup>42</sup> This has not been sufficiently discussed. But anyone who delves into these matters finds that the national question forms the background to a variety of disputes. The party did not venture to stress the Communist interpretation of the so-called national factor at a moment when the impotence of the bourgeois government was plain to see. It is particularly necessary to have the courage at such a moment to say forcefully that we Communists are against the bourgeois fatherland, but if we achieve a socialist government, we will defend this socialist fatherland. If necessary, we will defend the interests of this socialist fatherland through a revolutionary war. If we do not have the strength for that, we will carry out the obligations of the Versailles Treaty by confiscating the property of the bourgeoisie until the moment when workers of other countries come to our aid. We German Communists, and no one else, truly defend the interests of the country, the people, and the nation. The Communist Party of Germany is the only incarnation of the nation's true interests.

No one had the courage to say that. And this is no accident. Many comrades of the so-called Left wrongly held that posing the question in this way was opportunist. Other comrades grasped that this does not involve any opportunism and offered a theoretical defence of the viewpoint I have just presented, but they lacked both the energy and the capacity to lead a decisive campaign. It must be stated that the German party will be limping along until it learns to pose the national question correctly.

Now a third section, the *Communist Party of Yugoslavia*. You are quite familiar with the set-up in Yugoslavia after the war. The national question is among the most important political issues there. The bourgeoisie cannot rule without resolving it. What is the approach of our party? I know from personal discussions with one of the party's outstanding leaders, Comrade Marković, who is now in prison, that at least theoretically he well understands the national question. That does not apply, it seems, to the other party leaders. Many of them say, 'Why does the national question concern us? After all, we are internationalists, and proletarians have no fatherland. Why, then, should we place this question

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42 For a discussion of the issues in this debate, see remarks by Neurath, Böttcher, and Hoernle in Session 7 of this plenum. For the Comintern leadership's assessment of the issues, see remarks by Radek in Session 8.

at the centre of our agitation?' The result of this backward viewpoint is that the workers' organisations in entire provinces of Yugoslavia dropped away from us. They were captured by nationalists in Communist disguise.

Or take a fourth example, of a different sort: a minor but quite dangerous dispute in the trade-union movement of Czechoslovakia. We still have two textile workers' unions there, both led by Communists, that are divided by the national question between Germans and Czechs. We also hear that there is a rather serious conflict right now between the Czech and Slovak trade unions.

We encountered a similar nihilism on the national question even in the ranks of our [Russian] Communist Party. Not long ago, at the Twelfth Congress of our party, we had to adopt theses on this topic.<sup>43</sup> We often encounter good Communists who say, 'Marx has already said that the proletariat has no fatherland. Why, then, should we for our part raise the national question? Let the bourgeoisie occupy itself with that issue.'

The difference between us and the bourgeoisie is not that the bourgeoisie has a national question and we do not. Rather, the difference is that the bourgeoisie is unable to resolve the national question within the framework of the capitalist social order, while we can in fact resolve it within our social order. So long as we live within the bourgeois social order we must and will propose our own solution to the national question. I believe that we must now take decisive steps against the nihilism now emerging on the national question, disguised as internationalism and radicalism, which in reality represents the line of the Second International. In all the countries containing many nationalities, countries where the question of nationalities is playing a prominent role, whatever the cause, we must orient our parties to the fact that this is one of the most important issues of our time.

In order to understand the psychological essence of the parties in which nihilism on the national question is predominant, you must take into account that these parties do not yet feel themselves to be striving to win the majority in their countries. They are not yet parties struggling for power and for leadership of the state. So far, most of our parties still have the psychology of merely an oppositional workers' party in the framework of bourgeois society, a party that does not feel itself to be a leading force, the bearer of hegemony, which has set out to win the majority of the people, to overthrow the bourgeoisie, and to replace it in a leadership role. All this is quite understandable, since our parties, in the majority of countries, are still quite weak.

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43 A reference to the Russian CP theses, 'National Factors in Party and State Affairs'.

Fundamentally, the psychology of many of our sections is reminiscent of the best Social-Democratic parties from the Second International's best years. It is a narrow ideology of class, tending into the ideology of craft guilds. These parties are still small, and they hope in a relatively short time to actually defeat the bourgeoisie and take hold of leadership of the country. That explains why our parties in a number of countries overlook the importance of the national question. If the Yugoslav party, for example, really thought that it was going to overthrow the bourgeoisie and take its place, perhaps not today but tomorrow, it could not possibly say that the national question was of no concern. They would rather understand that the national problem in modern Yugoslavia is one of the most effective tools we possess for overthrowing the present government. We need parties that understand not only how to fight for the eight-hour day but also to organise the workers in such a fashion as to win the majority of the working masses.

I believe that at least some of our parties in the present period have outgrown the shoes of their childhood and have grown much stronger. In these parties the old psychology is giving way to a new one. These will not be parties of a craft guild but parties seeking to take leadership of the entire nation. That does not mean that we should start recruiting nationalists to the ranks of our parties or that we should permit the social composition of our proletarian organisations to be undermined in any way. Our parties must absolutely remain workers' parties, but these workers' parties must succeed in responding correctly to the national question in all countries where it is a sore point.

### *[Peasantry]*

This is even more true in the case of the peasantry. We have been very negligent in this arena and we need to catch up on a great deal. The way in which survivals of the Second International live on in the Third is particularly evident in this field. I will give you a couple of examples, beginning with our Polish section, which is certainly not among the worst in the Comintern.

The peasant question is certainly the decisive issue in Poland. It is no surprise that the social patriots of the PPS have long advanced, for demagogic reasons, the slogan of the 'workers' and peasants' government'. In fact, they have betrayed and abandoned it a hundred times, but still they use the slogan to deceive the workers and peasants. Quite apart from that, the question of the peasantry is urgently posed in Poland. Nonetheless, only a section of the Polish Communist Party's leaders have recognised the falsity of the old-fashioned approach to the agrarian question. The old tradition remains so strong that the party itself fails to do what is essential regarding propaganda among the peasants.

We also find an example in Germany. Theoretically, our comrades certainly addressed the question in the programme of the Spartacus League in a generally correct manner,<sup>44</sup> but in practice they remain strongly influenced by the traditions taken over from the Second International. When I was drafting my report, I was not aware of the latest news from Germany. Since then, it turns out that in the last few days the Social Democracy came up suddenly with a draft law on the peasant question. Suddenly I see *Vorwärts*, where this draft law takes up the entire first page. In huge letters, I see 'The land to the people!'<sup>45</sup> Bold words. A law proposed by these Social-Democratic gentlemen. What does that mean? Obviously, they are doing this out of sheer demagoguery.

A German comrade told me that this law is merely an empty threat to the agrarians [large landholders]. Agreed, these people are merely playing a game, but it is interesting why they are playing precisely this card at the present time. The German Social Democracy suddenly and unexpectedly proposes a demagogic law, 'Land to the people'. What is the reply of our Communist Party? *Rote Fahne* limps along behind the Social Democrats and says a couple of days later, 'There are flaws in this project – here, and here – and we propose to fight for it together with you.'<sup>46</sup> As you see, comrades, we have an unfortunate reversal of roles here. Actually it should be the Communists taking the lead on this question. They should be the first to pose this question, and the Social Democrats should limp along behind them blabbering nonsense. Unfortunately, it turned out quite differently.

There are many countries in which our Communist parties seem to be equally clueless, even in countries where the agrarian question is among the most urgent issues and is absolutely decisive. Why are such blunders possible? As I have already stated, traditions of the Second International are evident here. We should not be ashamed to admit that. None of us fell from heaven as finished Communists. We all emerged from the womb of the Second Inter-

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44 The document 'What Does the Spartacus League Want', drafted by Rosa Luxemburg, was approved at the founding congress of the Communist Party of Germany in December 1918. The document's agrarian section called for 'Expropriation of the lands and fields of all large and medium agricultural enterprises; formation of socialist agricultural collectives under unified central direction in the entire nation. Small peasant holdings remain in the possession of their occupants until the latters' voluntary association with the socialist collectives.' The text can be found online at Marxists Internet Archive.

45 A reference to the 17 May 1923 issue of *Vorwärts*, which, under the title 'Land dem Volke', published the text of a law being proposed by the SDP parliamentary fraction.

46 Paraphrased from 'Sozialdemokratische Bodenreform', in *Die Rote Fahne*, 20 May 1923.

national, and its accursed past weighs on us. It's simply a question of shedding that burden as fast as possible.

[*Workers' and Peasants' Government*]

Based on all this, comrades, I draw the conclusion that the best way to shed these survivals as fast as possible is to broaden the slogan for a workers' government to read, 'For a workers' and peasants' government'. You remember how this developed over time, comrades: first the united-front policy, then the workers' government.<sup>47</sup> Now, I believe, we should broaden the slogan and do so generally.

Here are a few examples. The American Communist Party (Workers Party) advanced on its own the slogan, 'For a workers' and farmers' government', and did so with no prompting from us.<sup>48</sup> This slogan immediately proved to be very attractive in the United States, that is, in the most industrialised country of the world. The left wing of the trade-union movement, to the degree that it concerns itself with political issues, gave strong support to this slogan. A struggle developed between the American Communist Party and the American Social Democrats, who were trying to achieve organisational fusion with a wing of the farmers' party, having lost ground in the working class. The social patriots were looking for a new social base.

This is a phenomenon that we have seen not only in the United States; rather it is a sign of the times more generally. We see the same thing on an international scale. Social Democracy as a whole is losing its social base in the working class and is looking frantically for a new social base among the petty bourgeoisie, the office workers, civic employees, and even a part of the peasantry. We see such a trend in the United States and also in Germany.

In this framework, how should we shape our strategy? In a nutshell, our strategy should be expressed in the following ways: As the Social Democracy loses points of strength in the working class, we must occupy these positions immediately, because the working class is our main fortress. At the same time, the Social Democracy is seeking a replacement for this lost strength in the working class by winning new positions in the peasantry. How do we respond? We chase after the Social Democrats down this path and engage in struggle

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47 The Fourth Congress decision on the workers' government question can be found in the resolution, 'On the Tactics of the Comintern', in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1159–62.

48 The workers' and farmers' government slogan was first raised following a discussion in the American CP's Central Executive Committee in March 1923. See John Pepper, 'The Slogan of Workers' and Farmers' Government' in *Inprecorr*, 16 August 1923.

with them in this new milieu. Even as we occupy the positions lost by the Social Democrats, we keep a sharp eye on where they are headed and follow on their heels. That is why we need the slogan of the 'workers' and peasants' government'. It is very easy to apply this slogan everywhere in propagandistic fashion. Instead of calling for power to the workers, socialist rule, and the like, we will explain these concepts in our general propaganda through the slogan of a government of workers and peasants. For ordinary people who are not yet socialists, who are only beginning to find their feet on public issues, this way of putting it will be the most accessible.

In a number of other countries, by comparison, the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government has immediate and current significance. Who among us would have thought, half a year ago, that the slogan of a workers' and farmers' government in the United States would ever have become one of the most important political slogans of our times? Read the reports on the trial of Foster and Ruthenberg and you will see immediately the importance this slogan has acquired in the United States.<sup>49</sup> Why would it then be inapplicable in countries like Germany where, as I pointed out, the Social Democrats are losing ground among the workers and looking for new terrain? Isn't it a major omission that our comrades in Saxony did not think of raising a single question that would have aroused the peasants? We have succeeded in posing certain questions regarding the Saxony workers' government in a very skilled and intelligent manner, so as to arouse the Social-Democratic workers. Can't we also find questions that would have aroused the peasantry? Of course there are such questions, even if the number of poor peasants in Saxony is not that large. In Germany, and especially in East Prussia, a considerable social layer is gripped by poverty in the villages. And whatever one may say, Prussia plays the decisive role in Germany.

Take a country like Poland. The peasant question there, as I noted, is decisive. The proletariat alone cannot win in Poland, not without the peasantry. Of

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49 William Z. Foster and Charles E. Ruthenberg were charged with violating Michigan's criminal syndicalism laws, stemming from the August 1922 raid on the US CP convention in Bridgman, Michigan, during which more than thirty were arrested. (Foster was not arrested at Bridgman, but was subsequently charged with being present at it.) Foster's trial ended in a hung jury, while Ruthenberg was found guilty. Ruthenberg died in 1927 after his appeals were exhausted, but before his sentence began. During the trial, Foster repeatedly raised the workers' and farmers' government perspective. 'After the workers and farmers become the government', Foster told the jury, 'they will use the powers of that government in their own interests just as it is now in the interests of the capitalist class.'

course we can build an absolutely credible Communist opposition party, and it will remain so over time, but without the peasants it cannot defeat the bourgeois social order.

Thus for a Communist Party to possess even today the psychology of tomorrow's victory over the bourgeoisie – and 'tomorrow' here means, and can mean in a historical sense five or ten years – it cannot evade preparing even today the appropriate slogan. The slogan of a workers' and peasants' government is best able to express this task. Our mere adoption of this slogan signifies our preparation to win over specific layers. It will make for a very good start for the peasant to learn that the Communists are raising this slogan. That in itself leads toward a new relationship of forces.

Let us take up some additional examples, reviewing the situation in some other countries. Consider the case of Finland. There we have already won the majority of the working class. At the recent trade-union congress the Communists' strength compared to the Social Democrats was in a ratio of 24 to 3.<sup>50</sup> However, in Finland the peasants determine absolutely the fate of the revolution. We can well conclude that, given this state of affairs, the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government will be absolutely necessary there.

It could perhaps be objected that countries like Poland and Finland are ultimately of only secondary importance. That is quite true. So let me ask you: How do things shape up in France? In a few months the general election there will begin. France is a country of peasants like no other. Is it not then clear that the agitation among the peasants being carried out now by Comrade Renaud Jean will become much more successful if the party as a whole issues the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government for France? There can be absolutely no doubt that this would be a devastating blow against the Social Democracy, the Radical Socialists, and the infamous Left Bloc.

Let us turn to Germany. In Germany there is no revolutionary peasantry in the sense that we experienced in the pre-revolutionary years in Russia. Nonetheless, in East Prussia there are quite broad layers of peasants who could provide us with an extremely helpful support. And what will be the impact of the workers' and peasants' government slogan on layers of workers who are worn down by the struggle and have lost confidence that they can defeat the bourgeoisie with their own strength alone? In my opinion, the impact will be entirely positive.

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50 A reference to the Sixth Finnish Trade Union Congress held at Helsingfors (Helsinki) 12–16 May 1923.

I believe, comrades, that even in countries as rich as Switzerland, Norway, and Denmark, which did not take part directly in the war and whose peasants, therefore, were not ruined, the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government can be very useful, because even there we find layers of peasants whose interests are not counterposed to those of workers but are aligned with them. Not to speak of the Balkan countries. In Bulgaria we had for some time a so-called peasants' government, which was just overthrown a few days ago. Again and again we see proof that, given the present acute level of struggle, governments of the 'middle' cannot hold on. Either dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry.

You are all familiar with the repeated attempts to found a so-called Green International, that is, an International of peasants.<sup>51</sup> Only a few days ago I read a telegram that Stamboliyski was working to found a Green International of peasants. Now he is imprisoned.<sup>52</sup> In his attempt to fight on two fronts – against the big bourgeoisie and against the Communists – he endured shipwreck, and it had to be so. Nonetheless, these attempts to found a Green International doubtless deserve our attention.

We are actually seeing for the first time in recent political history some cases where peasant parties have tried to play an independent political role – and not entirely without success. That is what we see in Czechoslovakia and in the Balkans. This only became possible as a result of the imperialist war, which after all did a great deal to increase the confidence of the peasants. We are well aware that peasant parties cannot play an independent political role in the long run. The peasantry follows either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Our task is to do everything possible to ensure that they make the latter choice. We must carefully follow the ongoing decomposition of the peasantry's ranks. If we want to defeat the bourgeoisie, we cannot remain simply a party of the cities. We must be a party of the urban proletariat that is simultaneously closely linked to the village. The Communist Party of Russia was an exclusively urban party during at least two decades. But it succeeded in defeating the bourgeoisie only when it had achieved an intimate feel for the peasantry.

It will not do to say that the party has no people to carry out the work in the countryside. If the political task is posed correctly, sufficient forces will be found. The average worker has a feel for the village. If the average worker sees

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51 The Green International (formally the International Agrarian Bureau) was founded in 1921 by bourgeois agrarian parties in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Croatia, and Poland, with offices in Prague.

52 The 1923 German edition of the proceedings includes the following insertion here: 'Stamboliyski was murdered two days after Zinoviev's report.'

that his party does not consider work among the peasantry to be of any political importance, he himself will not concern himself with it. But if he knows that his party considers this work to be of overriding importance, he will succeed in utilising every trip to the village, every letter, every occasion for sending off a newspaper to establish contact with the peasantry. For me there can be no doubt that when the German Social Democrats suddenly appear with a draft law that they herald as meaning 'Land to the people', a country like Germany is ripe for the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government. When the new Communist Party in an industrialised country like the United States raises the slogan of a workers' and farmers' government with success, the time is ripe for this slogan. We must raise this slogan in Czechoslovakia, in the Balkans, and across Europe.

I make no secret of the fact that this question has not yet been sufficiently examined in our ranks. It has yet to be thoroughly discussed in our ranks; it is new, extremely important, and complicated. I am not forgetting for a moment the experience we have acquired with regard to raising the united-front policy, in which we frittered away many months through misunderstandings because our party was not sufficiently prepared. I am somewhat concerned that this might happen with the workers' and peasants' government. Perhaps this slogan will not be taken up immediately. I must say at the outset, comrades, that we are completely agreeable to postponing the drafting of a definitive decision if the discussion should reveal that our parties are still insufficiently prepared to take up this slogan. We would then begin a thorough discussion in the individual sections. Then we will make a decision a few months down the road. Personally, however, I believe that the experience of the united-front policy has not been in vain for our party. Our sections have learned a good deal about how to manoeuvre and have understood that a policy of manoeuvre is absolutely necessary for Communist parties operating in an environment of bourgeois and social traitors.

If it turns out that we possess sufficient mutual understanding on this question, I will of course propose that the slogan can best be adopted at this plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee. The situation is changing before our eyes. The Social Democrats are losing their shirts; the Social-Democratic Party is losing the soul of their own Social-Democratic workers. We have broken through the counterrevolutionary alliance of Amsterdam leaders. The internal crisis in the ranks of the strongest Social-Democratic party is growing more acute. On the other side, our Communist parties are becoming stronger. In such a situation we cannot afford to lose any time.

Meanwhile, we must assess precisely how the workers' and peasants' government slogan relates to our old formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There will be comrades among us who will, without doubt, ask whether in calling for a workers' and peasants' government we are just dropping our old call for a dictatorship of the proletariat. And will we remain a workers' party or become a workers' and peasants' party?

Anyone who understands anything about the united-front policy, who has begun to grasp what the proletariat's class-based political strategy is, must see that the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government indicates the road to a dictatorship of the proletariat and does not negate it in any way. In the strict and scientific meaning of the term, a workers' and peasants' government can hardly be achieved. The Soviet government is in fact a workers' government. Power is exercised by the working class and its party. The steering wheel of the state is held in the hands of the proletariat. But the proletariat and its party understand that the peasantry must be accommodated and drawn into participation in leadership of the state. In a word, the party aims to rule the country wisely. That is precisely why the proletariat in Russia, taking into account the real relationship of forces in its country, has summoned the peasantry to joint coordination in this framework, establishing a relationship within which the peasants support the workers. Thus the experience of one of the greatest of revolutions, the Russian Revolution, has proven that this is possible. The task of our Communist parties is to utilise the lessons of the Russian Revolution and apply them concretely to the specific conditions of each individual country.

In raising the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government, that does not imply in any way that we give up the dictatorship of the proletariat. We cannot retreat a single step from it. There is no way to free humankind from the yoke of capitalism other than the dictatorship of the proletariat. No other road is possible. The only genuine revolutionary class, revolutionary to the end, is the working class. But this class – which means its party – can act in either an intelligent or a stupid way. So we will reach the goal much faster and with fewer losses. We will partially neutralise significant layers of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie and partially draw them over to our side. However, if we act clumsily, if we conceive of the great class objectives of proletarian liberation along the lines of a craft guild, we will delay the moment of our victory.

We believe that the time has come to generalise the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government. Already at the Fourth Congress we had the feeling that things were evolving in that direction. Even then, we had formulated the task in Central Europe in almost those terms.<sup>53</sup> Now it has become clear that this

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53 In its adopted resolution, the Fourth Congress envisioned the variant of a 'government of

question has importance for all countries, that it is a genuinely international matter. And precisely at the moment that the Hamburg Congress has demonstrated so openly its complete political impotence, we must hurry to issue the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government. Gentlemen like Vandervelde will seek to win the peasants, but this will succeed only if we are completely short-sighted. If we proceed as we must, then we will lead significant layers of the peasantry to the party and the working class, which represents the interests of the nation.

This slogan will also play a not-insignificant role in the struggle against fascism. Take Italy, for example, which is the classic land of fascism. Consider the sequence of events. Fascism was born precisely in the peasant districts where the peasantry had risen up in struggle for the land. Fascism was initially a reaction of the estate owners against the authority achieved by the peasants. Now that fascism has achieved power, it hurls itself with brutal force against these peasant districts. Mussolini has introduced some genuinely mediaeval laws, such as the one forbidding people from leaving their homes after 8:00 p.m. It is in these peasant districts that the fascist bands are now raging. They seize the peasants who have 'gone wrong' and force them to drink the urine of fascist soldiers. These are facts passed on by our Italian comrades. Surely it is obvious that under such circumstances, the peasants' anger and hatred against the fascists grows with every hour. And what are we doing in the face of this situation? What are we undertaking? Nothing whatsoever!

I am not making any special accusation against our Italian comrades. I am well aware that insufficient work among the peasantry is a sickness in almost all our sections. That is what we see in Italy. Neither the reformists nor the Maximalists nor the Communists have lifted a finger to arouse the peasants against the fascists. Isn't it obvious that the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government is more appropriate than any other in present-day fascist Italy? We must raise this slogan.

To be sure, the Social-Democratic gentlemen will immediately assail us with abuse, claiming that, when advanced by us, this slogan is nothing more than demagoguery. But workers who want to defeat the bourgeoisie will see things differently. They will understand that we are seeking and finding allies in this struggle against the bourgeoisie. Working peasants will also see things differently. We will make it possible not just to neutralise significant layers of working peasants, but to win them over. We must utilise this slogan in every country

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workers and the poorer peasants'. It stated that 'Such a possibility exists in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, and so on'. In Riddell (ed.) 2012, *4WC*, p. 1161.

where there are peasants – and where is that not the case? Of course we will apply it in a manner befitting specific circumstances. We will naturally focus especially on peasants who do not employ wage labourers.

I will move on. At the Fourth Congress, we explained to you why, in our opinion, the Soviet government's New Economic Policy is not merely an episode of the Russian Revolution; it has international significance. We showed you that almost every country, after its revolution, will have to go through a more or less extended period of this policy.<sup>54</sup> We all agreed that the New Economic Policy is not a Russian phenomenon. No matter what the country, the victorious proletariat will have to pursue, at the appropriate time, unification of the working class and the peasantry. This fact – which is beyond any doubt – also seems to point to the logical conclusion of the workers' and peasants' government. Reviewing conditions in a wide range of countries, we cannot identify a single country in which this slogan would not be appropriate. We tell backward workers and peasants that we want to destroy the rich people's state and create a workers' state. Let us decide to add to this that we therefore propose the formation of a workers' and peasants' government. By doing this we will make it impossible for the Social-Democratic party to outstrip us, even in the parliamentary arena.

Of course it is not enough merely to adopt empty resolutions on this question. The task is to see clearly that this slogan too is fraught with major dangers, just like the united-front policy as a whole.

The danger linked with the workers' and peasants' government slogan is that some sections that are less consolidated and less well-schooled in Marxism could slip into interpreting this slogan in the fashion of the Left Social Revolutionaries. This party presented itself as representing the workers, the peasants, and the intelligentsia. We say – now and in the future – that we are a party of the working class.

However, after the working class has been victorious and has held power for a few years, it may well succeed in winning over a large part not only of the peasantry but also of the intelligentsia. If things develop favourably in Soviet Russia, we may well have a situation within a few years where our party will have the support not only of the entire working class but also of the peasantry and the intelligentsia. The Social Revolutionaries have simply forgotten the significance of a single Greek word: *chronos* – time. After the proletariat, as the leading force, has first risen up in struggle, organised itself, and overthrown the

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54 The Fourth Congress discussion on the NEP as an international phenomenon can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, on pp. 39–40, 71–2, 123, 332–3, 493–4, and 517.

bourgeoisie – after all that – it could win over, in a period of several years the undivided support of the peasants and intelligentsia. But only afterwards.

In order to carry out its role in sustaining the revolution and holding power, the proletariat must have an independent party that is not diluted by any petty-bourgeois rivulet. It must be a party cast in a single mould. In Russia, however, after several years of sabotage by not only the peasantry but also a significant portion of the intelligentsia, these layers are beginning to give the Soviet government their sincere support. The working class and its party have succeeded, through several years of heroic effort, in showing that they are capable of defending their country during the epoch of the greatest of revolutions. They have won full independence for Russia; they are building its economy, promoting scientific knowledge, appreciating its intelligentsia, and so on. In this framework the intelligentsia has begun to swing over to our side. But that only confirms that the party must remain a workers' party. Under no circumstances must it adopt the Social-Revolutionary formula of being a 'party of the workers, the peasants, and the intelligentsia'.

The danger posed by the workers' and peasants' government slogan is that our less-consolidated parties might be induced to water down the class character of our party. We need to act now to head that off. Now as before we remain Marxists, hard as a rock and irreconcilably 'dogmatic'. We are still, now as before, a workers' party fully committed to its class-based point of view. The social composition of our party must be proletarian. But we must be able to manoeuvre cleverly and successfully while successfully warding off the danger of sectarianism. We must become mass parties at all costs – a task that is by no means easy.

It is not true in bourgeois society, after all, that you have over here a tiny bourgeoisie and over there the proletariat. If that were the situation, victory would not be so difficult. In reality, however, we know that between the tiny bourgeoisie and the urban proletariat there are numerous strata: millions and tens of millions of peasants, lower layers, office workers, petty bourgeois, intellectuals, and so on. In order to achieve full victory over the bourgeoisie, we must undertake serious preparations.

We believe that the international proletarian revolution can win in a relatively short time. We are fully convinced of that. But this requires that we win over one portion of the middle layers and neutralise another portion. We must succeed in showing the way to liberation from the capitalist yoke to all layers of the population that do not have a direct interest in capitalist rule. We do not close our eyes for even a moment to the dangers inherent in the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government. But those who are afraid of wolves should stay out of the forest. We have already learned a good deal about mastering

the difficulties of our policy of manoeuvre. This was evident in carrying out the united-front policy. Our parties learned to swim by jumping in the water, and some of our parties have already mastered swimming. Indeed, the campaign linked to the united-front policy was our first campaign carried through on an international level. The difficulties it faced were not inconsiderable, but still they were almost completely overcome. Now is the moment to broaden out our radius of action and to alter the psychology of our party. Our parties must stop viewing themselves as a sort of guild carrying out specifically workers' tasks. They must act as parties that set out with determination to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie. We must take all preparatory measures, in the realm both of theory and also of organisation and politics. In this process we can be sure that issuing the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government will bring us gains not only in Czechoslovakia, France, Britain, Scandinavia, the United States, and Germany, but – in a word – everywhere.

**[*The Will to Power*]**

At the Third Congress we summed up our tasks in three words: To the masses! At the Fourth Congress we defined our united front more precisely and developed it further. The last six months have shown that this has helped us to gain a footing in broader layers of the working class.

Now we face an even greater task. We must awaken the will to power in our parties. We must make them into parties aware in their every move of their task to overcome the bourgeoisie. Our parties are the vanguard of the working class. Imbued with the will to power, this vanguard will transmit this commitment to the broad layers of workers in their millions. And when millions and millions of proletarians are imbued with this will to power, victory will no longer be so difficult. (*Prolonged applause.*)

## Executive Committee Report – Discussion

*Discussion on Executive Committee report.*

*Speakers: Zinoviev, Duret, Varga, Urbani, Höglund, Radek, Falk, Bukharin, Böttcher.*

*(Before the opening of discussion, Zinoviev takes the floor to make a correction.)*

**Zinoviev:** In discussing the Norwegian question yesterday, I was guilty of a small error. My speech could have been interpreted as meaning that we are locked in a formal organisational conflict with our Norwegian sister party. I said that the Norwegian congress rejected the decisions of the Fourth Congress. In a formal sense, that is not true. Rather the congress adopted, by a majority of two votes, theses whose substance is in conflict with the decisions of the Fourth Congress. But the congress in Kristiania then unanimously adopted a resolution declaring that the decisions of the Fourth Congress are binding for the Norwegian party, which will carry them out until the Fifth Congress.

So from a formal point of view, the Kristiania Congress acted in a loyal fashion, and we are not in a position where we would have to say that the Norwegian comrades have not carried out these decisions. Formally, juridically, the situation is somewhat different than could have been concluded on the basis of my remarks yesterday. Nonetheless, the disagreement on principle still exists, and for us that is the most important point. We are holding a discussion to determine the degree to which these disagreements still exist. I believe it is my duty to correct my speech in this regard.

**Jean Duret (France):** The call to include the Socialist leaders in applying the united front, necessary as it may be, is fraught with dangers that are all the greater given that we are dealing with parties that are less experienced and less fully educated in Marxism. In France, for example, we paid compliments to the reformist leaders. Given that Treint's articles have appeared in the party's official organ, the entire Political Bureau must take responsibility for this.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Duret appears to be referring to a series of articles by Treint on the need for a united front with the Socialist Party, which appeared in *L'Humanité* during April 1923 under the pseudonym 'Bertreint'.

I must criticise the Political Bureau's response to the Socialist organisations' rejection of the united front and the concessions made to the party's left wing – quite small but perhaps more dangerous than the right wing of the Socialist Party.

In my opinion, the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government is more dangerous than that of a simple workers' government. The latter slogan was understood in the International in two ways: as a result of revolutionary action, and also as a result of the interplay of parliamentary and democratic forces. It is necessary to emphasise that the workers' and peasants' government can be achieved only along a revolutionary path, rather than in parliamentary fashion. Regarding the national question, a pronounced lethargy is evident. Many repentant former social patriots now in the Communist International believe that national movements necessarily have an imperialist character. Assertions of this type are inspired by a method that is metaphysical and not dialectical.

**Eugen Varga:** The slogan of a workers' and peasants' government needs to be formulated more clearly. A distinction must be drawn between peasants who work and those who exploit. Working peasants are exploited by taxes, tariff policy, railways, trusts, and in many countries also by feudal landholders. They have many ties with the proletariat.

Certainly this slogan of a workers' and peasants' government entails significant dangers. When, in implementing the united-front slogan, we join with Social-Democratic workers, this is an alliance with comrades in our class. But the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government means that we seek an alliance with a class whose economic situation is different from that of the proletariat. Peasants do not suffer direct exploitation, as does the proletariat. There is a danger that broad layers of peasants who produce for the market and are exploiters will come over to us in their struggle against capital. That may well happen in the United States or Canada where not only working but also exploiting farmers are in struggle against capitalism, whose trusts have for decades kept the prices of industrial products artificially high and thus shifted the relationship between grain and industrial products to the detriment of farmers who produce for the market. This crisis will be greatly worsened when Russia reappears on the world grain market.

I would like to propose that we slightly modify the way that we present the workers' and peasants' government in our propaganda so as to read 'workers' and working peasants' government'. In this way the formulation would make a clear demarcation between the proletariat and the rich exploiting peasants.

The question will then surely arise of the relationship between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the workers' and peasants' government. Will the

latter become a barricade blocking the path to the dictatorship of the proletariat? I do not believe that such a danger exists. The peasantry will never be in a position to rule alone for a significant time. As a result, it must accept the leadership of another class. The question posed to the peasants is actually whether they will be led and exploited by capitalists and large landowners, or be led but not exploited by the proletariat during the existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat. I believe that we can say quite confidently and effectively that when the dictatorship of the proletariat has been achieved, this will be a workers' and peasants' government under the leadership of the proletariat.

If this congress is convinced that an alliance of the working class with the peasantry is absolutely essential, then it will be a milestone in our movement's development.

**Urbani** [Umberto Terracini] (Italy): Let me take up the accusation of sabotage levied by Zinoviev against the Communist Party of Italy and especially its leadership. Certainly mistakes have been made, but the responsibility for what took place regarding the carrying out of the Fourth Congress decisions does not lie merely with the activity or inactivity of the Communist Party of Italy. Here are some other factors that must be considered:

1.) The [Comintern] Executive Committee erred in its evaluation of what the Rome Congress of the Socialist Party decided, thinking that it expressed a sincere, enthusiastic, and resolute desire for unity. They did not listen to what we said in criticism of this assessment, namely, that among the supporters of this unification were to be found many who were secretly opposed to it.<sup>2</sup>

2.) It was a mistake to believe that the unification could be essentially prepared in Moscow.

3.) There was indeed sabotage, but it was carried out by the Socialists, by those who were neither for nor against the fusion. To take one example, the first session of the fusion commission took place in Milan on 4 February. On this day we learned that Serrati, who had just arrived [from Moscow], had immediately left Italy again, without saying so much as a word, and was now in Switzerland. That caused the commission a delay of three weeks. The Communist Party was in no way responsible for this sabotage.

4.) The biggest and most damaging error made in Italy was the fact that the fusion commission and the Comintern representative did not work closely together. I will not get into a discussion here of how extensive the powers of a Comintern representative should be; I'll stick to the specific case. The Comin-

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2 For the PSI's October 1922 Rome Congress, see p. 398, n. 25.

tern representative tried to win over opponents of the fusion through a policy of diplomacy. He did not insist on formation of a faction in the Socialist Party of those who favoured fusion. Even before the fusion commission had met, he spoke of the possibility that the two parties might form a bloc or a federation – that is, something very different from what had been decided in Moscow. This doubtless made our work much more difficult.

5.) We can also speak of errors that we ourselves committed. But we must protest most categorically against presenting the Communist Party of Italy and its leadership as solely responsible.

In addition, when the Executive Committee sent a second representative to Italy, the question arose as to which of them was correct? Because the second Moscow delegate determined that the Italian Communist Party was doing everything in its power to bring about the fusion.<sup>3</sup>

Zinoviev reproached us for not having undertaken any campaign in our press in favour of fusion. Given the constant attacks by Socialist opponents of the fusion, silence was our *only possible response*. If we had replied to them, the entire fusion project would have become impossible.

We ask that the Italian Commission state openly whether the Italian party has functioned poorly in the recent period, or has, on the contrary, complied with the decisions of the Fourth Congress. In my opinion, Comrade Zinoviev is holding the Communist Party responsible for the International's failures in Italy. This is not the right way to support the Communist Party, which is locked in an intense struggle against bourgeois reaction and to broaden the International's influence in Italy.

**Karl Zeth Höglund** (Sweden): First of all, I will correct the somewhat distorted picture that Comrade Zinoviev has given of the Norwegian and Swedish parties. I must say that if Comrade Zinoviev's portrayal of the other Communist parties displays a similar degree of objectivity, then we really will have no picture of the factual situation in the Communist International. In general, Comrade Zinoviev is entirely negative in his portrayal of the Communist movement. He did not show the degree to which the parties have been consolidated politically and organisationally, the degree to which the united-front slogan has been carried out and has succeeded, what errors have possibly been made, what positive measures must still be taken, and so on.

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3 The principal Comintern representatives in Italy during 1923 were Dmitry Manuilsky and Mátyás Rákosi.

With regard to the Hamburg Congress, I can confirm what Comrade Zinoviev has said. We must not underestimate this congress, however, and its significance in the struggle against our movement. The reconstituted Second International is not merely a spectacle. To be sure, it is not a socialist International, but it is still an International that is seeking to be more strictly centralised in order to tie its parties more firmly to its anti-Communist policies. It is very important for the Communist parties to examine the decisions of the Hamburg Congress closely, to highlight their ambiguity, emptiness, and counterrevolutionary dynamic, and also to utilise the disagreements that came to light regarding their attitude to Soviet Russia.

Now as to the Scandinavian question. As regards Norway, our party is almost unanimous in the view that the Executive Committee itself carries substantial blame for the difficult situation there. The ECCI made major errors, and the internal disputes were aggravated rather than being resolved. We in Sweden are quite familiar with the situation in Norway, and we must warn most earnestly against any aggravation of the crisis. If the great Norwegian Labour Party were to break apart, this would mean the death of communism in all Scandinavia.

**Radek:** Very true!

**Höglund:** It would be an Italy of the north.<sup>4</sup> And we do not want that. We also believe that the unfortunate condition of the Danish Communist movement, which is almost dead, was caused by a very clumsy and unjust intervention by the Executive Committee.<sup>5</sup>

It is, above all, practical experience in these countries that has led the Swedish Communist Party to adopt a very sceptical attitude to the Fourth Congress's decision to increase the powers of the ECCI and heighten centralism. We demanded that the Executive Committee conduct its work and its relations with the different parties more capably and reliably. We are not opposed to democratic centralism, and we declared that all the Fourth Congress decisions are binding for our party. But we voiced some suggestions and comments on the world congress decisions in this arena. We asked for certain organisational measures, which we will formulate specifically in the debate on centralism that will follow.

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4 A reference to the January 1921 split in the Comintern's Italian section, the PSI, after which only a minority of the party remained in the Comintern.

5 The Danish dispute is discussed in Session 5 of this plenum. (See p. 466.) A resolution on the question can be found on pp. 625–6.

After Comrade Zinoviev's speech, one could well believe that the effectiveness and the internal life of the Swedish party was focused on the question of religion. He did not say a word about our political and trade-union work. He took up only one statement by me on our party's position on religion, a question that is not currently of importance either to the Swedish party or the International. But I am afraid that this question could become important as a result of Comrade Zinoviev's thoughtless remarks. Unfortunately, Comrade Zinoviev did not quote what I wrote. I must therefore do this myself. The article ['Communism and Religion'] was written because assertions had been made in certain circles of the party in meetings in Stockholm that the party should begin to carry out anti-religious propaganda. The danger existed, therefore, that such secondary issues could rob the party of a great deal of energy better spent on other and more important tasks. This could contribute to a sectarianism, and we see other symptoms of that in the movement. I therefore wrote an article that stated, in part:

The Communist Party does not insist that its members make a statement denying any belief in God or belief in the hereafter. ... The party demands only that members accept the political programme established by the party for its activity and the statutes that regulate the party's organisation. ... The goal of communism is to create an existence on this earth worthy of human beings. We are not concerned with the way things are organised in heaven. Everyone may think what he wishes on that question, provided that his concerns regarding heaven do not hinder his participation in the work of making this earth inhabitable for humanity.

However, the Communist Party is irreconcilably opposed to converting religion into a class-political institution such as the state church. This state church is nothing more than a spiritual police agency of the ruling class. It has nothing to do with genuine religiosity but rather contributes to strangling it.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, we combat the degeneration of religion into phenomena such as the current vogue for 'speaking in tongues' and other spiritual epidemics of a clearly morbid character.

We also reject any attempt to convert this or that religion into a defence of slavery, exploitation of the working masses, or injustice. ...

It is true that Marxism as a world outlook, as a universal philosophy, is incompatible with positive religion. However, historical materialism

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6 The Lutheran Church of Sweden was the state church of the country until 2000.

makes no claim to solving the problem of the ultimate cause of existence and all issues related to that. ... The task is to criticise not so much heaven as earth, not so much ruling-class theology as its politics; to abolish not so much God as capitalism. This is a genuinely Marxist concept, for Marx said that 'with the abolition of the upside-down reality that is theorised as religion, religion itself will disintegrate.'

And finally:

It would be folly for the Communist Party, by branding itself as anti-religious, to drive away forces that could otherwise be won to our efforts. We must keep in mind that there are masses of workers, petty-bourgeois, and small peasants whose class position will bring them, sooner or later, to a revolutionary point of view, that is, to our party, but who could only be held back if the party were to proclaim a 'struggle against religion', because they are closely tied to religious traditions and concepts. And there are many others who are indifferent to religion but who are repelled by direct anti-religious propaganda. The Communist Party, like every militant movement, seeks the path of least resistance to its goal. It must therefore avoid everything that would make it more difficult to assemble forces and is extraneous to the central tasks of its activity. Individual Communists may carry out pro-religious or anti-religious propaganda in any way they choose. That is their right, and no one will interfere with that, so long as it does not interfere with the Communist Party's political programme and activity. But if the party as such were to approve of atheism as a necessary principle of Communist belief, it would degenerate into a sect, just as surely as if it declared itself to be Baptist or Ephraimist.

Well, comrades, is the viewpoint that I have summarised here incorrect? And will it be demanded of the Communist parties, as Comrade Zinoviev suggests, that they wage an open 'struggle against religion'? In that case, religious workers and peasants, who are quite numerous in most countries, could not belong to our party, even if they were also revolutionary fighters who accepted our programme. I cannot imagine any greater nonsense than for the Communist International to issue such a slogan. As for the sizeable forces that Comrade Zinoviev's speech will set into motion against us, that will soon be evident in the bourgeois and Social-Democratic press of Europe.

Finally, as regards the new slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, we in Sweden have nothing against it. But I believe that the impact of such a

slogan is being overestimated. In addition, it seems to me that we should first establish how broadly the slogan of a workers' government has been accepted before altering it. It is not so crucial to always come up with new slogans and new theses. The main thing is to carry out previous decisions consistently and energetically, along with attention to the detail of daily work to win the trust of the broad masses.

**Radek:** Comrade Höglund claimed that the Executive Committee had made major errors in Scandinavia. I propose that his speaking time be extended so that he can *specifically* prove his allegations, which weigh very heavily. He has not addressed that with a *single word*.

**Höglund:** I ask that I be permitted to come back to this later in the discussion, because I am not able to speak German without written preparation.

**Erling Falk (Norway):** Zinoviev's report left the impression that the Norwegian party – or the current leading it – is anti-Communist. That is incorrect. The Norwegian party is in favour of a centralised Communist world movement.

The disagreements between the Norwegian party and the Executive Committee revolve around centralism and the practical positions taken by the ECCI toward the party. The Executive Committee wrote the party on the basis of absolutely incorrect information and conveyed its criticism through Radek and Bukharin. These unfounded criticisms reinforced opportunist currents.

Zinoviev said that certain members of the Mot Dag group had to be expelled, but he did not name any names and did not make any specific accusations. The party is torn by the disagreements that arose as a result of this stance by the Executive Committee.

It is true that there are disagreements on issues of principle, including as regards centralism. We believe that the Executive Committee should be negotiating with the party's leadership bodies rather than with a minority. The youth movement was formed as an absolutely separate organisation, and we understand this took place with the ECCI's help. But both sides must be loyal. If this policy continues, within two years we in Norway will be in the same situation as Italy. The International's authority should be absolute in matters of international significance, but as a rule the International should not intervene in matters of local significance.

Zinoviev said that the new united-front policy was needed because the Social Democrats are stronger and the Communist Party had turned out to be weaker than we expected. That is not the case in Norway. Here the Communist party is a mass party and the Socialist party is small. We decided to apply the

united front to the strong leaders of the trade unions and not to the weak leaders of the Social Democracy. The workers' government slogan would strengthen the reformist forces.

In addition, if we want to arouse support for a government of workers and peasants, we should not be making enemies of the peasants by attacking religion.

**Nikolai Bukharin:** Comrade Höglund says that he is disappointed in Zinoviev's report because it did not offer what he hoped. In my opinion, Zinoviev needed to take up new political developments and symptoms of dangerous trends in our sister parties, and that is what he did. The fact that we proceed in this way is the difference between us and the Second International. Höglund accuses the Executive Committee of having ruined the Italian party and wanting to do the same to the Norwegian party. But he did not provide the slightest piece of evidence for this assertion.

Yesterday, Zinoviev asked why the question of religion had cropped up all of a sudden. This can have only one objective cause: the fact that there is a campaign across all Europe right now against Soviet Russia based on the religious persecution that supposedly takes place in Russia. And some Swedish comrades are utilising this situation to give the world an assurance that only the Russian Communists are bad people like that, while they themselves are fine people and are not against religion at all. Perhaps that is not their intention, but objectively it is so. These comrades are afraid of the attacks of the bourgeois press.

The question of centralism is similar. Precisely at the moment when the bourgeois press starts writing about ukases from Moscow and how the Norwegian comrades are dependent on the Moscow dictatorship, our Norwegian comrades take up the question of centralism. That means that the Scandinavian Communists appear to be more humanitarian than the true Communists. Whatever their intentions may be, that is the objective meaning of what they are doing.

As for the substance of Höglund's arguments, they do not contain an atom of Marxism. He is wrong to say that the Communist Party does not call religious belief counterrevolutionary. At present every religion in Europe is counterrevolutionary. In the Eastern countries, religion can play a revolutionary role to a certain extent, as indicated by the struggle of the masses in Asia who hold fanatical religious beliefs against British imperialism. The methods for freeing the proletariat from the chains of capitalism are the same as those to free the working class from bourgeois ideology. And religion is part of that.

Comrade Höglund writes, 'However, the Communist Party is irreconcilably opposed to converting religion into a class-political institution such as the state church.' Marxism, however, states that every religion is a form of class ideology and therefore represents an implement of that class.

We can tolerate religious people in our party, because religion has deep roots in the soul of 'modern' people. We can be patient in leading these people to maturity, but we must not draw from that the conclusion that we as a party are indifferent to religion. Höglund told me that my *ABC of Communism* states that we should be cautious in our struggle against religion.<sup>7</sup> That is of course quite correct. We need a differentiated approach. We must employ different methods in the struggle against religion among workers than is the case among peasants, among whom we must exhibit greater patience. Comrade Falk claims that it would be absolutely absurd at this time to launch a campaign against religion. He overlooks, however, that we have not begun any such campaign; it is rather Comrade Höglund who has initiated a campaign *in favour of* religion.

Now a few words regarding the comments by Comrade Falk. According to him, Zinoviev said in his speech that the Communist Party of Norway is hostile to the Communist International. In reality Zinoviev said the precise opposite. Comrade Falk says that we never discussed specific questions directly with the Norwegian party but rather went to individuals. Here too, that does not correspond to fact. We have gone a thousand times to the Norwegian party leadership and asked it to please send its representatives to Moscow so that we may be able to discuss these questions with them. That was not always done. Falk reproaches us for having linked up with a faction, but he forgets that it was the Norwegian party itself that chose its representative to us. Comrade Tranmael himself did not come.

As for the Mot Dag group, this matter should be discussed in a commission. Unfortunately, the Norwegian party has no great interest in international issues. As for the youth, I personally believe that in questions relating to relationships with the International, national discipline, when it conflicts with the International, is not obligatory for any member of the party or its affiliated organisations. This applies to any party member and also for any component part of the organisation as a whole. If there is a conflict between the International and the local section, any member, any youth organisation, and any party branch has the full right to be for the International and against its central leadership. If there is really good will among the Scandinavian comrades

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7 The *ABC of Communism* by Nikolai Bukharin and Yevgeny Preobrazhensky was published in 1920. Chapter eleven is devoted to 'Communism and Religion'.

to work hand-in-hand with the Communist International, we will find ways to overcome the differences. (*Applause*)

**Paul Böttcher** (Germany): The main policy question before the European parties is that of the united front and the workers' government. It is in Germany that the united front has so far been most successfully applied. When we apply this policy, however, we always have unavoidable disagreements on how to carry it out. In order to avoid any blurring of our basic principles, it is always necessary to emphasise the role of the Communist Party as leader in the struggle to establish the [proletarian] dictatorship.

The Fourth Congress established beyond any doubt that applying the united front must not entail any distortion of the proletarian dictatorship or revision of the principles of communism. We harbour the strongest mistrust against the Social-Democratic leaders because of the traitorous role that they have played in the past, and that they are objectively compelled to play in the future. But we have confidence in the Social-Democratic workers, trusting that they will struggle together with us. Communist parties must take hold of the united-front policy and experience it. In the German party, the opposition initially advanced the view that the united front could be achieved only from below. This point of view is wrong and has now been surmounted. The united front is our present political strategy, with which we not only expose the Social-Democratic leaders but also, simultaneously, lead the Social-Democratic and non-party workers toward specific, advanced arenas of struggle.

This perspective assumes that the Social-Democratic workers, even if they still belong to the Social-Democratic Party, will join the Communists in struggle. The demands raised in applying the united-front policy must be such that the Social-Democratic workers see them as immediately achievable. The united front is a pact in blood between Communist and Social-Democratic workers in the struggle against coalition politics and the bourgeoisie, and as such, it will naturally become a pact of these workers against the Social-Democratic leadership. Even our opposition had to concede that our implementation of the united front was winning different strongpoints for struggle that assisted the working class in subsequent battles. Winning these strongpoints is decisive. This leads the Social Democracy to break up because of its inner contradictions. It faces the question: workers' politics or bourgeois politics. The united front thus has an important result, expressed initially on an ideological level: the division of Social Democracy.

*A workers' government* can begin within the existing democratic institutions. Far from being a firmly anchored point, it is a shifting line that changes in appearance every day as a result of the entire dialectical period of transition.

Situations may arise in which we say to the Social-Democratic workers that we, as Communists, are willing to form a revolutionary coalition even with the Social-Democratic leaders, even though we know that these leaders will betray us at the first opportunity. The present very tense situation in Western Europe gives us grounds to believe that the first step may be not the formation of a workers' and peasants' government but rather a direct transition to a dictatorship of the proletariat. Nonetheless, we must reckon with a possibility that may become imperative, namely forming a workers' government as a revolutionary coalition with the Social Democracy and the trade-unions. Such a government must be based on working-class strongpoints outside parliament.

In Germany, we have organised workers sympathetic to the Communist Party in factory committees, workers' control commissions, and defence guards. All of these are expressions of the united front through which the Communist Party is conducting the struggle. Through the united front large portions of the Social-Democratic workers, who still maintain their membership in the Social-Democratic Party, have been won to us in their convictions. We must promote this process with all the means at our disposal. Our parties must be committed to winning political power, to victory, to leadership of the nation. Our party has not yet displayed this psychology in the struggle over the Ruhr.

A word to our Norwegian comrades: We have the feeling that the Norwegian party is not sufficiently linked to the other Communist parties. We hope that the Norwegian comrades will recognise that federalism causes severe damage to the movement. Strict centralism is the precondition enabling the Communist International to maintain leadership of the world revolution. (*Applause*)

*(The session is adjourned until the evening.)*

## Executive Committee Report – Discussion

*Continuation of discussion on Executive Committee report.*

*Speakers: Flieg, Shatskin, Ewert, Trachtenberg, Johnson.*

*(Šmeral opened the session at 8:00 p.m.)*

**Leopold Flieg** (Sweden): I would like to explain the discussion on centralism that took place in the Swedish party just after the Fourth Congress, one that is quite important for the Executive Committee. When the Central Committee heard the report of our delegation, Comrades Kilbom and Höglund were assigned to draft a resolution. They could not reach agreement and submitted two different proposals, which were then referred to another commission. It produced a resolution that was adopted. This led Comrade Höglund to resign from his leadership posts in the party and the International.<sup>1</sup>

In response to this resignation, an expanded meeting of the party leadership (National Committee) was convened. It adopted a resolution against centralisation of the Comintern. Previously, the Central Committee had rejected a proposal to invite the ECCI to this National Committee session. Then we had the conference in Kristiania, where there were negotiations with the ECCI representatives.<sup>2</sup> After this conference, Comrade Höglund declared in a session of the youth organisation's national committee that, given the statements of the ECCI's representative in Kristiania, the disagreements could be considered as resolved. At the same session he helped write a resolution that accepted unreservedly the Fourth World Congress decisions, but he did not want to publish this resolution.

Then Comrade Höglund, at the party congress, reverted to his previous position and called for the congress to declare its agreement with the reservations expressed by the expanded party leadership, that is, against centralisation of the Comintern.

Höglund's resignation statement stated that neither the Swedish party nor the Comintern was ready for further centralisation. This must be compared

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<sup>1</sup> Höglund later rescinded his resignation.

<sup>2</sup> The conference in Kristiania (Oslo) referred to was a meeting between the Swedish party leadership and Comintern representatives Bukharin, Kolarov, and Kobetsky that took place during the February 1923 congress of the Norwegian Labour Party.

with the statutes adopted by the party's recent congress, through which the party became one of the most centralised parties in the entire Comintern. This demonstrates that Comrade Höglund is quite genuinely for centralisation, but only when carried out under the leadership of the Swedish party's central leadership, and not centralisation in the Comintern. Höglund stated that we are not ready for centralisation because we have such significant federalist traditions! In order to combat this Social-Democratic federalism we should surely not be continually advocating federalism in the fashion of Comrade Höglund. One would hope that he would take a stand right away for advocacy of centralism. Quite the contrary, he started speaking out against centralism.

Now as to the question of religion: Comrade Höglund says that it is of little importance for our party in Sweden. So why then did he propose a resolution at our party congress similar to his article? Comrade Höglund claims that he wrote the article because party branches in Stockholm had organised meetings in which the question of communism and religion was to be discussed. But what was the origin of these discussion meetings? They originated when a member of the party leadership, Kata Dalström, privately organised some lectures on the question of theosophy, Buddhism, and spiritualism. She talked in these lectures about chairs that walk, tables that rise, and so on, and strongly criticised the educational work undertaken by the youth federation and the party. Neither the party leadership nor Comrade Höglund made any criticism of this lecture. It was only after Comrade Nerman discussed Comrade Dalström's ideas in the lecture that Höglund wrote his article.

Höglund says that if we start up anti-religious education in Sweden, the entire Communist workers' movement will disappear. That is quite wrong. Comrade Höglund based his viewpoint on an incorrect translation of a speech by Comrade Zinoviev. Our task in Sweden is to continue our Marxist educational work.

**Lazar A. Shatskin** (Youth International): The question raised by Höglund's article 'Communism and Religion' is important and central for the Communist Youth International, especially with regard to developing the worldview of the Communist Youth. According to Höglund's article, religion is a private matter even for the Communist Party. From a Marxist viewpoint, that is completely wrong. As early as 1905, Lenin wrote as follows:

So far as the party of the socialist proletariat is concerned, religion is not a private affair. Our Party is an association of class-conscious, advanced fighters for the emancipation of the working class. Such an association cannot and must not be indifferent to lack of class-consciousness, ignor-

ance, or obscurantism in the shape of religious beliefs. We demand complete disestablishment of the Church so as to be able to combat the religious fog with purely ideological and solely ideological weapons, by means of our press and by word of mouth. But we founded our association, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, precisely for such a struggle against every religious bamboozling of the workers.<sup>3</sup>

Comrade Höglund's point of view is far closer to that of social-democratic 'toleration' than Lenin's Marxist position. Religious believers were surely always much stronger in Russia than in Sweden, but this did not mean that the revolutionary party's anti-religious education led it to become a sect.

With regard to democratic centralism, Comrade Falk has advanced here the viewpoint of the Swedish opposition rather than what he advocated in Norway, which was principled opposition to centralism in the International. The contrast between the Second and Third Internationals with regard to centralism is closely related to their political character. The Communist International is an International of the deed. That is why it needs to draw together tightly and coordinate its forces. The Norwegian comrades' position on this question is a holdover from Social Democracy. In Hamburg too it was decided to apply discipline in international questions but to give parties a free hand on national issues.<sup>4</sup> The Communist Youth International has had an elected executive leadership ever since its formation, and the results have not been bad at all. The Scandinavian comrades' demand for a modification of this provision must be rejected as incorrect.

Falk's charges that the Norwegian youth stirred up opposition to the party are incorrect. The Communist Youth Federation of Norway accepts the framework of the Communist International and is therefore in opposition to the party. It is our duty to ensure that the Communist Youth continue to defend in Norway the viewpoint of the Communist International.

As for anti-militarist work, up to now it has rested almost entirely on the shoulders of the Communist Youth International. This situation needs to be changed. The Communist International needs to direct its organisations to take part in this work and reinforce it.

As regards the fusion of the Socialist and Communist parties of Italy, the Italian youth have had a better experience. The Communist Youth did not sab-

3 Lenin, 'Socialism and Religion', in *LCW*, 10, pp. 85–6.

4 A reference to the May 1923 Hamburg Congress that fused the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. See p. 385, n. 6.

otage the fusion. At the congress of the Socialist Youth, there was an 80 per cent majority in favour of fusion.<sup>5</sup>

The workers' and peasants' government slogan requires ambitious theoretical education regarding the peasant question. It would be good if Comrade Bukharin could write a theoretical document on this question, perhaps in the form of a small pamphlet. When Comintern parties undertake more energetic agitation among the peasantry, it should not be forgotten that the party's composition must remain predominantly proletarian.

**Arthur Ewert** (Germany): A number of incorrect points of view have been expressed in the Scandinavian workers' press regarding the question of an armed insurrection. In one interview, Comrade Tranmael dwells on Moscow's extreme insistence on the use of weapons and cites the Kapp Putsch in Germany as an example of the workers' ability to achieve victory even without weapons. That is a typical Social-Democratic point of view. In addition, it does not correspond to fact. During the Kapp Putsch the German working class did in fact take up arms, and only after it had been disarmed was it beaten down.<sup>6</sup>

We must also strongly protest the view of Comrade Tranmael that the Executive Committee, by wielding a big stick, hindered the recovery of the German party. In our view, centralism in the Comintern is far from being sufficiently developed. It is true that a general staff capable of intervening authoritatively regarding the policies, tactics, and tasks of the individual parties cannot be created overnight. It will be constituted only over a lengthy period of development.

The most important question posed here by Comrade Zinoviev related to the workers' and peasants' government. This is important not only for agrarian but also for industrialised countries. In Germany the industrial proletariat is the decisive social layer. Even so, proletarian victory will be possible only when we succeed in at least neutralising two million peasants. In Germany the question of the workers' and peasants' government is not new, because the Spartacus League already turned to small peasants through its slogans and actions. Our task will be to formulate this slogan in such a way that it is clear to the working masses that we are speaking of *working* peasants.

Now a few words on the national question. When the conflict over the Ruhr broke out,<sup>7</sup> this question was not posed in Germany with sufficient clarity, and

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5 The Italian Socialist Youth Federation held its congress in Milan 6–7 January 1923. The congress voted to unreservedly endorse the Comintern's Twenty-One Points while retaining its affiliation to the PSI, and it called for a joint action committee with the Communist Youth.

6 For the Kapp Putsch, see p. 74–5, n. 14.

7 For the 1923 conflict over the French occupation of the Ruhr, see p. 387, n. 10.

even in the party there were various disagreements that have only recently been overcome. The challenge in Germany is not particularly difficult, because the bourgeoisie itself is betraying Germany and selling the country piece by piece to the Entente. The question is more difficult in other countries. During the Ruhr conflict we have seen the first steps toward collaboration between the French and German Communist parties. True, this collaboration is lacking in various ways, but this does not take away from its great importance as a first step.

**Karl Radek:** The debate at this plenum presents a picture entirely different in character from what the international proletariat witnessed in Hamburg. Previously we were told that there was no intellectual life in the Communist International. In Hamburg, as we saw, not a single issue was discussed publicly. When Modigliani took the floor in discussion of the Russian question, he had to push his way through physically in order to give expression to the conflict.<sup>8</sup> The place where genuine workers have the opportunity to discuss disputed issues objectively is at our congresses. In my opinion, it will be very helpful if our Scandinavian comrades, when speaking about centralism, consider the lessons of our work here.

Falk says that, yes, the Executive Committee should take decisions on international questions but should not intervene regarding local, that is, national issues. How does he think this is going to work? How can Comrade Falk review and correct the work of the Communist Party if he is opposed to taking decisions at our congresses on issues affecting our individual parties? The two German comrades who spoke today were able to demonstrate that their party is making progress and has achieved victories. Everyone who heard them speak felt that they were accurately expressing the feelings of the German party. Comrades, recall the Third Congress, where we battled with the German party regarding the March Action.<sup>9</sup> I am convinced that there is not a single comrade in Germany who would not agree that the intervention at that time by the International, along with the collective discussion, helped them in assuring that this year's provocation by the German bourgeoisie – much greater than that of March 1921 – got nowhere because of the experience the party had gained.<sup>10</sup>

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8 Modigliani's speech at the Social Democrats' Hamburg Congress can be found in *Labour and Socialist International 1923*, pp. 37–40.

9 For the March Action, see p. 194, n. 9.

10 In Radek's report on the world political situation in Session 6, he details what the German bourgeoisie's provocation in the Ruhr crisis consisted of. See pp. 490–1 and 506.

And that intervention was carried out not by the Executive Committee but by the International through its congress.

Comrades, the question of religion cropped up here – accidentally, it would seem – because of an article by Höglund. I believe that the discussion has already provided some evidence that we have not encountered this problem merely because of a piece of paper, an article by Höglund. This will become increasingly clear as we proceed. This question can be of great international significance for us. And once again, the exchange of opinions around this specific case will help us overcome a danger and understand a matter that has international significance and is important for every party.

We have two types of questions: first, those relating to *consolidating* the individual parties that already exist, and second, to *broadening our foundations*. With respect to consolidating the International, the Italian and Norwegian questions are closely related.

The presentation by Comrade Urbani on the Italian question was directed sharply against the Executive Committee.<sup>11</sup> He tells us that we should show him when his party sabotaged the decisions of the Communist International. He points to Comrade Dmitry [Manuilsky] as a witness to this. Nonetheless, we are sufficiently familiar with the attitude of the Italian party from the last congress, and that alone is enough to show that the party does bear a degree of responsibility for developments related to the Italian question.

Comrade Urbani says that Vella and Nenni are also to blame. But that does not speak in favour of the Italian party. Precisely because individual leaders of the Socialist Party wanted to sabotage the fusion, our party had to step forward to block this sabotage. Our Italian friends are outstanding comrades, and anyone who has dealings with them in Italy returns impressed. But that must not prevent us from pointing out their errors. This does not constitute an intervention by an outside agency, but an *exchange of international experiences*.

According to Comrade Falk, they are quite prepared to discuss centralism with us, but we are making unsubstantiated allegations. Comrade Falk, did you not write an article in *Mot Dag* portraying the Communist Party of Germany as an unimportant group of intellectuals, lacking in any influence, while the same issue ran a hymn of praise to Stinnes? When I was in Kristiania in January, an article appeared in *Social-Demokraten* by Comrade Bull during the negotiations claiming that delegates to Communist International congresses were forced by the ECCI's terror to vote against their convictions, and that these congresses are

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11 For the presentation by Urbani (Terracini) in Session 2, see pp. 426–7.

therefore a farce. I ask you whether these are innocent matters, showing us that centralism is merely a question of 'more' or 'less'? This article demonstrates that we are dealing with ailments within a very good proletarian party.<sup>12</sup>

Comrade Falk, I concede that Bukharin, Zinoviev, and I are not Norwegians, and it may well happen that we attribute to *Mot Dag* a quotation that was actually from *Social-Demokraten* or that we do not know that Johanssen was not a member of the party.<sup>13</sup> But Zinoviev's political judgment of the Norwegian party is certainly no misunderstanding. The Executive Committee judged the situation correctly. At one time, the Norwegian comrades approved the decisions of the Communist International and recognised its authority on all questions, but now they oppose it. So we ask them: What is your point of view now?

The Norwegian party is a healthy proletarian party, and anyone who tries to initiate its split from the International is going to get their fingers burned. The party suffers because it has not been touched by great events. Its present situation flows from the historical experience that it has undergone. However, this limitation must be overcome, not through a diktat but through unity with the Norwegian comrades. Either the *leading* comrades will understand this, or comrades *outside the leadership* will understand it.

As for the broadened foundations of our activity, three questions must be taken up: the workers' and peasants' government, the national question, and the religious question.

Let me start with the question of *religion*. Every revolutionary class that aims to win power boldly proclaims '*ni maître ni dieu*' – no lord, no God, as the French bourgeoisie puts it. No class that aims to bring down the old power has failed to shake its fist at God. Höglund writes Communist articles about the mysteries of life and death. I was always of the view that we should leave it to the bourgeoisie to think about death, since for us it comes all too soon, and the less we think about it, the better. Höglund writes that communism cannot answer this question and says that religion in itself is different from religion in the service

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12 Radek appears to be paraphrasing an article by Bull that appeared in the 14 January 1923 issue of *Social-Demokraten*, which stated, 'This is the stage of development in the history of the International in which we find ourselves. The transformation of the International from a basis of trust to one of obedience goes full steam ahead. The idea in Moscow is to make the world congress a gramophone record of the ECCI. The national executive in Kristiania is to be compelled into obedience through faith, while representatives of the ECCI become the party's lords and masters.'

13 Karl Johanssen was a journalist for *Social-Demokraten* who repeatedly wrote anti-Communist articles; he was expelled by the Comintern Fourth Congress.

of the bourgeoisie: these are symptoms of old age. This is not the thinking and manner of speech of a revolutionary party and a revolutionary leader. It is tedious to cogitate about such questions.

I believe religion to be an important question, involving more than simply a faux pas by Höglund. We can well be thankful for this article, because it confronted us quite unexpectedly with a question that plays an enormous role in the English-speaking countries and the Netherlands and carries weight both in the Catholic and Protestant countries. The question is how we reconcile the following two things. Our world outlook is anti-religious. There is no Communist Party that wants to conquer the world while conceding heaven to the Lord God. We cannot leave God sitting comfortably in heaven, because he is a tool of capitalism.

For us it is enough to know that the British Labour Party begins its congresses with a religious ceremony, that it has taken such an interest in persecuted and innocent Polish and Orthodox priests and even Jewish rabbis, that it wants to hold Comrade Newbold hostage for Cieplak.<sup>14</sup> Then there is the Netherlands, where the majority of workers are in the ranks not of the Social-Democratic but the Christian trade unions. And in Sweden, when the Liberal Party split, a portion of the workers and small peasants unified on a religious basis. Taking these facts into account, we see a question that we must clarify.

We are a party with an atheist world outlook. And as Comrade Bukharin already said, our atheist outlook is something that must be presented to the masses with caution. What does that mean? We are not merely atheists; we are a Communist Party that struggles for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This does not mean that, in approaching the backward masses, we are obligated from the first moment on to present them with our entire programme. That is what makes the difference between agitation and propaganda. Agitation directs the attention of the broad masses to the most important questions. Only when the masses have been attracted and drawn closer to the party do we go further. We draw the conclusions. We continue until they are members of the Communist Party, and then we can give them Bukharin's book about materialism.<sup>15</sup> But no one starts with Bukharin's book. Do you think that the Communist

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14 Jan Cieplak was a Roman Catholic bishop in the Soviet Union who was arrested and tried for counterrevolutionary activities in March 1923, in which he was sentenced to death. Cieplak's sentence was commuted and he was sent to Poland in 1924 in a prisoner exchange.

Walton Newbold was the British Communist Party's sole member of Parliament, elected in 1922.

15 Bukharin's book, *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology*, can be found online at Marxists Internet Archive.

International is asking you to go to the peasants and, first off, demand that they break from the Lord God, and before they sign such a statement, we want to have nothing to do with them? Our atheist standpoint must be subordinated to the goals we are pursuing in any given situation.

As Comrade Bukharin said earlier, we conduct agitation differently among peasants than we do among workers. We speak differently to an industrial worker familiar with electricity than we do to a fisherman living in some hut in Norway, reading the Bible the long winter through – a poor fisherman indeed. Comrade Zinoviev said that in Russia we expel comrades from the party for having baptised their children. We are right to do so. We are a besieged fortress. A soldier that is not capable of withstanding the influence of his aunt or grandmother will be even less able to stand firm in the moment of danger.

The German comrades say that 50 per cent of the members of their party still have a formal relationship to the church. No one is proposing to expel those who still belong to the church. The German party has always resisted the demands of comrades in the big workers' centres who demand that the party insist that its members be compelled to leave the church. Let Comrade Höglund write an article against such demands for expulsion of party comrades who have religious ideas. Let him write that Communists do not believe in either God or the devil, but in order to defeat capitalism, the proletariat must overcome the fear of God and the devil. Let him say that so long as the working masses still harbour deep-rooted religious notions, even while taking part in the struggle, we will deal gently with this superstition – combat it, but deal gently with it. No comrade would say a word against such an article by Höglund.

We call for the greatest caution with respect to the masses who still have such prejudices. But we do demand of the party's *leaders* that at least in basic issues of the party's world outlook they think clearly and speak clearly to the masses. Not a step backward from our atheist point of view. The *Morning Post* in Britain said with regard to our atheist newspaper that anyone who is not aware that the Bolsheviks do not belong to human society must recognise this fact when they see how the Bolsheviks abuse God. Anyone in Britain who does not have the courage to say, 'I am an atheist', who does not have the courage for this struggle in the English-speaking countries, will also lack the courage to speak out for the goal of communism.

Comrades, in order to win the masses, we take into account the psyche and the prejudices of the working class, displaying deep consideration for their erroneous beliefs and half-formed thoughts. In the same way, we will proceed cautiously regarding [religious] questions.

Now a few words about the *peasant question*. We are not dealing here, as Höglund asserts, with a new slogan. We have long since broken with the social-

democratic approach of not wanting to have anything to do with the peasants. Ewert has already referred to the fact that when the revolution in Germany was still alive, in Germany in 1919, the Communist Party of Germany set about developing an agrarian programme.<sup>16</sup> In Italy the comrades did too little on this question, but they grappled with it. It would be crazy not to recognise that in France, a peasant country *par excellence*, the agrarian question, the relationship to the peasantry, is the decisive issue in the revolution. The content of this question is thus not new. The reason we are presenting it now is that we feel that things are going forward. We need a new hook on the wall on which to hang things that are new.

But mere economic demands to improve the lot of the peasants are not enough. There must be a culmination. We must tell the peasants that they have no prospects of improving their lot until we and they take power. The Bolshevik Party was very early in orienting to the peasants, but only in the slogan of the 1905 revolution – for a coalition with the peasants – did this assume great significance.<sup>17</sup> Coalition with the peasants does not mean, however, that in Poland we form a coalition with Witos and in France with the Radical Socialists. Those are counterrevolutionary peasant parties, and we are not going to join in coalitions with any such formation.

The national question, that is, the party's declaration that it will be the party of the nation, is in Britain merely a propagandistic formulation of the final goal. But in Germany things are different. There the national question has quite a different meaning. It is significant that a National Socialist paper, *Das Gewissen*, spoke out strongly in its last issue against suspicions of the Communists. It termed them a party of struggle that 'is every day becoming more national Bolshevik'. In 1920 national Bolshevism signified an alliance to rescue the generals who had immediately after the [November 1918] victory smashed the Communist Party.<sup>18</sup> Today, however, national Bolshevism signifies the pervasive feeling that salvation is to be found only through the Communists. We repres-

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16 Ewert's comments on this can be found in Session 3 on p. 439.

17 During Russia's 1905 revolution and in the years leading up to 1917, the Bolsheviks put forward the governmental slogan of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

18 'National Bolshevism' was a current in the KPD and then KAPD in 1919–20, led by Fritz Wolffheim and Heinrich Laufenberg. It contended that Germany as a whole had been proletarianised and called for a national alliance of the German nation to wage a revolutionary war against the Entente powers. Along these lines it urged cooperation with right-wing nationalist forces on an anti-Versailles programme. The Wolffheim-Laufenberg current was expelled from the KAPD in August 1920.

ent today the only road forward. Strong emphasis on the nation in Germany today is a revolutionary act, just as it is in the colonies. Our French comrades have to grasp this. If Poincaré continues to wreak havoc in France for another few years, the French party too will have to speak as the German party does today.

Höglund accused the Executive Committee of errors and said he would demonstrate that later on. He will not succeed in this. However much the ECCI has been criticised by various friends, not one of them was in a position to demonstrate that things could have been done better. The resolution submitted on this question must present new tasks for the coming months in such a way as not to arouse new disputes and to enable the Communist International to take a step forward. (*Loud applause*)

**Alexander Trachtenberg** (United States): I was glad to hear Zinoviev's remarks on the impressive steps forward taken by the American party during the last year. If the American party has improved, it is because of the decisions taken at the last international congress. The new slogan of the International regarding a workers' government is very useful in the United States. In contrast to Europe, the United States does not have a large peasant population. It does, however, have a large mass of farmers, whose status has recently become similar to that of European peasants. Many are gradually losing the land they obtained without charge twenty-five years ago and are becoming landless tenant farmers. Statistics issued in recent years show that 75 per cent of farms are burdened with mortgages, and that farmers' debts have increased 130 per cent since 1910. The number of farmers has decreased because many have moved to the cities. Their transitory wartime prosperity has since been halted by the railways, the grain elevator companies, and other intermediaries.

This situation has led the farmers to form their own political party. In the few years of its existence, the Non-Partisan League has scored significant political victories. It demands the nationalisation of the railways, grain depots, grain elevators, and the like.<sup>19</sup>

In recognition of this fact, the Workers Party has adopted the slogan of a government of workers and working farmers. This slogan also has its dangers. The Socialist Party of America has also turned to the farming population but let itself be persuaded to fuse with the Non-Partisan League and other similar

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19 The Non-Partisan League was founded in 1915 as a populist formation in the US, originating in the Upper Midwest. It advocated state control of farm-related industries and banks as a way of reducing corporate power.

political parties, with the result that the Socialist Party has completely disappeared in several states. It must be emphasised that the American party takes that danger into account in advancing our slogan.

**Johnson** [Charles Scott] (Canada): Canada is an overwhelmingly agricultural country with a large population of poor and small tenant farmers. These farmers are in such a hopeless situation that many of them are selling their farms. In the western states, there are 150,000 farmers who have emigrated from Ukraine and Russia. Last year they sent a delegation to our party's district conference in Manitoba and sought help from the party. The farmers' organisations are controlled by the big grain producers, and the delegation asked our conference to help them in forming a separate party for poor farmers.

That conference forwarded this request to a national conference.<sup>20</sup> After discussing the matter, the national conference said that the party had too little experience in this arena and was too poorly informed to adopt a policy. However, the principle of a workers' and peasants' government proposed by the International was adopted. Still, the party faces the question of whether poor peasants can be accepted into the party, or whether they should be organised in a separate farmers' league. The party established a commission for further study of this question.

*(The session is adjourned at 11:30 p.m.)*

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20 The Second Convention of the Workers' (Communist) Party of Canada was held in Toronto 22–25 February 1923.

## Executive Committee Report – Discussion

*Continuation of discussion on Executive Committee report.*

*Speakers: Negri, Koritschoner, Newbold, Rosmer, Zápotocký, Kolarov, Beruzzi, Amter.*

**Negri** [Mauro Scoccimarro] (Italy): The Italian delegation is in agreement with Comrade Zinoviev's report and especially with the Executive Committee's position on the questions of centralism and the workers' and peasants' government. We hope that centralism of the Communist International as set down in the Fourth Congress decisions will receive emphasis.<sup>1</sup> No concessions are possible on this point. We are in complete agreement with the Executive Committee's stand on the Scandinavian question.

We do not consider the workers' government to be in any sense a definitive solution. Nor is it a pacifist interlude. Rather it is a transitional phase that reflects a transitory relationship of forces. This stage must lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat; otherwise it will lead to reaction. Its task is to prepare the first of these paths.

We accept without reservation the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government. We never thought in terms of anything other than a workers' and peasants' government, because it is required by the situation in Italy. Among 12 million toilers, we have 4 million workers and 8 million peasants; half of the latter are wage labourers and the other half are peasant landowners.

*(In response to Zinoviev's speech, Negri reads quotations indicating the position of the Italian party on the agrarian question.)*

The old Socialist Party committed errors in this field, but the new Communist Party has succeeded in winning the peasants' sympathies.

In order to ensure that the peasants' mode of thought does not penetrate our party, it is essential that those who are manoeuvring with the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government possess an ideology that is absolutely clear and proletarian. Here we in Italy encounter the problem of the fusion [with the Socialist Party]. Our strictness on this question has been criticised. There was neither sabotage nor reluctance on our part regarding the Socialists. In order to

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Decisions on the Reorganisation of the Executive Committee and Its Future Activity', in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1133–7.

assure the success of the revolution, we are ready to ally with the devil. But it is essential that the party that emerges from the unification be purely proletarian and Communist.

**Franz Koritschoner** (Austria): Zinoviev's remarks represent a great step forward, offering us new fields of work. All governments that we have had in Austria so far have been founded on collaboration with the propertied peasantry. Agitation in rural areas for a government of the workers and poor peasants will aid us in coming closer to layers that until now have marched under reactionary leadership, and in winning the rural areas of Austria for the revolutionary class struggle.

But the slogan must be formulated as Comrade Varga proposed: For a government of workers and working peasants. Otherwise it would have a truly counterrevolutionary impact in our country, since the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government amounts to the same thing as a coalition of the workers' aristocracy and the large peasants.

At present Austria is nothing more than a colonial territory. It is entirely subject to the rule of the League of Nations. This has resulted in the complete loss of political and economic independence, enormous joblessness, rising impoverishment of the masses, and billions in taxes laid on the working population.<sup>2</sup>

Hamburg undoubtedly signifies the bankruptcy of Austrian Menshevism,<sup>3</sup> but we must not overlook that it has created a closer unity and a better and more fully organised alliance in struggle against communism. It would be dangerous to underestimate this. Right now we must not dismantle the centralism of the Communist International, but rather maintain it and develop it further. By continuing along our line of march, we will broaden the periphery of sympathisers around the Communist Party. Even now, in the trade-union arena, we note that the number who are under the influence of our slogans is at least ten times as great as the number of our organised Communists.

The most urgent task of the Executive Committee, especially with regard to the parties in Central Europe, is to draw together the partial struggles in differ-

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2 Austria was created from the main German-speaking regions of the dissolved Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I. Under the Treaty of Saint-Germain of 1919, the victorious Allied powers set territorial borders that allocated some German-speaking areas of the old empire to Czechoslovakia as well as imposing other conditions on the new country.

3 The Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Austria, whose leading members were Friedrich Adler and Otto Bauer, had been the leading party in the Two-and-a-Half International with strong Marxist pretensions. This theoretical current was often referred to as 'Austro-Marxism'.

ent countries and thus increase the coordination of actions on an international scale. Such coordination in the Danubian and Balkan states will bring us great success in the struggle against reformism and fascism.

**Walton Newbold** (Britain): The British delegation objects to the tone of Zinoviev's speech with regard to nationalism and the colonies, but it will explain its views first in the commission meeting.

The united-front policy is steadily increasing the party's influence throughout the country. In many trade unions, especially among the machinists and miners, the Communists are taking the leadership. They have gained a firm foothold in the union councils.

The leaders of the Labour Party proposed a motion at the party's Edinburgh Conference last year for the expulsion of the Communist Party. At the next yearly Labour Party conference, at least thirteen trade-union councils and two large trade unions will favour the Communists' affiliation.<sup>4</sup>

As for the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, this was adopted by the British Communist Party with enthusiasm. Nonetheless we prefer Varga's formulation: for a government of workers and working peasants. The progressive workers' movement in England has always neglected the agricultural workers. There was no peasantry in England. It was driven into the colonies or into the cities back in the eighteenth century. There is a large peasantry in Ireland, and the slogan will surely provide a stimulus to the Irish party's development.

With regard to religion, the British Communist Party believes that it is necessary to attack the churches, but that this can best be done by the educational institutions led directly or indirectly by the party. The Communists are strongest in the mining districts of West Scotland and South Wales, but religiousness is still quite strong among the mineworkers. Similarly, the entire Irish peasantry are devout Catholics. In Ireland, an attack on religion would make the party's development impossible for many years. The British party is always

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4 The Labour Party's Twenty-Second annual conference, held in Edinburgh 27–30 June 1922, approved a resolution designed to exclude Communists that stated, 'Every person nominated to serve as a delegate shall individually accept the constitution and principles of the Labour Party'; and 'No person shall be eligible as a delegate who is a member of any organisation having for one of its objects the return to Parliament or to any local governing authority of a candidate or candidates other than such as have been endorsed by the Labour Party, or have been approved as running in association with the Labour Party.' At the Labour Party conference the following year (London, 26–29 June 1923), however, there was a significant increase in support for CP affiliation, although the conference did not overturn the ban.

criticised for lacking influence on the masses. Would it not be better, therefore, to attack religion indirectly rather than directly?

**Alfred Rosmer** (France): With regard to the question of centralism and the relations between the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions, the French delegation can recount some useful experiences. Höglund believes that the Executive Committee made errors regarding the Norwegian party on the basis of incorrect information. The opponents of the Communist International have said the same thing regarding the French question for a long time. Another article, by Tranmael, contains an argument that is just as well known: 'The International is trying to force us into passive obedience.' Tranmael is two-faced here: sometimes he is against exaggerated centralism; at other times he acts like a left Communist. Those who talk in this way in France are now outside the Communist International and are headed toward the Second International.

Falk tried to draw a line between the Communist International and its sections. That is very difficult. We ask the Scandinavian comrades to speak to the Executive Committee's relationship to the French question. Has experience really shown that the ECCI was in error? What Negri said today shows that the Scandinavians are wrong to refer to the opinion of the Italians who, we see, are supporters of centralism and even consider it to still be insufficient. Tranmael said: 'Either a break from our revolutionary tradition or a break with the Communist International.' Statements like that are impermissible. Recall Frossard, who positioned himself in the same way between French tradition and the Communist International. The first precondition for resolving the conflict is to stop posing the question in this way.

Duret's speech surprised the delegation that came from France.<sup>5</sup> Duret has been in Moscow for six months, during which he has completely ignored the French party, sent it no information, and expressed no criticisms of it. Yet he criticised the party sharply from this platform. He would not have done that had he the slightest connection with the party. Treint, who is in substantial agreement with us, is the only defender of the unfortunate formulation of 'worker imperialism'. His article was published only with reservations. There is no way to prevent a functionary from committing stupidities from time to time. Duret knows that better than anyone. As regards Treint's answer to the Dissidents, we did not wait for Duret's criticism before setting things right. We have applied the united-front policy with a degree of success, which is reflected in the con-

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5 For Duret's speech in Session 2, see pp. 424–5.

fusion within the ranks of the reformist CGT. We would be further along now had we not lost half a year in a fruitless discussion on this policy, which Duret forced on us.

As regards Hamburg, Höglund said that it is dangerous to underestimate the unification of the two Internationals. It is true that this clarifies the situation for Communists, but it's also true that it can create illusions. We must therefore expose the Social-Democratic initiative in Hamburg. The best way to combat the new Social-Democratic International, however, is to counterpose another International that does not resemble it at all and does not bicker over belonging to and supporting the Communist International, the way the Scandinavians do.

**Antonín Zápotocký** (Czechoslovakia): The question of the workers' and peasants' government is for us not a slogan of general propaganda; rather it is beginning to become an important issue of everyday politics. This slogan presents us in Czechoslovakia with very interesting openings for political development. We do not want to undertake anything that would be in conflict with the International's intentions, and so we feel an obligation to alert you to the situation we face. What has been said so far in the discussion is not enough for us. We need the general slogans to be *made more specific*.

The power of the workers' movement has been declining recently. Given this situation, it is much harder to lead initiatives in struggle. As a result, the disputes regarding the possibility of creating a workers' government through the parliamentary road have ended in failure. But this perspective comes to the fore at once as soon as the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government is raised.

The present governmental coalition is fractured along several axes. There is great tension between the party of the industrial and financial bourgeoisie, led by Dr. Kramář, and the Agrarian Party. Meanwhile, the Agrarian Party itself is breaking up, and one wing of it would be a natural ally for us. We can hasten this process of fracturing and promote the growth of the peasants' self-confidence to the degree that we pose the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government in specific terms.

Another sign of decomposition in the enemy camp is the evident tension between the Masaryk-Beneš group on one side and the National Democrats and Kramář on the other. These antagonisms are so strong that the bourgeois forces are divided even in the sphere of foreign policy.

The workers' and peasants' government is also advanced by supporters of the so-called Socialist Union,<sup>6</sup> which uses the following specific slogans among

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6 The Socialist Union in Czechoslovakia was formed in March 1923 as a left social-democratic

others: a workers' and peasants' government; establishment of relations with Russia; approval of a state loan of a billion Czech korunas; a guarantee for exports to Russia; and so on.

How should the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia respond to these slogans, which over time could very well become popular?

We are fully aware of the fact that voting in elections is only a trigger, a stimulus, to bring this concept into motion. The real power and support for such a government must of course come from outside parliament, from the masses and their independent mass organisations. The workers' and peasants' government must consider, before it is born, what real means are available for its defence.

Czechoslovakia is a small country, but it has international significance. The strength of our party could become a cause for embarrassment if we are unable to develop a clear and specific line for the transitional period. There is a danger of opportunism in defining a goal for the transition, but this exists only if it is considered to be a final goal. In the present situation, the united front is not merely a manoeuvre to expose opponents. It is a genuine and serious struggle through which we can win new positions and move forward in a way that leads to positive gains.

As for the national question, we agree completely with the formulation proposed by Comrade Zinoviev. I will add only that it is *not only national antagonisms* that led to differences of opinion between the Czech and German textile workers; the confused situation around the Red International of Labour Unions was also a factor.

**Vasil Kolarov (Bulgaria):** The united-front policy has been studied sufficiently in terms of the industrialised countries. Where do things stand with the agrarian countries, the peasant masses, who are organised politically? The proletariat cannot take power in these countries without the peasants' active support. The Communist Party and the trade unions linked to it are virtually the only organisations of the proletariat. The Social Democracy and the non-party groups do not amount to anything. The difference between workers' and peasants' organisations lies in the fact that the former have a class character, while the peasants build associations that include both rich and poor. When these group-

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organisation that sought to unify the various socialist currents outside the CP. The party, affiliated to the Labour and Socialist International, broke apart in 1925, with some joining the CP and others remaining in the social-democratic movement.

ings achieve power, they defend capital and oppress the workers' movement – that is integral to their politics.

Despite these circumstances, we have had to form a united front with the Agrarians [National Agrarian Union] several times: for agrarian reform, for prosecution of the governments responsible for the war, and against the first attempt of the bourgeois parties to carry out a coup using the bankrupt Wrangel forces. The coup that drove the Peasant Party from power appears to be directed against the working masses of city and countryside.<sup>7</sup> The biggest barrier to a united front with the peasants consists of the fact that our party must defend its rights and even its existence against the peasant government.

In a country like ours there is no doubt about a workers' and peasants' government, while in industrialised countries the workers' and peasants' government slogan has the more propagandistic goal of neutralising the peasant class. In the agrarian countries the prospect of a [proletarian] dictatorship can win new authority in the form of a workers' and peasants' dictatorship. Several months have passed since the Bulgarian Communist Party adopted the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government. It was so warmly received that this caused unrest among the peasant leaders and was a major cause of their policy of terrorism against our party. If the present coup marks the beginning of a civil war, which seems to be the case, our party will have to make common cause with the agrarian federation, and that could lead to a workers' and peasants' government.

It would be useful to return here to the national question, which in principle was resolved at the Second Comintern Congress. This question is being raised with great vehemence in the Balkans, where it may well trigger a war. We need precise decisions that are adapted to every possibility. This should be taken up at the next world congress.

On the Italian question, I am in agreement with what Zinoviev has said. The mistakes of the Italian Communist Party result from the conception of the party held by some Italian comrades. The theses adopted by the most recent Italian congress indicate that these fighters do not understand the difference between a mass party and a sect.<sup>8</sup> The Scandinavian comrades, who support centralism in principle, have a vacillating position, shot through with ambiguity, in practice laying charges of despotism. They support centralism for the Eastern [European] countries and the Southeast, but not for the West. At

7 For the Bulgarian coup, see pp. 384–5, n. 5.

8 Presumably a reference to the 'Theses on the Tactics of the PCI' (Rome Theses) adopted by the PCI's Second Congress of 20–25 March 1922. It can be found in Hoare (ed.) 1978, pp. 93–117.

home they apply a strict centralism, but they do not want the International to practice this toward them. I hope that the debates will lead to a clarification.

**Beruzzi** [Dmitry Manuilsky]: The Polish Communists should express their views on the national question. As yet they have not made clear their attitude towards the Ukrainians. It is essential for the Ukrainian party to know what this attitude is. The Polish Communist Party must demand for the oppressed nationalities the right to separate from the country into which they were incorporated by force.<sup>9</sup>

At the [Comintern's] Fourth Congress, the Italian Communist Party accepted the resolutions that were proposed.<sup>10</sup> It has been stated that this party is accepting the Communist International's decisions only out of discipline. But no enthusiasm can be expected with regard to a marriage of convenience with Vella and Nenni. Nonetheless, the party conscientiously carried out the adopted decisions, and the accusations against it are somewhat exaggerated.

[...] that this is the result of errors by the Communist Party.<sup>11</sup> That amounts to saying it was incorrect of them to allow themselves to be defeated. I have heard opinions of that sort from German comrades; since the 1921 March Action, however, they have discovered that there are exceptions to this historical law. Can a party take up the struggle without running the risk of being defeated? The Paris Commune was defeated; this also happened to the Russian revolution of 1905. Are there grounds to say that this was the fault of the Communards and the Bolsheviks?

The situation in Italy was objectively revolutionary in 1919, but the Communist Party was still in a formative stage. By the time the party saw the light of day, the counterrevolution had already triumphed. Thus the accusation against the Italian comrades is unfounded. It is said that Mussolini triumphed because he was able to win the peasant masses, while the Italian Communist Party proved incapable of this. That has not been proven. Is it appropriate to review our policy on the agrarian question? As for the Italian Communist Party's approach to fascism, I believe that its error consisted in devoting too much attention to internal, organisational questions and not enough to influencing and drawing together the masses. This is also true of the period since fascism gained power.

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9 This paragraph is taken from the *Inprecorr* version.

10 The Fourth Congress resolution on the Italian question can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1138–42.

11 The first part of this sentence is omitted in the German published text.

Without making any accusation but rather in the very cordial tone appropriate for revolutionaries who have my full admiration, we can submit their errors to a review. I believe, for example, that the Italian Communist Party has made too little use of the possibilities for agitation since the assassination of Vorovsky.<sup>12</sup> There is also an anti-colonial tradition in Italy that the party could have made use of.

I am in agreement, with some reservations, regarding the Executive Committee's position on the Italian question. It is appropriate to take internal measures in the Italian Communist Party, and they do not express the mistrust that Comrade Urbani [Terracini] ascribes to them. We want only to point to the goal of these internal measures, namely, to firm up the party. The leading committee should be broadened by incorporating workers and increasing representation of the minority. Our Italian Communist Party should utilise the united front – which has had such good results in Germany – in its relations with the Socialist Party. I am convinced that at the Fifth Congress the Italian Communist Party will be among the best sections of the International.

**Israel Amter** (United States): The Scandinavian comrades are wrong on the question of centralism. Their stance is due in part to the fact that they have not been exposed to the attacks by capitalism that have swept across the rest of Europe. International discipline and centralism are necessary because the party faces enormous tasks. There is no foundation for the concern that centralism could destroy the initiative of local organisations. The emphasis on special, national conditions is typical of what we usually hear in such matters. The International has not made sufficient use of its authority, and that is the case in the United States. The Communist International has shown that it is capable, when circumstances so require, of giving advice and lending a strong hand of assistance.

In Italy the Communists committed a crime against their own movement and the International by erecting a partition between their party and the Socialists, when the latter were prepared to unite with the Communist Party.

The question of religion has not been sufficiently clarified, particularly where the United States is concerned. There the church is used openly as a tool of capitalism against every advanced workers' movement. Can the American party keep silent when atheism is being debated even in the universities? I do

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12 Vatslav V. Vorovsky, the Soviet representative in Italy from 1921 to 1923, was assassinated by a White émigré on 10 May 1923 at a diplomatic conference in Lausanne, Switzerland.

not agree with Newbold that this is a campaign that can be left to be carried out by subordinate organisations.<sup>13</sup> What I say applies to the treatment of religion in Britain as well.

The slogan of the workers' and farmers' government is necessary in the United States, but it must be adapted to the understanding of the poor, working farmers, in order to create a division between them and the farmers who are exploiters. It would be a victory for us to bring about such a split. There is no basis for any fear that peasant farmers could represent a danger for the proletarian dictatorship.

*(Adjournment: 4:40 p.m.)*

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13 For Newbold's remarks in Session 4, see pp. 450–1.

## Executive Committee Report – Discussion

*Continuation of discussion on Executive Committee report.*

*Speakers: Vladetić, Saitta, Scheflo, Serra, Giacomo, Höglund, Laursen, Krajewski, Aoki, Tranmael.*

*(The evening session was opened at 8:30 p.m. by Comrade Gallacher.)*

Vladetić [Djuro Cvijić] (Yugoslavia): Comrade Zinoviev reproached the Yugoslav party for having an unclear position on the national question that was keeping the proletarian masses of Slovenia, the country's most industrially developed region, from coming to the party. This is not the case. The Yugoslav party is battling fiercely against both Serbian hegemony and the chauvinism of the Slovenian and Croatian bourgeoisie. Despite the illegality into which we have been forced by the Yugoslav regime's white terror, we have succeeded in destroying the liquidationist and centrist party in Slovenia. That party benefited from the collaboration of some former leaders of our party who presented this support as a realisation of the Fourth Congress theses on the united front. This is a great victory for the Slovenian proletariat, revealing that it is under our leadership more firmly than ever.

Yugoslavia's national problem is rendered very complicated because of the many nations and tribes that live under the political hegemony of the Serbian bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup> National struggles thus are enormous in their dimensions. We have been unable to play a decisive role in these struggles, not because of an incorrect position on the national question but because of illegality. Despite factional struggles, the party has always been in agreement on our slogans for the national question, namely: against Serbian hegemony, for rewriting the constitution, and for the right of self-determination of all nations and tribes.

We have gladly welcomed all the Executive Committee's previous proposals on the national question and will commit all our resources to carrying them out. We have also campaigned in the past for the workers' and peasants' government slogan, and we scored some successes in popularising it among the masses. We succeeded in putting an end to the factional struggles, as indicated

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<sup>1</sup> Yugoslavia was formed in 1919 by the annexation to Serbia of Austro-Hungarian territories that included present-day Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Montenegro.

by the unanimous decisions of our most recent party conference.<sup>2</sup> In this way we have created promising preconditions for a better relationship between the party and the Executive Committee, and have also shown that our party is a match for the difficult questions posed by the struggle in Yugoslavia.

**Saitta** [Fabrizio Maffi]<sup>3</sup> (Italy): There were no differences of opinion regarding the scope of the Rome Congress, which voted for the masses to join the Third International.<sup>4</sup> Our Communist comrades often underestimate the masses and ascribe too great an importance to individuals. We were of the opinion that the Socialist Party of Italy had led to the International masses who could have been utilised very successfully if only the will to do so had been present. We worked in our party for the fusion, while the Communists worked against it. Today our friends are in a minority in the Socialist Party. *Avanti* is now run by Vella. This outcome is not what we worked for; it is the opposite of what we wanted. Those opposed to the fusion had no strong argument except the ill will that the Communists displayed regarding the fusion. The Moscow Executive Committee wanted the fusion and the Central Committee in Rome did not want it.

It has been said that the fusion was compromised by the sudden departure of Serrati for Italy. Serrati returned immediately on our request after a ten-day absence, only to be arrested three days after his arrival. Mussolini had him arrested once Serrati's victory in *Avanti* had become evident. Had this victory taken place ten days earlier, would he not have been arrested then?

The truth is that the fusion was difficult because of the insistence that this party with 42,000 members, which wanted to join the Third International *en masse*, be put through a sieve. The conditions posed initially for the fusion offended nearly all the comrades, except me. The ECCI wanted to satisfy the Communists who did not want the fusion. We were even told that if we were

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<sup>2</sup> The Yugoslav CP held its Second Conference in May 1923 in Vienna.

<sup>3</sup> The identification of Saitta/Saita is from Broué 1997, p. 941. Fabrizio Maffi was a leader of the pro-Comintern wing of the PSI that was fighting for fusion with the PCI. He was one of two consultative delegates from this current attending the Third Enlarged Plenum, together with Vincenzo Pagella.

Kahan 1990, p. 42, identifies Saitta at the Third Enlarged Plenum as Antonio (sic) Vota. That identification is problematic. Giuseppe Vota was one of the central leaders of the PCI minority that favoured fusion with the PSI; the text of Saitta's remarks above, however, indicate clearly that he is speaking on behalf of the PSI fusionists. That is also made clear by Saitta's remarks to the Italian Commission in the Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/76.

<sup>4</sup> For the PSI's Rome Congress, see p. 398, n. 25.

a minority at our congress, and we left the Socialist Party, the conditions for admission would be even more severe. A considerable number of comrades in the Italian [CP] Central Committee are still saying that they are against the fusion. They demand that our faction leave the Socialist Party because that would weaken us.

**Urbani:** That is not true!

**Saitta:** This is the first time I have been told that. The process of rapprochement between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party was conducted in a way designed to make any rapprochement impossible. We say this without any oversensitivity. If fusion is desired, responsibility for achieving it must be entrusted to people who really believe it to be necessary.

**Olav Scheflo** (Norway): In response to the criticisms of Comrades Höglund and Falk regarding the Executive Committee's conduct on the Scandinavian question, we believe that the Communist International concerned itself with conditions in the Norwegian party not too much but too little. The Executive Committee is well aware that the Norwegian party is at present an important force in Scandinavia, and it was absolutely the ECCI's duty to intervene. It is not true, as Comrades Höglund and Falk maintain, that the intervention of the Executive Committee is making matters more difficult for the Norwegian party. Quite the contrary. Both at the [Comintern] Fourth Congress, as well as the conference with the ECCI representatives in Kristiania, full agreement was achieved thanks to their intervention. However, on both occasions, as a result of the hostile attitude of the majority, the factional struggle started up again.

It is significant that representatives of the majority advocate neutrality of the party with respect to the trade unions. They rejected in Kristiania a proposal by the minority to send a delegation to the Red International of Labour Unions on the grounds that the Social Democrats must be handled with consideration. The opponents of centralism exerted strict centralisation vis-à-vis the minority in the Norwegian party.

At present Norway is locked in a severe crisis. During the recent period the largest of the banks went bankrupt, which led to great bitterness among the peasants. The slogan of the workers' and peasants' government is therefore strikingly relevant in Norway. Comrade Falk's fears that this slogan would give rise to strong disagreements among us are quite unfounded. Our faction will continue to take a position, now as in the past, which has found full approval from the Executive Committee.

**Serra** [Angelo Tasca] (Italy):<sup>5</sup> In debating the Italian question, we should set aside all *amour propre*. The comrades of the Italian Communist Party's Central Committee are personally beyond reproach, but an erroneous policy is all the more dangerous when it is pursued with courage and dedication.

I judge my party harshly. Did it do everything in its power against fascism? No. There were great possibilities for struggle. If the party had attempted to arouse the entire working class against reaction, it would have been extremely well placed indeed. Our party did not do that because its leaders, entirely taken up with efforts to assure the theoretical purity of the party at all costs, never reached out to the masses.

Only when it was too late was the united-front policy applied – convulsively and under the pressure of circumstances. It was not until a few months before the fascist seizure of power that the party leadership permitted comrades in the trade-union administration to collaborate with the Maximalists [PSI].

As individuals, all Communists carried out their duty in struggle against the fascists, but the party as such did not do so. It did not succeed in putting its stamp on the struggles of the working class against fascism. It refused to join the alliance of working people that had the confidence of the masses, allowing it to become a tool of the Freemasons.

Did the leadership of the Communist Party of Italy consciously sabotage the united front? Not at all. The leadership itself was sabotaged by its sectarian mentality. Similarly, precious time was wasted in the fusion process, while our enemies were active. This happened because we were too much occupied in safeguarding some useful sectarian traditions. Such an approach necessarily leads to a fiasco. The Italian Communist Party is the only one that has not yet got in step with the united-front policy.

Negri [Scoccimarro] fears the results of party contact with Socialist forces. Myself, I have more confidence in the party. Let us come into contact with the masses. They will not compromise our theoretical purity; we will educate and lead them. The revolution's future depends on contact with the masses.

**Giacomo** [Mátyás Rákosi]: The victory of fascism took the Communist Party in Italy quite by surprise. The party's best leaders were outside the country when Mussolini carried out his coup. The right wing of the Social Democrats was silently cooperating with Mussolini, so that our faction in the Socialist Party had to struggle not only against the reformists who had remained in the party but also against powerful enemies outside its ranks. The greatest error of the

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5 Serra (Tasca) is speaking here as a leader of the PCI minority.

Italian Communist Party was to not have supported our Socialist friends during their severe struggle at this time. During the difficult struggle that is now raging in the Italian [Socialist] party they played the role of a silent spectator, as they themselves have conceded. Despite the fact that the [pro-Comintern wing of the] Italian Socialist Party had too little time for intensive work, it is nonetheless significant that they managed to win about 43 per cent of the party membership. How little aid from our Communist comrades would it have taken to win a majority? These facts must be stated before such an authoritative plenum, all the more given that another regular congress of the Italian Socialist Party will take place in only a short time, at which our faction will once again pose the question of fusion.

Our Norwegian comrades have no idea of the harm caused by their conduct in Italy. Those opposed to the fusion seized upon their arguments eagerly. They are also in error attacking the ECCI. The history of the Italian workers' movement is a classic example of what happens to a movement when the proposals of the Communist International are not heeded. The Norwegian comrades are probably not aware that at the last congress here Serrati had to concede that he had been wrong in Livorno and that the Comintern had been right.<sup>6</sup> If the Norwegian comrades cling to their present stance, they will certainly manage in the end to create Italian conditions in Norway.

**Höglund** (Sweden): In response to Comrade Radek's request, I will now specify my criticisms on the Executive Committee's conduct in the Scandinavian question. We recognise that major errors were made by both sides in the Norwegian party, which justified an intervention by the Executive Committee. And in response to Comrade Scheflo I must note that we never said the ECCI should not concern itself with the Norwegian questions or the Norwegian party. Instead, we noted the errors made in this intervention. Nor did we support the Tranmael faction. We were quite critical in certain matters, such as his approach to the united front. But in our opinion the ECCI intervened without sufficient knowledge of the facts and without impartiality, and the way they intervened was often quite provocative.

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6 The Italian Socialist Party's Livorno Congress took place 15–21 January 1921. A left current, which received 58,783 votes, demanded immediate application of the Comintern's Twenty-One Conditions for membership. The majority current led by Serrati, which received 98,028 votes, insisted on the need to apply the Comintern conditions flexibly 'in conformity with the context and the history of the country' (Broué 2005, p. 477). The Right led by Turati received 14,695. After the vote, the Left walked out and organised the Communist Party of Italy.

In my opinion, the most important errors of the present and previous Executive Committee were as follows:

1.) The expulsion of Comrade Lian, the chairman of the Norwegian trade-union confederation, was a mistake that was later reversed. Moreover, the expulsion was carried out without the knowledge of the party leadership.<sup>7</sup>

2.) The first letter to the [Norwegian] party leadership was published in *Pravda* before the leadership had any knowledge of it. The Swedish Social Democrats' official publication, the Stockholm *Social-Demokraten*, was thus able to publish the full text of this letter and utilise it demagogically before the Norwegian leadership had even received it or had heard anything about it. The entire bourgeois and Social-Democratic press in Norway was thus able to exploit the letter for its own purposes.<sup>8</sup>

3.) The second letter, sent on 22 September, was written without discussion with the party leadership in Norway and without its knowledge.<sup>9</sup> To be sure, Scheflo, leader of a faction, had come to Moscow, but for other purposes and without any mandate on this question. The party leadership did not know that the Norwegian question was being taken up by the ECCI at that time.

4.) The so-called summary article of Comrade Tranmael was interpreted quite wrongly, as if he wanted organisational unity with the right-wing Socialists. That was not true. On the contrary, Comrade Tranmael was quite sceptical regarding a united front with the Social Democrats. Nonetheless, this article was used to incriminate Tranmael, in order to show that he did not share the International's outlook.

5.) The second letter, as a whole, was one-sided; in part it bluntly contradicted the first. It was written so harshly and provocatively against the Tranmael current that it actually heightened the dispute rather than helping to overcome it.

6.) It was an error to elect a representative of the Norwegian minority to the Executive Committee.<sup>10</sup>

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7 For the Lian case, see p. 322, n. 4.

8 The first ECCI letter to the Norwegian Labour Party relayed the decisions of the Second Enlarged ECCI Plenum of June 1922. For the resolution on the Norwegian question adopted at that plenum, see pp. 360–2 of this volume.

9 The second ECCI letter reiterated the ECCI's criticism of the Norwegian party's parliamentary tactics, specifically regarding compulsory arbitration of wages. However, it expressed scepticism of 'pretend-radical critics of the parliamentary fraction' and denied that these critics were 'better Communists' than the objects of their criticism.

10 Olav Scheflo, a representative of the minority, was elected to the ECCI at the Fourth Con-

7.) The expulsion of Karl Johanssen at the world congress was an error. Cancelling the suspension of Comrade Halvard Olsen, who had not been suspended at all, was also harmful to the organisation.<sup>11</sup>

8.) Comrade Bukharin unfortunately voiced grave accusations against the Mot Dag group in his polemic at the Norwegian party congress, which caused great bitterness and posed a barrier to genuine understanding. Bukharin suggested that leaders in this group were incipient fascists. Such a gross accusation must be made specific in the party and these forces would have to be expelled at once. Otherwise, the accusation should be withdrawn –

**Bukharin:** No.

**Höglund:** – as harmful to the Norwegian party and to good relations between it and the Communist International.

9.) At the last party congress, the dispute in the Norwegian party was declared to have been resolved. Nonetheless, Comrade Shatskin, a leader of the Youth International, wrote an article in the Norwegian *Klassekampen* right after the congress that took up once again the entire dispute in the party and made crude attacks on the present party leadership.<sup>12</sup>

**Shatskin:** That is not true! It is a report on the congress. Can we not write about it?

**Höglund:** This approach is dangerous. One must ask whether or not such attacks are made in accord with leading comrades of the present ECCI. The Youth Executive takes it to be its special task to drive the youth in Scandinavia into opposition against the party. Instead of making the youth federations more

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gress. The move was opposed by the Norwegian party leadership. See Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1106–7.

11 Karl Johanssen was expelled at the Fourth World Congress, as a former bourgeois journalist who had opened a campaign inside the party against the revolutionary workers' movement. Halvard Olsen, a worker and longtime party functionary, violated discipline at a metalworkers' union congress, for which he was expelled by the NLP. Hearing his appeal, the Comintern's Fourth Congress voted to take him back into membership. See Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1089–92.

12 Shatskin's article 'Der 17. Kongreß des Kommunistischen Jugendverbandes in Norwegen' [The 17th Congress of the Communist Youth League in Norway] was printed in *Jugend-Internationale*, no. 8, April 1923, pp. 241–2. It was subsequently reprinted in the 12 May 1923 issue of *Klassekampen*, organ of the Norwegian Communist Youth.

youthful, in Scandinavia they are becoming more elderly. Older members are taken into the youth leadership. The chair of the Norwegian party is its representative in the youth leadership and is, as I understand, the youngest person there – or one of the youngest. Instead of becoming a mass movement, it is becoming a movement of an elite among the higher-level Communists of true believers who believe they are more far-sighted than the party. This trend is contrary to centralism and signifies a step toward two Communist parties. We demand that this drift be halted entirely.

Now as to the Danish question. Above all, it was an error to negotiate with half-anarchist putschists in the party who had carried out such a criminal breach of discipline. They violently attacked the party offices and stole the party newspaper. In addition, it was an error, when an agreement was reached at the world congress, to expel Comrade Hellberg and to suspend Comrade Ernst Christiansen from all responsible posts for one year.<sup>13</sup> There were no objective grounds for such an action. It took place only because the putschists are so good-looking – those who tried once again to carry out a putsch in the party and have now been expelled. Comrades Hellberg and Ernst Christiansen did outstanding service for the International and the Russian Revolution in difficult times, including the period of illegality. Expelling such comrades without objective grounds is a great injustice.

I could also speak of the Executive Committee's errors in Swedish matters, but we will be discussing that in a special commission. The criticism of the Swedish party expressed by the commission chosen last year was unjust and false. It was done without the necessary knowledge of the facts and aroused great indignation in the party.

I will now take up the 'higher question', that of religion. Bukharin demolished my article theoretically, but what practical conclusions did he draw? He said that we can tolerate religious people in our parties and we must proceed cautiously, have patience, and so on. That is exactly what I was trying to say, and of course we have to put up with the fact that I said it in my own way.

We were never against educational work on the question of religion. What we wanted was to avoid clumsy anti-religious propaganda that would damage the party. We wanted to avoid driving away sincere religious workers and peasants. In my opinion, the discussion has shown, despite everything, that we are

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13 Ernst Christiansen and Sigvald Hellberg, leaders of the rival groupings in the Danish CP that had split with each other in February 1922, were both removed by the ECCI as part of its effort to bring about a reunification.

agreed on the main point, which is that we must attempt to win these religious workers and peasants for communism and the united front, as Comrade Radek said quite correctly.

As for Comrade Flieg's speech, I will say only that the Swedish party is in no way responsible for his statements.

**Georg Laursen** (Denmark): Comrade Höglund seems to me to be unhappy that the Executive Committee played a mediating role in the Danish party dispute.<sup>14</sup> The ECCI's actions were correct. There was a possibility at that time of creating a unified Communist organisation in Denmark, despite the small group with anarcho-syndicalist leanings. The offer to mediate was turned down, and the ECCI then appealed again and issued a directive for an unconditional fusion. When the Executive Committee saw that the proposal made by the Scandinavian Commission had failed owing to the stand of Hellberg, it said quite correctly that this obstacle had to be removed. The Swedish comrades bear a share of the blame for the split that subsequently took place, because they gave the Hellberg group at least moral support. We are still impeded in our agitation because of the Swedish comrades' stand. It is politically necessary that the two groups join together unreservedly.

In the Danish Commission established by the Enlarged Executive Committee we will once again make every effort to achieve a fusion of all the Communist forces in Denmark. However, we must insist that our sister parties in Scandinavia also do everything possible to promote such a unification.

**Anton Krajewski** (Poland): I only want to make a short statement. Comrade Zinoviev made some remarks on the Communist Party of Poland's position on the peasant question that require a partial correction. It is quite true that on this question we had to overcome resistance in our own ranks. However, this resistance has now been overcome – at least in the party's leading circles – and the party has decisively and unambiguously adopted the Comintern's position.

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14 The Communist movement in Denmark arose from two sources: a left wing in the Social-Democratic youth movement, which became the original Danish Communist Party, and the revolutionary wing of the syndicalists. In early 1921 the two wings merged into the Communist Federation, but the unification came apart in a bitter dispute in February 1922. In August 1922 the ECCI convened a meeting in Moscow to help bring about an agreement to unify the two sides. The unification of the two organisations was to finally occur in September–October 1923. For the Third Enlarged Plenum's resolution on the Danish question, see pp. 625–6.

Not only the Central Committee but also the largest local party organisations have adopted clear resolutions along these lines. The most that can be said is that the process of overcoming the old point of view delayed action on this question.

As to the question of how we present our principled stand on the self-determination of nations, I can tell you that we did this without any reservations. Our fundamental position is the right of self-determination of nations, including the right to separate from the Polish state, and that is evident in our public documents.

**Aoki** [Arahata Kanson] (Japan): Comrade Zinoviev expressed the view that a legal political workers' party should be built in Japan. The Japanese comrades have no fear of persecution and imprisonment. During the last thirteen years they have become accustomed to persecution. But I believe it would be premature to form a legal political party at this time. The Japanese comrades need the support and sympathy of militant forces in the working class. These forces are indifferent to politics. They are inexperienced and have a limited understanding of politics. Even the present leaders of the Yuaikai are losing all influence because of their reformist leanings.<sup>15</sup> Should we establish a legal party despite the danger of losing these militant working-class forces? Syndicalist workers are opposed to the Communists only because the Communists are political. If they form a legal party, this will entail great losses, at least for some years.

The main task is to educate the workers politically before forming a political party. The United Workers' Committee, formed last year to protest against a proposed law to suppress radicals, is the main focus of the political movement.<sup>16</sup>

I urge the congress to advise the Japanese comrades in this matter. We are for centralism, but we ask the Comintern Executive Committee to take into consideration the backwardness and weakness of the Japanese workers' movement.

As for the united front, there are no Social Democrats or Amsterdam trade-unionists in Japan. The only possible united front is between the Communists and the syndicalist workers. Given that both these forces are deprived of political rights, there is no basis for agitation for a workers' and peasants' government.

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15 The Yuaikai was the Japanese trade-union federation, with over 300,000 members.

16 The 'Anti-Radical-Social Movement Bill' was introduced in the Japanese Diet in 1922, calling for imprisonment of those seeking to change the government. That bill failed to pass, but its main provisions were enacted in 1925 in the form of the Peace Preservation Law.

**Martin Tranmael** (Norway): In examining the differences between the Norwegian party and the International, it is necessary to take into account the structure and traditions of the party. It was organised thirty-six years ago as a federation of trade unions without a defined political persuasion or socialist goals. It radicalised during a long process of evolution, becoming a socialist and finally a Communist party. Its transformation into a Communist party began long before its affiliation to the Third International.

The work of radicalisation was above all a struggle against the reformist leaders and *thus against centralisation*. The struggle ended in 1918, when the radical left wing won the upper hand and led the party's affiliation to the Third International. Two years later, the Communists won the leadership of the trade unions.

In 1921 the right-wing socialists left, forming the Social-Democratic Party. In contrast to other countries, the Norwegian Social-Democratic Party is quite small and weak, while the Communist party is strong.

After the party adopted the platform of communism, in the first elections it faced, it won 29 seats in parliament, making it the second-largest political party in the country. Nonetheless, the leaders of the [parliamentary] group, who presently head up the opposition in the party, joined with the trade-union leaders to force through parliament a law on compulsory arbitration.

With regard to the united front, the situation in Norway is very different from that in other countries. Four-fifths of the workers are supporters of the Communist party, and those who are swayed by the Social Democrats can be influenced through the trade unions. Under these conditions, an appeal to the Social-Democratic leaders would only contribute to consolidating their party.

The Comintern's second letter, sent off without prior discussion with the party executive, was based on incorrect and incomplete information.

The Fourth Congress decided to implement heightened centralisation. This was a serious matter for a party with the traditions of the Norwegian party, especially given the experiences it had already gathered regarding the manner in which the centralisation was carried out. Major disagreements arose in the party, and the question was raised whether the International would modify its position or whether the party's relationship with the International would change. The ECCI made some concessions, and there was no doubt that to a certain degree it had modified its viewpoint on this topic – for example, regarding the amount of time required for the party's reorganisation. After the congress there were grounds to believe that the conflict had been resolved. But after the article by Shatskin, reprinted in Norway, the struggle broke out again, because according to the article if a choice had to be made between the party leadership and the International, the International must be chosen. Such comments

rested on the premise that the struggle would continue. Zinoviev's speech also gives us cause to fear that the conflict will flare up again.

There is also a struggle in the trade unions, and the Socialists take advantage of this. Major strikes and lockouts took place. Under such circumstances, it would be madness, at such a moment, to send a delegation to the Profintern conference. That would give the Social Democrats a pretext to blow apart the central trade-union confederation, or at least to weaken it.

As for the workers' and peasants' government slogan, there are special conditions in Norway. The party already encompasses a significant number of small peasants, and its main task lies in strengthening the organisation and winning the rest of the small peasants to the party, rather than organising a separate party, as the slogan proposes. If this appeal is issued now, it will reinforce the reformist forces and tendencies in the Communist party.

All in all, the delegates of small Communist parties should bear in mind that it is easier for them to adapt to each resolution than it is for large parties. The main goal is to carry out effective work and achieve practical results, and this goal requires strong mass parties.

*(Adjournment: 12:45 a.m.)*

## Executive Report Summary; World Political Report

*Summary of discussion on Executive Committee report. Report on world political situation.*

*Speakers: Böttcher, Zinoviev, Radek.*

*Convened: 12:00 noon.*

**Böttcher** (chair): (*reads a statement by Comrade Shatskin, which says, in part:*)

My article, first published in *Jugend-Internationale*, was then reprinted in *Klassekampen* without my involvement. The article criticised the decisions of the Norwegian party convention that contradicted decisions of the Fourth Congress. It emphasised that the Norwegian youth had the right and duty, with regard to the disputed questions, to give priority to the Communist International's decisions over those of a two-vote majority in the party congress.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary of Discussion on Executive Committee Report

**Zinoviev:** Höglund said that much was missing in my speech. That is understandable. We have fifty parties, and many questions are posed for discussion. Not wanting to present a catalogue, I focused on what was most important. A written report was also distributed. What does Comrade Höglund disapprove of? He would have preferred if I had paid less attention to the Scandinavian questions. But these issues are extremely important. The discussion on religion will prove its worth. Höglund puts a good face on the matter by saying he is content, he has won. As if we, for our part, were proposing a campaign against religion! It is not we but the bourgeoisie that engages in a campaign – against us – because we oppose the counterrevolutionary priests. We are well aware that there are broad layers of the proletariat in Germany and Britain and Ireland who entertain religious feelings. We intend to take that into account.

At the Fourth Congress, regarding the debate on the workers' government, we stated that we wanted to act together with the Christian workers.<sup>2</sup> So there

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<sup>1</sup> Shatskin is responding to claims by Höglund and Tranmael on pp. 464 and 468–9.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to members of Christian trade unions can be found in the resolution on the tac-

is no need to give us lessons on this topic. In Russia we have countless millions of peasants who are religious. We succeed in dealing with them. The Russian party, however, must take different measures on religious questions than the other parties. And not only on religious questions. In the Russian party we submit the membership to regular cleansings. In other countries, where the Communist parties are not in power, there is no need to take such stern measures. Expelling from the party workers who are still religious is absolutely out of the question. A campaign against religion is out of the question.

Höglund accused me of having polemicalised against him without quotations. I did that in order to protect him. However, since he insists, I will now quote a passage in his article that is of fundamental importance. Höglund writes:

Communists, as private individuals, can carry out religious or anti-religious propaganda as they choose. That is their right, and no one will interfere with that, as long as it does not involve any detriment to the political programme and activity of the Communist Party. But if the party as such were to endorse atheism as an essential component of Communist belief, it would necessarily be reduced to a sect, just as surely as if it declared itself to be Baptist.<sup>3</sup>

And here is another passage of Comrade Höglund's article. Allow me to quote:

The party demands only that (its members) accept its political programme and statutes. But programme and statutes concern themselves only with the methods and means to emancipate the proletariat from the yoke of capitalism.

That is the aspect of Comrade Höglund's article that addresses principle. Perhaps you will permit me to address this dispute not with my own words but with those of a recognised master. In an article written during the 1905 revolution, when we did not yet call ourselves Communists but were rather the revolutionary wing of Social Democracy, Lenin wrote as follows:

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tics of the Comintern approved by the Fourth Comintern congress. It stated: '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.' In Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1099.

3 In his speech Höglund quoted the same passage (p. 430). The difference between the texts is caused by Zinoviev using a different German translation of Höglund's article.

Religion must be declared a private affair. In these words socialists usually express their attitude towards religion. But the meaning of these words should be accurately defined to prevent any misunderstanding. We demand that religion be held a private affair so far as the state is concerned. But by no means can we consider religion a private affair so far as our Party is concerned. Religion must be of no concern to the state, and religious societies must have no connection with governmental authority. Everyone must be absolutely free to profess any religion he pleases, or no religion whatever, i.e., to be an atheist, which every socialist is, as a rule. Discrimination among citizens on account of their religious convictions is wholly intolerable. Even the bare mention of a citizen's religion in official documents should unquestionably be eliminated. No subsidies should be granted to the established church nor state allowances made to ecclesiastical and religious societies. These should become absolutely free associations of like-minded citizens, associations independent of the state. ...

Complete separation of Church and State is what the socialist proletariat demands of the modern state and the modern church. ... So far as the party of the socialist proletariat is concerned, religion is not a private affair. Our Party is an association of class-conscious, advanced fighters for the emancipation of the working class. Such an association cannot and must not be indifferent to lack of class-consciousness, ignorance, or obscurantism in the shape of religious beliefs. We demand complete disestablishment of the Church so as to be able to combat the religious fog with purely ideological and solely ideological weapons, by means of our press and by word of mouth.<sup>4</sup>

So you see how Comrade Lenin presents this question: religion is a private matter where the state is concerned, but not vis-à-vis the party. Comrade Höglund, however, advances the opposite viewpoint that religion is a private matter where the party is concerned. I ask Comrade Höglund to reply openly and precisely whether I have defined his position correctly. Yes or no? Is he demanding that religion be a private matter with regard to the party? Based on Comrade Höglund's article, there is no doubt that his answer to this question is 'yes'. If that is the case, he is making a fundamental error and is adopting the Social-Democratic point of view. For the most serious error that the Social Democrats

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4 Lenin, 'Socialism and Religion' in *LCW*, 10, pp. 84–6.

make in this field is precisely their insistence that religion must be a private matter where the party is concerned.

Consider carefully the second quotation that I read out from Comrade Höglund's article. According to Höglund, all we need to demand of our members is acceptance of elements of the party's political programme and its statutes.

We are well aware from our practical experience that the average worker – after all, we are a mass party – is often not fully familiar even with our programme, and we cannot demand that of him. It is enough for us that they hate capitalism and are prepared to fight in our ranks for its overthrow. Where the party as a whole is concerned, however, and its nucleus, and especially its leaders, we of course demand not just acceptance of the statutes and elements of its political programme. The party is based on a firm world outlook. We are Marxists. We stand on the foundation of the materialist conception of history. Permit me here to counterpose to the thesis of Comrade Höglund the opinion of Comrade Lenin. I will quote from the same article by him:

Our programme is based entirely on a scientific, and moreover the materialist, world outlook. An explanation of our Programme, therefore, necessarily includes an explanation of the true historical and economic roots of the religious fog. Our propaganda necessarily includes the propaganda of atheism; the publication of the appropriate scientific literature, which the autocratic feudal government has hitherto strictly forbidden and persecuted, must now form one of the fields of our Party work.

And he continues:

We shall now probably have to follow the advice Engels once gave to the German Socialists: to translate and widely disseminate the literature of the eighteenth-century French Enlighteners and atheists.<sup>5</sup>

As you see, this is something completely different.

Comrade Höglund frightens us with the prospect that if we become atheist we will degenerate into a sect. As you know, comrades, Comrade Lenin succeeded in organising not merely a sect but enormous masses – at least as many masses as our Swedish comrades have behind them. Comrade Lenin has a somewhat better feel for the millions of workers and peasants than Comrade Höglund. Lenin succeeded in standing at the head of the people in their

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5 Ibid., p. 86.

entirety, at the head of the international workers' movement. He is certainly not a sectarian. Nonetheless, he was completely right in saying that our task lies not only in defending the statutes and political programme but also in having a solid world outlook, of which atheism is a component.

I do not know if I should present more extensive quotations from Marx and Engels. They were quoted here as having said that religion is the opium of the people, and so on. Marx and Engels expressed themselves entirely differently than Comrade Höglund did in speaking about the 'mysteries of life'.

Let me repeat that I have not selected the most absurd portions of Comrade Höglund's article but rather the most principled. You can see the crucial errors that he has made on this question. He should stop giving the impression of having won on this question. The Comintern will give him a clear and frank answer. The Comintern did not, does not, and will not hold the position that religion is a private matter where the party is concerned, or that our task is limited to defence of the statutes and the elements of its political programme. We assume much greater tasks. We – that is, the party – take on the task of showing the way forward to humanity as a whole. We are adherents of a coherent and consistent world outlook, which makes up a component of communism.

How we carry out our propaganda is quite another matter. In a word, we should pursue it in an intelligent manner. We must find appropriate forms, means, and occasions – that is absolutely clear.

We too have sometimes come across anti-religious writings that are so crude that they will not only fail to convince a person with religious views but will offend them. We must be particularly discriminating and strict about such matters. Nonetheless, anti-religious propaganda is essential. Once again, I do not know what happened in Sweden to lead Comrade Höglund to suddenly come up with such an article. Let us suppose – although there is no evidence of this – that a couple of impatient and insufficiently educated comrades threw themselves into anti-religious propaganda in a somewhat crude manner. Even if that were the case, Comrade Höglund should not forget that he is a member of the International. Even if as many as a dozen Swedish comrades had missed the mark, still Comrade Höglund should not write an article that presents a false point of view and can only injure the international movement. Comrade Höglund says that the Social-Democratic press will attack what we say and use it to attack the Swedish party. Yes, that is possible. Our disputes are always utilised by the Social Democracy. But Comrade Höglund should not forget that the Social Democrats will definitely use his article on religion, written very much in the spirit of *Sozialistische Monatshefte*.

I ask Comrade Höglund again to say frankly whether he stands by the proposition that religion is a private matter where the party is concerned. If the

answer is 'yes', than he is committing an outrageous and fundamental reformist error. If 'no', he should state that frankly, and then he can tell as many jokes about it as he wants. As for us, we stand on the old position. We are not a sect but a mass party. We are ready to join with any honest proletarian who has religious inclinations. And we are not proposing to launch any kind of anti-religious crusade. We are saying nothing new. We stick with what Engels and Lenin said. We ask only that comrades like Höglund who play a significant role in the Communist International not write articles that throw our youth into turmoil and compromise the idea of communism.

Let me now take up the question of the Norwegian party. The speeches yesterday by Comrades Falk and Tranmael were very loyal, at least formally. That must be stated. It appears that the comrades are genuinely seeking an understanding with the International, and that is also our fervent desire. But it is not a reason to forget certain facts. Even back in 1921 there was a conflict in the Norwegian party because of the Twenty-One Conditions.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, its Central Committee adopted a decision to leave the Communist International. Those are important facts. The Communist International is not a hotel, where you can check in and check out, but a cherished community of struggle, whose adherents are tied to each other in life and death. Höglund defended the journal *Mot Dag*. He asks us to be loyal to the Norwegian comrades. Certainly, we must be loyal to comrades, but not to people who combat us in such a shabby fashion as does the *Mot Dag* group. Or is this too a private matter? With all due respect to the Norwegian proletariat, how can we permit individuals to write this way in its name?

We are reproached for having expelled Johanssen, although he was not a member of the Communist Party. The criticism turns back against the Norwegian comrades, because Johanssen was the director of their main newspaper. Comrade Tranmael says that we should merely give them time, and everything will work out right. Quite correct, we must give them time. But after all, there are questions that didn't just arise yesterday. It took three years before the name of the main newspaper was changed from *Social-Demokraten* to *Arbeiderbladet* [Workers' Newspaper],<sup>7</sup> and before a beginning was made in reorganising the party.

Shatskin is quite right that the Communist Youth have the duty of intervening to defend international discipline. We must reject the low opinion that has

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6 For the Comintern's Twenty-One Conditions, see p. 124, n. 9.

7 The name was changed on 3 April 1923.

been expressed here of the youth. The youth is the best segment of the Communist International, and that is well and good, because they are the bearers of the future. Höglund says that we have acted disloyally. It is not defence of discipline that is disloyal, but rather breaking it. It is disloyal to tolerate those in the party that break discipline.

Tranmael criticises us regarding the Lian case. But Lian appeared with Jouhaux in Genoa at the Labour Bureau conference. We asked that he be expelled, but it turned out he had been sent there not on his own initiative but on that of the central leadership. Tranmael criticises us for having adopted decisions without consulting the party's representatives. That is not true. We had lengthy negotiations with Comrade Friis and repeatedly asked that Comrade Tranmael come here. It is not our fault that we were unable to consult with this party leader.

Tranmael criticises us for having made an incorrect criticism of the parliamentary fraction. But Tranmael himself refuted this allegation. Höglund says it was an error for us to have elected Schefflo [to the ECCI] rather than [Haakon] Meyer, who represented the party majority. I did not suspect that Meyer was the author of the article in question. I only know that he has been a member of the party for a short time. Members of the ECCI must be comrades who personify the movement.

Tranmael also complains that Bukharin was too harsh in his criticism of *Mot Dag*. Given everything that we know about this journal, Comrade Bukharin's criticism was only too justified. Comrade Höglund, a founder of the Zimmerwald Left, could have found better things to do than to defend such people. If we saw that Comrade Tranmael was himself carrying out the decisions of the International, then fine, he should do that. But Comrade Tranmael has too much patience with people who do not deserve it.

We must have respect for the traditions of the Norwegian party, and the questions here cannot be resolved in the wink of an eye. Comrade Tranmael stresses that we must retain the trade unions. Very true. But it is wrong to draw the conclusion that the trade unions should not belong either to Amsterdam or to the Red International of Labour Unions. Right now the international federation of transport workers is collaborating with the Red International of Labour Unions, and Fimmen himself is working with Moscow. Given that context, the conduct of the Norwegian trade unions is incorrect. It is justified by the fact that conflicts were taking place. That would be an additional reason to join the Red International of Labour Unions, an organisation that is not ceremonial but is for struggle.

As for the question of centralism, Ledebour himself, in the statutes for his International, states that theses are adopted by the International and their

implementation is then left to the individual parties.<sup>8</sup> And that is a Social Democrat talking! We should not intervene in local questions. But is the Ruhr crisis a local matter of the German or the French party? All the major questions today are international in significance. We have never intervened in truly local matters. But was Lian's trip a local question? We know very well what must be and what must not be settled centrally.

Comrade Höglund spoke of Denmark. In his view, the Executive Committee made major errors with regard to the Danish movement. However, I must note that during the entire period of the Danish conflict – and it has lasted about two years – we never received a single piece of advice, not even a single message, from the Swedish Communist Party's leadership. The first commission to investigate the Danish question was chosen out of Sweden. It may well be true that we have really made some mistakes regarding Denmark. Personally, I was very sad, for example, that these conflicts led to the loss of Comrade Marie Nielsen.<sup>9</sup> We know her as a devoted and gifted fighter of the revolutionary workers' movement. But we assigned you in Sweden to investigate this conflict. Why did you not tell us at once that the Executive Committee had made an error? Why did you not even make a specific proposal to correct it?

What Comrade Laursen told us today is outrageous. Comrade Höglund, in his capacity as a member of the Executive Committee, is of course within his rights to point out to the Executive Committee the errors it has made regarding Denmark. That is his uncontested right. But neither Comrade Höglund nor any other of us has the right to circumvent the decisions of the ECCI and support a group that was expelled from the Comintern. Comrade Höglund did that, however, by sending friendly correspondence to this group and an invitation to his party's congress. That is simply and absolutely disloyal.

I must repeat that you have the full right to propose that the Executive Committee correct a decision that you consider to be wrong. But you have not

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8 Georg Ledebour led a minority of the USPD that opposed the 1922 fusion with the SPD, and sought to maintain the USPD as a separate organisation after the merger was carried out, initially with 30,000–40,000 members. In 1923 a number of the members of the rump USPD joined the KPD while others – including Ledebour – formed the Sozialistischer Bund (Socialist League).

In July 1923 an international meeting was held in Frankfurt, Germany, attended by the Ledebour group and its international allies, which included the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries of Russia and the General Jewish Labour Bund. The meeting agreed to set up a joint information bureau.

9 Marie Nielsen, a founding leader of the Danish CP, was part of a split in the party in early 1922. With help from the ECCI, the two sides reunited in September 1923.

done that. Instead, you committed the authority of the Swedish party to back a group that has not been recognised by the Executive Committee. That is impermissible. We have now chosen a new commission to look into the question of whether we really committed a mistake regarding the Danish question. If such an error was made, we will be the first to propose that it be corrected. But we must correct our errors in an organised way, as is proper for Communists. So long as there exists a decision adopted by a majority, the minority must carry it out.

We have elected a broad commission to take up issues relating to the Scandinavian conflict in detail. The sharp discussion that took place here cannot hold us back from making all necessary concessions to the veteran fighters of the Norwegian and Swedish workers' movement. We had to present our viewpoint here very precisely. We will see in the commission whether we are really divided by major and fundamental disagreements. If that is the case, there is nothing to be done. But if that is not the case, we can come to unanimous decisions that must then be carried out.

The Italian party is the International's favourite child and also its naughty child. Comrade Urbani [Terracini] presents matters as if I had said that the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party was entirely to blame for the present crisis. If I had said that, it would of course be an exaggeration. But I did not in any way say that blame fell solely on the Central Committee of the Communist Party. I say only that the Central Committee is among those responsible for the difficult situation we now face. Comrade Urbani comforts us with the fact that the right-wing Socialists sabotaged the Fourth Congress decisions. That's cold comfort indeed. All these gentlemen are only there, after all, to sabotage decisions of Communist congresses. But we have the right to demand a different attitude from our Communist Party. I charge you Communists with a lack of good will. I am very well aware what enormous objective difficulties you have encountered in recent months. But it is absolutely clear that you have been at fault for a great many things. We very much hope that the decisions we are taking this time will become reality without fail. The fascist government is flagging. Soon a new and fresh wind will blow in Italy, and then our comrades will have more success.

As for the question of the workers' and peasants' government, I am in agreement with Varga's proposal.<sup>10</sup> We can add the word 'working' to this slogan. Koritschoner said here that the primitive internationalism of the workers had

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<sup>10</sup> For Varga's proposal, see pp. 425–6.

some good results.<sup>11</sup> But this internationalism is not primitive; it is an essentially healthy sentiment that carries us forward. When we say that we will not neglect the national question, it does not mean that the Czech workers have Czech feelings, and the German workers have German feelings, and they confront each other. No, they should have international feelings. But the party must learn how to win for us, at least for a span of time, the forces that are discontented nationally – forces that play an important role in politics. For example, the Bolsheviks took a position on the Ukrainian question that helped the party to move forward. The situation today is similar in almost all countries. No, it is not a question of turning the workers into nationalists. They should be good internationalists!

Comrade Zápotocký said that it was not possible at present to rouse the masses in Czechoslovakia for the decisive battle. But if an army cannot fight, it must be active, it must manoeuvre, and these manoeuvres must have specific goals. These remarks are not entirely comprehensible. In Czechoslovakia there is a severe crisis because the exchange rate of the koruna is being raised artificially. Unemployment is very high, the parliament is locked in a permanent crisis, the slogan of a [proletarian] dictatorship does not seem so impossible, and it's mostly a question of how we raise it.

A Russian counterrevolutionary, Izgoyev, wrote about May Day in Prague, as he saw it himself. Countless demonstrators marched past, and they belonged to the Communists. Then came the banners of the Social Democrats: a couple of thousand well-dressed people, including many women. Given that, Zápotocký's speech seems to me to be somewhat too pessimistic. Where manoeuvring is concerned, this activity cannot be artificial. It would seem that the question of unemployment provides sufficient genuine opportunities for activity by the party and the trade unions. It is wrong to counterpose manoeuvres and concrete goals, as Comrade Zápotocký does. The purpose of manoeuvres is to achieve positive goals that are not too distant.

News has come from Bulgaria that Stamboliyski is preparing a counterblow and that the Communists had prepared an uprising in Plevna but the leadership body of the Communist Party was opposed.<sup>12</sup> If this report proves accurate, it would represent a great error. Now we must ourselves ally with the cursed Stamboliyski. The Bolsheviks joined with Kerensky against Kornilov.<sup>13</sup>

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11 For Koritschoner's comments, see pp. 449–50.

12 For the Bulgarian coup, see pp. 384–5, n. 5.

13 In August 1917, Lavr Kornilov, a general in the old Russian tsarist army and commander-in-chief of the army under Kerensky, sought to overthrow the Provisional Government. While

The Bulgarian party has been built over a twenty-five-year period. Now it must show whether this accumulation of forces was Communist in character. There are only three possible roads in Bulgaria. The party can enter into struggle, a struggle that can lead to a workers' and peasants' government. Or, if the party does not struggle and the present government continues, then the party will risk life and limb – or it will rot. The third possibility is that the party leadership will remain inactive, but the masses will be swept into struggle, and that will result in a split. We are far from the scene, and cannot provide any directives. But we must alert the Bulgarian party to the dangers.

There has been such broad agreement on the question of the workers' and peasants' government that it is already possible now to utilise this slogan. Tranmael was quite right to remark that the new slogan does not refer to petty parliamentary alliances with so-called peasant parties, which are actually bourgeois parties. Rather it means that we go to the peasant masses. What the National Socialist paper *Das Gewissen* writes about the KPD is actually a first-rate compliment to our party. The KPD is not national in the normal sense of the word, but it is significant that sections of the bourgeoisie are now thinking it is a party that turns to the entire people. That is a great victory, showing that the party does not interpret the concept of 'class party' in the sense of a craft guild. The KPD is a class party, but in the sense that a revolutionary party must be on the eve of a revolution. There may still be interludes, but the outcome of the struggle is not in question.

I do not underestimate the Second International: it is an International of deceit. I only wish to stress that we are not a ceremonial International. Recent developments in the workers' movement, the unification of transport workers of the two trade-union Internationals in struggle,<sup>14</sup> signify that the relationship of forces is shifting in our favour. Decisive events may well take place before the Fifth Congress. A keen eye, a firm hand, and loyalty to the International will bring us great successes. (*Enthusiastic applause*)

(*The chair reads the following statement by the Swedish Communist Party secretary, Comrade Ström.*)

In order to avoid any possible misunderstandings, let it be stated that telegrams of greetings were sent in the past to *both* Danish Communist parties, along with invitations to the Swedish party congress.

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refusing to give political support to the Kerensky regime, the Bolsheviks helped lead the successful effort to block Kornilov's coup.

14 For the collaboration between the Amsterdam International's transport workers' federation and the Soviet transport unions, see p. 394, n. 18.

**Arthur Ewert** (Germany): The German and the British delegations introduce the following motion on the question of religion:

The Enlarged Executive Committee considers that Comrade Höglund's position on the question of religion is wrong, un-Marxist, and Social-Democratic. The Executive Committee insists that religion is in no way a private matter for Communist parties. Rather, religion is to be exposed through ideological struggle, carried out with appropriate means and methods.

This motion is also signed by delegates from France, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Finland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia. The same is true for the following motions of the German and British delegations:

The Enlarged Executive Committee considers the tendency around the Mot Dag group to be anti-Communist and incompatible with membership in the International.

The Enlarged Executive Committee considers the position of the Norwegian party leadership regarding relations with the International to be incorrect and damaging. This position objectively represents a tendency to break away from the movement of the Western European proletariat, as well as from the proletarian world movement as a whole.

*(Zinoviev proposes, on behalf of the Russian delegation, that the motions be referred to the commission, so that an understanding can be reached with the Norwegian comrades.)*

*(Falk speaks against this motion; Radek speaks in favour. It is then adopted unanimously.)*

*(The congress now comes to the second point on its agenda.)*

## The World Political Situation

**Radek:** Comrades, during the six months that have passed since the last congress, at which I gave a written report on the liquidation of the Versailles Treaty,<sup>15</sup> a whole number of quite important world-political events have taken

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<sup>15</sup> Radek's report prepared for the Fourth Congress was titled 'The Winding-Up of the Versailles Treaty'. It can be found online at Marxists Internet Archive.

place, which substantially alter the general picture and demand from us a great many tactical decisions. Before going into a discussion of these questions, however, I would like to direct a few modest words to a noted patron of the Communist International, Lord Curzon.

In his note to Soviet Russia, Lord Curzon called the Communist International a 'mischievous body' – that is, an organisation that foments mischief.<sup>16</sup> And he expressed his great unhappiness with the fact that we are active in questions of world politics. Comrades, we are aware of the great honour shown us by Lord Curzon in addressing us in this fashion. We also know that we are not as qualified to deal with world political questions as Lord Curzon. None of us attended Eton College; none of us dreamed at the age of seven of becoming viceroy of India; and we do not represent the class that has been shaping world politics for three hundred years.

We represent a class that up until now was the object of world politics. We do not study world politics in the colleges of the British aristocracy. Rather, the working class studied the effects of the policies of Lord Curzon and others through their impact during the World War on our bodies. It is now evident that these studies were inadequate, because otherwise Lord Curzon would no longer be in a position to pursue world politics. We attempt to assist the working class in these studies, and it is understandable that we make errors in this process. If Lord Curzon's position was not so fundamentally different from ours, we would receive his criticisms with thanks, just as we do the criticisms of our opponents in the workers' movement. But we do not hope to be in a position in the future to mitigate the criticisms of Lord Curzon and receive a certificate from him that we are an organisation that brings him joy. That is not our goal. Rather, we are convinced that in our engagement with world politics we are pursuing goals that the working class has adopted, pursues, and will achieve, whether Lord Curzon likes it or not.

Now let us address the issues.

The first fact that occurred shortly after the congress and that signified a major shift in the international situation was the British-American treaty regarding payment of the British debt to the United States. The second was

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16 On 8 May 1923, Britain's foreign secretary Lord Curzon delivered an ultimatum to the Soviet government accusing it of actions against British interests in India and Afghanistan. The ultimatum demanded that the Soviets recall their diplomatic representatives from Iran and Afghanistan, apologise for anti-British acts, reduce maritime limits, and pay financial compensation for repressive actions taken against British spies in Russia. The note threatened to cancel the British-Soviet trade agreement of 1921 unless these demands were met. Soviet Russia responded on 11 May, rejecting almost all of the demands.

the occupation of the Rhineland and the British attitude to it. The third: the Lausanne Conference. The fourth: the British-Russian dispute. The fifth and last: the de facto liquidation of the Washington Agreement on East Asia.

These appear to be separate developments unrelated to each other, but in reality they are very closely linked. Only by analysing the interrelationship of these five questions can we achieve a picture of the world situation and arrive at the tasks that we as the Communist International have to accomplish.

*[The Collapse of Lloyd George's Political Plan]*<sup>17</sup>

In order to understand the major world-political shift represented by the British-American debt agreement,<sup>18</sup> it is necessary to recall, with a few words, the previous phase of British policy, that of *Lloyd George*, as it found expression first in the Genoa Conference and second in the well-known Balfour note regarding debts among the Allied powers.<sup>19</sup>

The plan pursued by Lloyd George in the interests of British merchant capital was as follows: The Allies owe large debts to each other – above all, to the United States. One of the major debtors of Britain and the United States is France. Britain sought an agreement that would have reduced France's debt to the Allies but required France, in return, to reduce its armaments and decrease the burden of reparations weighing on Germany. If France had been compelled to reduce its army, the conflict between Britain and France in the struggle for hegemony in Europe would have been alleviated and the situation of Britain improved. If France had been compelled to cancel a portion of Germany's reparations in order to reduce its debt to Britain and the United States, the German bourgeoisie would have been reconsolidated. And since Germany plays a large role in the British trade balance, the British merchant and industrial bourgeoisie would have become able to overcome the mass unemployment that costs Britain as much every year as France demands of Germany in reparations, namely £100 million.

The second part of Lloyd George's plan was to reach an agreement with Soviet Russia in Genoa that would not only have drawn Russia back into capitalist world trade, but through which Russia would have become a new cap-

17 Subheadings in this report have been supplied by the editor.

18 In early February 1923, the British government stated its acceptance of US proposals on British debt payment. The Anglo-American War Debt Convention would be formally signed on 19 June 1923.

19 On 1 August 1922, Arthur Balfour, Britain's Lord President of the Council, sent a note to a number of Allied governments that had debts with Britain. The note called for these countries to pay up, so that Britain could settle its own large debts to the United States.

italist state. Lloyd George hoped that the Soviet government would abandon its socialist character, that is, its constant efforts to develop the economy step by step in the direction of socialism. He hoped that Russia would – in the form of 99-year leases – give back to the foreign capitalists the factories they had previously possessed. What is more, he hoped that Soviet Russia would be forced to pay debts and so-called compensation to the capitalists by delivering over to international capitalism its railroads, its ports, and perhaps its as-yet undeveloped riches. In this manner, the Russian peasants and workers were to contribute to the restoration of European capitalism.

Lloyd George explained in Parliament following the Genoa Conference that the leaders of the Russian Revolution were intelligent and sensible people. They were under the pressure of a mob stirred up by fierce Communists like our friend Bukharin, whom he did not mention but was thinking of, and for this reason the intelligent people should be provided with some help. The Russian regime could continue to call itself a Soviet government; 'The Internationale' could still be played, but the economic resources of Russia should be handed over to European capitalism. The hitch was that this idea shared a characteristic of Ariosto's famous horse: it was dead.<sup>20</sup> The check had been drawn up without consulting two waiters: *the United States and Soviet Russia*.

The plan could succeed only through the agreement of Soviet Russia, on the one hand, and on the other through American pressure on France and American preparedness to make a loan to Germany. The United States was not interested in promoting the policies of Lloyd George and Britain. Consider merely the most elementary statistical data on the recent economic development of the United States during the great boom of 1922–3. Steel production in the United States is twice as high as in the prewar period and now amounts to 50 million tons. The amount of land planted with wheat has risen from 46 million acres before the war to 98 million. Despite the Fordney Tariff,<sup>21</sup> American industry is processing raw materials from abroad in such vast quantities that it is beginning to suffer from an inadequate labour force. All this demonstrates why the American bourgeoisie felt no need at all to jump headlong into European affairs and invest massive amounts of capital in the restoration of European capitalism.

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20 A reference to Ludovico Ariosto's sixteenth-century epic poem, *Orlando Furioso*: 'Covered with shield and sword, one, leaping, sped / Now here now there, and thus himself defended, / Lest a two-handed mace upon his head / Should fall, with which the giant still offended: / On the field lay his horse, already dead.'

21 The Fordney-McCumber Tariff bill was enacted in September 1922, imposing large increases in tariffs on imports.

There are two groups in opposition to isolationist policies. The first is the farmers, but they account for only 30 per cent of the American population and 17 per cent of national income; 20 per cent of agricultural production is exported. The second group is the financial and banking circles, and at a bankers' conference in Washington they openly expressed their desire for involvement in European matters. They hope in this way to gain control of European industry. A number of banks are interested in financing exports from Europe, to supply goods at prices lower than those of American products.

They had a possibility for big profits, but this would be to the detriment of American capitalists, who sought protection from all competitors through the Fordney Tariff. The improvement of economic conditions in the United States has reinforced the country's isolationist tendencies, despite Hoover's warnings that the country must plan for the morrow and keep up relations with the foreign powers. American imports have grown, but this is due to increased use of raw materials from the colonial countries, who are recipients of American gold. The United States has not emerged from isolation. To the degree that it is beginning to pay closer attention to world events, this concerns not so much those in Europe as those in the Near and Far East and in South America.

When the question of a loan to Germany was discussed in the United States, the director of the Morgan Trust, Lamont, made a speech indicating how difficult it would be for the banks to mobilise capital for Europe. He explained that the banks do not possess all that much capital; they raise it through the broad masses of petty bourgeois who take out loans. But these people see that Europe is torn apart and threatened by war and revolution. They say that until the European bourgeoisie itself establishes order, it cannot expect any help from America. That was the overriding reason why the United States did not join in Lloyd George's plan.

But there were also other reasons. Lloyd George was trying, in a political sense, to create an Anglo-American coalition against France. The United States knows very well that French policies in Europe are destructive in character. The United States does not want at this time to be definitively tied to Britain. As I explained in my report on the liquidation of the Versailles Treaty, British policies in the Far East are not written in stone. Britain has not agreed to any definitive commitments against Japan. The United States does not know whether it will find it necessary to hold Britain in check in a future struggle in the East. The United States and Britain are not only two great industrial powers competing on the world market; they are also two great sea powers. The United States has caught up with the British fleet and cannot exclude the possibility that it will have to engage in struggle against this fleet on the high seas. If

such a situation comes to pass, France might not be the enemy; it might be a possible ally. The French submarines would cut off the routes through which raw materials and grain comes to Britain, and French ports, scattered across the Atlantic and Indian oceans, would be bases for the American fleet. And the United States, which has raised such a ruckus about militarism in Europe, refrained in Washington from demanding that France give up the construction of submarines.

As for the second aspect, regarding Soviet Russia, Lloyd George's plan broke down because of a small mistake made by Lloyd George regarding Soviet Russia. By no means do I deny that we possess some sense and a good deal of self-possession, but Lloyd George went wrong in judging our intentions. Perhaps he has fallen victim to the Second International and the Mensheviks in assuming that the New Economic Policy meant nothing other than that we wanted a parachute to enable us to descend slowly into the swamps of capitalism. Soviet Russia declared in Genoa and then in The Hague<sup>22</sup> that it was fully prepared to make concessions to foreign capital in return for credits. But under no circumstances would we hand over our heavy industry and our railways to foreign capital. That demolished the Lloyd George plan from the eastern side. During discussions in the Villa Alberti,<sup>23</sup> he threatened the Soviet delegation that if he was politically extinguished, no such good friend would take his place, and our enemies would win the upper hand. Our reaction was that we know how to struggle against our enemies, but God save us from our friends. And with that, the Lloyd George plan was shattered.

When the new Conservative cabinet took office, it had to seek other paths to a rapprochement with the United States. If Mohammad cannot go to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohammad. The British chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Baldwin, an owner of the company Baldwin Ltd., travelled to the United States and returned with an agreement. The impression this made was reflected in the reaction of Lloyd George, which I will convey. His words are too delightful to remain unknown:

A cold shiver ran down the back of England when it was announced officially that the British Government had definitely agreed to pay over

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22 A reference to the international financial and economic conference held in The Hague from 15 June to 19 July 1922. A Soviet delegation to that conference was headed by M.M. Litvinov. For the Genoa Conference, see p. 274, n. 11.

23 Villa Alberti was one of the sites of the Genoa Conference, and of Lloyd George's temporary residence.

£30,000,000 a year for 60 years to the United States in respect of debts incurred for the Allies, without seeking contribution from our debtors to protect the taxpayers of this country.<sup>24</sup>

And it is no surprise that a cold shiver ran down the back of even such a strong capitalist power as Britain. A victorious power is supposed to pay an ally in that war 300 million gold roubles every year, not only without receiving a penny from dreadful Russia, but also without receiving a penny from good allies like France and Italy. Taxes paid in Britain are higher than those of the bourgeoisie of any other country, and yet the proportion of taxes going to pay the debts of Britain's allies is 10 per cent. Imagine: 10 per cent of British taxes to make up for the failure of its allies to make payments to Britain! This is the way Britain sought to achieve a political rapprochement with the United States. But that was not the only result of the collapse of Lloyd George's plan. The other result that Britain had to consider was what to do about France.

**[*Britain, France, and the Ruhr*]**

The United States declined to exert the pressure of the dollar on France to force it either to pay its debts or to declare itself ready to reduce the size of its army, ease the war danger, and reduce the burden of German reparations. Britain therefore faced the question of what options were available for the struggle against France. And here the military balance sheet is exceptionally unfavourable. Britain's strength has been that it is an island. The invasion plans of Napoleon and also of Germany came to grief. Yet Britain had to accept after the war that it was no longer an island. The development of air fleets and the deployment of chemicals in war bestowed on Britain not just one but several Achilles' heels. Consider the book of Major Lefebure on the evolution of chemical warfare.<sup>25</sup> Lefebure was the director of British chemical supply during the war. The conclusion is inescapable that France is capable of using its air force to destroy British centres of industry.

On 23 March the British Upper House discussed the relationship of Britain's air force to that of France. The situation is catastrophic. In April 1923 Britain possessed 35 air squadrons with 529 planes. Twenty-nine of them were located in the colonies: in Egypt, India, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Constantinople. France has a target of 2,163 planes in 1925 and a present complement of 1,722 planes. France is thus three times as strong in the air as Britain. And here is a

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24 United Press Association report, 15 February 1923.

25 Victor Lefebure, *The Riddle of the Rhine: Chemical Strategy in Peace and War*.

jest of history: the pro-French clique in Britain, with the *Morning Post* in the lead, is now campaigning for expansion of the British air force. This led to Lord Grey's cool statement in the House of Lords that Britain cannot risk a breach with France.

In this situation, Britain faced the question: *What next in the reparations question?* The dollar was then worth 9,000 marks, and it was clear where things were headed. The Paris Conference took place.<sup>26</sup> Britain proposed a payment programme that, in terms of the proposed figures, was no more favourable for Germany than the French proposal. It gave no assurances to France, which then rejected this plan. Bonar Law was just as well aware as Poincaré that the German state secretary [Carl] Bergmann was waiting with this plan in the ante-chamber, but they did not invite him in. Many believe that this was a comedy of errors, and that remains the opinion of Germany's worthy public opinion up to this day. The British asked more of Germany than the French, and this led to a break with the French. The British were so anxious to save Germany, and nonetheless, although they knew that Bergmann was right there, they did not invite him in.

There is a simple solution to this riddle. Britain was pursuing in Paris a policy of provocation. Britain wanted France to act alone and occupy the Ruhr territory. The idea was clear. If Britain is no longer capable of beating back French imperialism, it must permit French imperialism to break its neck on the resistance of Germany. The British government knew full well that in the long run it could not tolerate France's occupation of the Ruhr region. If France remains in the Ruhr, it will unify German coal with the coal of Lorraine and the iron ore of Briey. That will create the basis not only for French imperialism but for French capitalism's economic domination of Europe, at least up to the Berezina River.<sup>27</sup> The British are well aware that they cannot permit such a thing. But their plan aimed at letting the French efforts shatter against things that have a will of their own. Britain knew full well that when the petty-bourgeois German government of Wirth fell, it was replaced by a government of heavy industry. The German People's Party, which thereby came to power, had fought for years

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26 The Paris Conference of 2–4 January 1923 was yet another attempt by the Allied governments to come up with a financial plan to avoid a German default on reparations payments. No agreement was reached due to disagreements involving Britain, Italy, and France.

27 The Berezina River in Russia (today located in Belarus and just east of the Polish-Soviet border at the time) was the site of a major 1812 battle between Napoleon's retreating French army and Russian troops.

against the policy of compliance with reparations, and it was necessarily going to mount resistance. And behind this resistance stood Britain.

The British policy was one of provocation, for which there are several precedents in history. London proclaimed neutrality, while in Berlin the British ambassador, Lord D'Abernon, was the driving force spurring the German bourgeoisie on to resistance. Lord D'Abernon, previously chairman of the Ottoman Public Debt,<sup>28</sup> is said to not only take great interest in beautiful women and horses, but also to be a great financier who has speculated on the Berlin exchange that the value of the mark will fall. But so great is our respect for British lords that we were sure he would not allow politics to get mixed up with finances. Whatever the truth regarding the aristocratic pursuits of Lord D'Abernon, his game is being carried out in the interests of British policy. Curzon spoke in London about non-intervention, while Lord D'Abernon sought to drive Germany into a struggle, promising, of course, that Britain would lend its support to Germany at the decisive moment.

So Britain is counting on Poincaré breaking his skull against the resistance of the German miners, financed by the German bourgeoisie. At the appropriate moment the conflict will be resolved by a compromise, through which an iron and coal cartel will indeed be formed, but with the participation of Britain and the United States. Given that the United States and Britain are economically stronger than France, Britain hopes that it can ultimately join with the financially weak but organisationally very strong German bourgeoisie to dominate the iron and coal cartel. This plan was placed in great danger by Lord D'Abernon's partner, the German bourgeoisie.

Comrades, what has taken place in the last six months in the Ruhr must be closely examined by the entire international working class. It shows not only that the international bourgeoisie is incapable of rebuilding the capitalist world economy, but that the bourgeoisies of the individual countries are incapable of subordinating their specific interests to the common interests they all share.

The German bourgeoisie is now a band of hyenas, fighting over every piece of carrion. As a class, they have a great world-political stake in dismantling the Versailles Treaty. But they help Poincaré obtain victory, because each clique of German capitalism thinks only of its immediate profits. What has been the problem of resistance [in the Ruhr]? It consisted in feeding the German workers in the Ruhr long enough so that Poincaré would realise that he could not

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28 The Ottoman Public Debt Administration was a European-controlled organisation formed in 1881 to collect debts owed to European companies by the Ottoman Empire.

break their resistance. Instead of that, the German bourgeoisie, while shouting about national defence, carried out a policy that I will portray to you through a few facts.

The German bourgeoisie received from the state many billions of paper marks as 'Ruhr aid', in order to be able to pay wages to workers who were off the job. They received 200 billion paper marks as an allowance for their exchange costs. That amounts to 200 million gold marks.<sup>29</sup> The German bourgeoisie received perhaps a third of Germany's gold reserves in order to purchase cheap currencies and buy cheap coal with this currency. By the end of January, the dollar had risen to 49,000 marks. It was driven down to 20,000 and 19,000. As Comrade Pawlowski [Varga] will explain more fully in a special article in *Communist International*,<sup>30</sup> the German bourgeoisie went to a bank window, received paper marks as credit, and then went to another bank window and received dollars for less than half price. More than 300 million gold marks were pumped out in this way, and Stinnes led off a wild speculation in dollars. The results are well known. According to a telegram received today, a dollar now gets 100,000 marks. The German bourgeoisie has abandoned its resistance. It drove prices up to such a high level that the working class needed its wages to be multiplied ten times over to be able to buy what it received before the Ruhr crisis.

The German bourgeoisie, supported by the German government, sought to drive down wages. On 8 March the Wolff telegraph agency stated openly that wages must now be driven down. Representatives of the government intervened in all negotiations between employers and workers, demanding that wages be lowered. The result was that German workers in the occupied territory received no increase in wages from 8 February on, while increases were approved for civil servants.

The result was a spontaneous wave of strikes, beginning in the Ruhr and then embracing all of Germany. This led a representative of the German government, as you know, Dr. Lutterbeck, to appeal to General Degoutte, pointing to the great example of Thiers in 1871, with the request that the French bourgeoisie return the favour it had asked for at that time. In 1871 Bismarck helped overthrow the Paris Commune, and now Lutterbeck demanded French help in crushing the uprising in the Ruhr.<sup>31</sup> This document needs to be distributed

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29 In 1923 a gold mark was worth slightly under US\$0.25.

30 The article by Eugen Varga (under the pseudonym E. Pawlowski), 'Die Niederlage des bürgerlichen Deutschlands im Ruhrkampf', was published in *Die Kommunistische Internationale* no. 26 (1923), pp. 96–106.

31 On 26 May 1923 Johann Anton Lutterbeck, a German official in the occupied Ruhr, had requested that French occupation authorities give permission to German police to enter

by all parties of the Communist International, not just the German, as a classic document of the bourgeoisie's betrayal of the goals of national liberation. This stands as evidence that the bourgeoisie has given up on resistance against French imperialism. Two weeks ago, following Dr. Lutterbeck's letter, Chancellor Cuno said in a speech in Münster: 'Our resistance is not yet over. We will continue it.' But in all history no attempt at *restitutio in integrum* [returning to the original condition] – that is, a return to virginity – has ever succeeded. The German bourgeoisie is prepared to surrender to Poincaré at the cost of the German proletariat.

The German bourgeoisie proposed to the German government that heavy industry, trade, and agriculture contribute 500 million gold marks a year to pay the reparations, if the eight-hour-day is abolished and the railways are returned to the industrialists – in short, the capitalists will obtain the right to auction off Germany not merely on a retail but on a wholesale basis. Since the proletariat was not in a position to take hold of the bourgeoisie's real values,<sup>32</sup> the bourgeoisie is taking possession of the bourgeois state in the most literal sense of the word, by depriving it of all independent economic operations and laying all the burdens on the proletariat.

We believe that with the defeat of the German bourgeoisie in the Ruhr, the victory of Poincaré has been achieved in fact, although it has not yet been formally ratified. The only question is whether Poincaré is in a position to take possession of all the gains from this victory, or whether a portion of the booty will have to be passed on to Britain, which is of course trying to create the impression that it has saved Germany once again. The German bourgeoisie is not even capable of surrender. It unleashed all the hounds of nationalism against the French, and now it is sitting stark naked. It wanted to carry through its surrender by provoking a Communist uprising in the Ruhr, so it could then raise an outcry that the Communists have opened the door to the French. It could then unite the fascists and nationalists, among whom a section could have turned against the government, and throw them against the working class, defeating the Communists.

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the Ruhr Valley in order to suppress the growing strike movement there and restore order. In his note, Lutterbeck wrote, 'I take the liberty of recalling in this connection that at the time of the Paris Commune, the German Command did all it could to meet the needs of the French authorities taking repressive action'. Quoted in Broué 2005, p. 708. For Bismarck's assistance in crushing the Paris Commune, see pp. 387–8.

32 In October 1921 the German CP had adopted the demand of confiscation of the bourgeoisie's 'real values,' by which it meant items such as land, buildings, industrial plants, etc., that were not affected by Germany's hyper-inflation at the time.

Thanks to the cool-headedness of the German Communist Party, this plan has failed and the German bourgeoisie has no idea what to do next. Its offer amounts to the enslavement of Germany, but it wants to play the role of slave-driver. It does not want to permit the French to carry out this exploitation on their own, and French imperialism fears that the guarantees offered are mere sheets of paper. As things stand, an agreement will be concluded that hands Germany over to Entente imperialism, but it is possible that the situation will remain undecided for many months.

When the Ruhr struggle began, Poincaré made a speech taking up the German offer, according to which an international bankers' commission would determine how much Germany had to pay. His speech was given in a tone that reminds one of statements by Chicherin. France would never permit, he said, that international finance determine what France was to receive and what it required. Mr. Poincaré's socialist tirade against international finance was aimed against the United States and Britain. Obviously, in such an international commission the British and American banks, as the lenders, would play a decisive role.

If France wins in the Ruhr, it of course does not mean that American and British capital have been completely excluded. But France has declared it will not withdraw from the Ruhr until the payments have been made. So France retains the targets for exploitation in its military grip, and the pressure of dollars and sterling is weakened.

It may be that the struggle in the Ruhr will take revolutionary forms. Or perhaps the corpse of passive resistance will poison the air.<sup>33</sup> Or it may come to an agreement. But in all these cases one thing is certain: six months of warfare in the Ruhr have thrown back the German economy for many years. Merely bringing wages into line with prices involves a wage revolution. The financial condition of Germany is absolutely hopeless. The German bourgeoisie's hope for an American loan was blown out of the air. We knew this in Genoa when we called for loans, but the German bourgeoisie believed in that prospect.

And now Keynes, the friend of the Germans, comes along and tells the German bourgeoisie in the London *Nation* that the best they can hope for is a loan given as charity, a pittance, enough to buy a cigar but not to alleviate the fin-

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33 On 13 January 1923, two days after the Ruhr occupation, the German Reichstag voted for a policy of 'passive resistance' to French and Belgian occupation authorities. Despite this symbolic act, the German bourgeoisie and SPD-led government made no efforts to organise any such resistance. German workers, on the other hand, engaged in strike action and demonstrations, with the support of the KPD. For their part, right-wing nationalists carried out armed actions against the occupation.

ancial situation of Germany. That means Germany is headed into large-scale economic devastation, while Britain loses one of its most important customers for a long time. And that brings me to the connection between this defeat of Britain in the Ruhr and its Russian policy.

*[The Anglo-Russian Conflict]*

Reviewing the basic statistics of British foreign trade, we see the following:

From 1921 to 1922, British exports to non-British countries rose from £ 310 million to £ 336 million.

British exports to British colonies dropped from £ 208 million to £ 198 million.

All in all, Britain's trade with its colonies has risen since the war by 2 per cent, that is, by an extremely small amount, given that the British pound has been subject to a revolution in prices. This outcome is extremely small given the efforts made by Britain to retain its grip on the colonies.

British exports to Germany, which amounted in 1913 to £ 29 million, were £ 12 million in 1921 and £ 24 million in 1922. So trade with Central Europe rose faster than with the colonies, despite the devastation after the war. Now we see that because of the Ruhr events this Western European market is headed for a major breakdown.

That is the reason why the current led by Lord Beaverbrook – that is, the current oriented to the colonies – is gaining in strength, even though it runs counter to the facts of Britain's trade balance and economic condition. A section of the British bourgeoisie is saying that Europe's economy is headed toward ruin. That is why its attention is shifting more and more to the colonies.

This tendency was expressed in Curzon's note against Soviet Russia. It appeared at almost the same time as the note to Germany, in which Curzon demanded that the German bourgeoisie pay what France demanded, giving short shrift to the German bourgeoisie. At first glance, it seemed to be crazy for Curzon to be taking on both Russia and the German bourgeoisie at the same time. But there was method in this madness. The colonial tendency is seeking to push through its policies, which consist in handing over Germany to France, with minimal participation of Britain, and in return gaining France for the struggle against Soviet Russia, in order to prevent France from taking Britain's place in Russia. No doubt you will ask why this struggle against Soviet Russia; why Britain's policy toward Soviet Russia has changed. The explanation lies, as I said, partly in the failure of Lloyd George's plans, partly in developments within Russia, and partly in the Near East.

Let me begin with Russia. As I said, Lloyd George viewed the New Economic Policy as a bridge built by Soviet Russia to get to capitalism. He was counting

on the intellectual and moral disintegration of the Soviet Russian Communist Party. Lord Curzon did not study Marxism in Eton, to be sure, but there are facts that get through even to a British *Junker*. The facts are very simple. Russia did not surrender in the Civil War; rather it won a military victory. But it suffered grievous wounds in that Civil War. Then there was the famine.<sup>34</sup> In Genoa an attempt was made to compel Russia to surrender, at a moment when famine was holding a knife to its throat. In 1922 we had an average harvest, and the famine eased except in regions that we could not reach due to transport problems. For the first time our workers are receiving halfway adequate food, and I now see from my experiences in Germany that they are better fed than the German workers.

If we have good harvests in the coming years, we will export 150 million to 200 million poods each year.<sup>35</sup> We must do this in order to enable the peasants to expand the cultivation of grain. The price of bread is so low that if we do not export, the peasant will be obliged to reduce the area cultivated for grain. Britain can only welcome that, because it will be liberated from its present dependency on the United States with regard to raw materials and bread. But in terms of Britain's global policy – its desire to force Soviet Russia to its knees – it faces the question: What is the significance of 150 million poods? It means 150 million gold roubles. It means that the peasant receiving this gold for his grain will buy more products of industry, and light industry will expand, something that is happening already, and there will be resources for expansion of industry as a whole. The Soviet state, which has a monopoly of foreign trade, will receive money for the technical equipment of the Red Army.

And there is more to it than that. Lloyd George welcomed the New Economic Policy. But the New Economic Policy enabled Soviet Russia to strengthen its position in the Near East. Teheran is closer to Nizhni Novgorod than it is to London via Abukir. Kabul is closer to Nizhni Novgorod than to Calcutta or to London. And the Eastern peoples were accustomed to Russian goods. Before the war, the products of Russian industry began to defeat the British in the Near East. No matter if Soviet Russia were to swear off propaganda, and even swear that Lord Curzon is the greatest friend of the Eastern peoples, even so, the economic changes will strengthen the position of Soviet Russia in the East.

And that, in the view of Lord Curzon, amounted to a threat to the very political line that he, based on his entire past experience, proposes as the focus of British policy: the strengthening of relations with the colonies and above

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34 For the Russian famine, see p. 54, n. 1.

35 A pood is equal to approximately 16.38 kilograms (36.11 pounds).

all with India. In a speech given in 1910 on the role of India in the British Empire, Lord Curzon stated that Iran and Afghanistan are a military buffer zone for India. The interests of British capitalism do not require occupation of these countries, but they do demand that Soviet Russia not gain any decisive influence there. Well, in contrast to tsarism, Soviet Russia does not seek either military or economic domination of Iran and Afghanistan. But there is something else that Lord Curzon fears even more: namely, that the ideas of Soviet Russia, fortified by its trade with the East, will lead these countries out of conditions of political powerlessness and will help them become masters in their own house. That would represent a great danger for British imperialism. The tsarist armies of old could threaten its Indian fortress from outside. If the Iranians and Afghans become free people, this will have an impact in India that will strengthen the enemies of British imperialism within the Indian fortress.

So Lord Curzon's response is that he will force Soviet Russia to its knees now, bring it into alignment with British policy, and eliminate it from the list of decisive factors in the East. Or, if that fails, Soviet Russia will be provoked into battle before it can become dangerous. As you know, Britain is very much inclined to have its wars waged by foreign agencies. The notorious telegrams of the Italian representative Amadori in Moscow revealed the British plan very candidly. Amadori, a low-level official without political influence, was not able to carry out such plans on his own. However, he reflected the intentions of the capitalist states as a whole.<sup>36</sup>

Lord Curzon's plan was as follows: Britain and Italy would take their distance [from Russia], then pressure would be placed on the British vassals – namely, all the powers of the Baltic and North seas. Germany would be the only country left [with relations] in Moscow. But German industry, Curzon assumes, is headed for ruin and breakdown. It lacks sufficient means to buy bread and raw materials. Given its collapse in the Ruhr, it will not have the resources to supply industrial goods to Russia. The Amadori telegram put it crudely: Russia will be cut off from all sources of hard currency. In other words, a financial and economic blockade of Russia. Then Amadori says: How will this shape the relationship of Russia with neighbouring states? Following this breach, passive opposition [to Russia] will strengthen and be transformed into active oppos-

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36 Giovanni Amadori, head of the Italian trade mission in Moscow, had sent a telegram to Rome in March 1923, suggesting that Italy break off Russian-Italian trade negotiations, with an eye to undermining the Bolshevik regime. The text of the telegram, presumably intercepted by Soviet intelligence, was published in the *Manchester Guardian*.

ition. In other words, the Petlyura people,<sup>37</sup> the SRs and all the riffraff, the Georgian Mensheviks, will all get new sterling banknotes. They will be let in via the Romanian and Polish frontiers. Curzon imagines that after all this we will wonder whether it is perhaps better to carry out a raid into the West, rather than to look on while they destroy our harvest.

It was Britain's policy to provoke a war between Poland and us. That is why the head of the British general staff, the Earl of Cavan, travelled direct from Rome – where he had met with Mussolini – to Warsaw. What he had to say [to the Poles] was that although they had lost the war in 1920, that was with a new army that was poorly organised and did not enjoy Britain's support. Now it can have British support. So the plan was to draw us into a new war with Poland, whose consequences, in Curzon's thinking, would be to force us to raise taxes sharply, increasing the peasants' discontent. The economic burden of a new war, Curzon hoped, would blow us out of the water.

His second hope was to speculate regarding Lenin's illness. Comrades, we are historical materialists, but Lord Curzon, who rode into Delhi on an elephant, believes in the cult of heroes and is convinced that if Lenin is ill, the rest of us will lose our heads. We treasure the role of Comrade Lenin more greatly than a Lord Curzon is capable of imagining. But do not draw up the balance sheet without considering the twenty-five-year history of our party. The chair of the Comintern Executive Committee, Comrade Zinoviev, told me often in the past – and Bukharin and I contested the point – that there will be renewed interventions, that our opponents will test us out with bayonets to see how much we are worth in the absence of Comrade Lenin. When I was abroad, speaking with a quite intelligent American journalist, I asked him whether Curzon wants war because he fears that we are becoming too strong or because he believes we are weak. The answer I received was this: 'Curzon fears that you are becoming too strong and therefore wants to test your weight now, when you are temporarily without Lenin.' British policy reckoned with a split and the decay of our party through the New Economic Policy.

There is no need for me to explain here what pretexts Lord Curzon utilised to bring about a breach with Soviet Russia: stories of secret conspiracies that we were hatching in the East. It sounds strange indeed, coming from the mouth of a spokesperson for a government that, as an ally of tsarist Russia during the war, conspired outrageously against Russia. British documents stolen by German agents in Teheran in 1916 and published in Berlin the following year demon-

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37 Simon Petlyura was leader of the anti-Soviet Ukrainian government that fought the Red Army during the Civil War.

strate that beyond any doubt. There is no need for me to say anything else. It is more important now to examine how this affair wound up.

You are aware of the policy pursued by Russia. Soviet Russia stated that if Lord Curzon wants war, he should wage it himself; we will do without that war, thank you. Obviously Soviet Russia perceived the trap set by him here. The goal was to humiliate Russia so that our sense of honour would not permit us to avoid this breach.

Comrades, we are a workers' and peasants' government. If we become strong ten years from now, as I dearly hope, and have the entire European working class with us, perhaps we will compose a special ceremonial address on how we were treated by the Lord Curzons, if they still exist then in some form. As you know, when Japan cut itself off from the capitalist world, it demanded that Dutch merchants wishing to enter Japan's ports first perform the kowtow. Perhaps in the future we will establish such a ceremony. As for today, we concluded that this was not a matter of ceremony and prestige. Rather, the point at issue is that Lord Curzon wants war, and we are absolutely against such a war. And if it is to be forced on us, we will not fight now but rather fight when we can demonstrate with a minimum of losses that it is dangerous to play games with Soviet Russia.

Lord Curzon is now trumpeting it abroad in the world that he has won a victory. True, Soviet Russia declined to withdraw its ambassador, but it paid 130,000 gold roubles and agreed that it would not engage in Communist propaganda with the British colonies. That's a pretty penny – 130,000 gold roubles. But Lord Curzon forgot something in his triumph. Mired in the level of stupidity with which the students of Eton trump those of Potsdam, he overlooked two things.

The first is Russia. When Lord Curzon served as viceroy of India, he was the father of India's national movement. His policy of dividing Bengal speeded the revolutionary movement's development by several years. In Soviet Russia, where the working class has established its dictatorship, national consciousness is a component of its rule. Count Mirbach and General Hoffmann educated the Russian people on the national question. At the time, I was among the innocent, leftist, and stupid Communists who fought against our teacher Lenin and did not want to sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Lenin said to us, 'What do you know about the Brest treaty; it is just a piece of paper. We will experience most bitter humiliations, and then the revolutionary masses of Russia will know that we must have means with which to defend ourselves, and Hoffmann and Mirbach will educate the masses on the national question.'<sup>38</sup>

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38 The Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers headed by

Lord Curzon tried to continue this educational process, and we can reveal to him that we will translate the substance of Lord Curzon's talk into plain Russian for 150 million people, so that it is understood by every last peasant. But Lord Curzon has not drawn the balance sheet of the just-concluded conflict as regards the East. He believes that the East will conclude that Soviet Russia fears war with Britain and therefore cannot defend us, and that will make the East lick Lord Curzon's boots. Lord Curzon misestimates the situation in the East. The popular masses in the East will grasp that the representative of Soviet Russia, Comrade Vorovsky, was killed in the struggle for their liberation.<sup>39</sup> These masses will grasp that we were placed in danger of war because British imperialism sees Soviet Russia as a friend of the Eastern peoples. The peoples of the East know that we remain what we were. And this balance sheet in the East will be decidedly against Lord Curzon.

Lord Curzon wanted a breach. He was still threatening a breach on Sunday, when he received our most recent note, but he could not carry it out, even though we had definitely refused to recall our ambassador. He could not carry out a breach because Soviet Russia's sensible policy persuaded not only the British Labour Party but both parties of British Liberalism that it was Lord Curzon who wanted war, not us. Lord Curzon could not carry through the breach because the forces in the British Conservative Party that represent industry asked where this was leading.

It is enough to read the articles of [James Louis] Garvin in the *Observer* to perceive the contradictions in the Conservative camp. Curzon was defeated in his own party, because the industrialists did not want to take such a leap into the unknown. From their own point of view, they were right. The breach would have meant a battle all down the line, and British imperialism would have taken blows not in the area where this would perhaps have been wel-

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Germany was signed on 3 March 1918. Under its terms, Soviet Russia ceded a quarter of the population of the old Russian Empire as well as nine-tenths of its coal mines. General Max Hoffmann and Wilhelm von Mirbach, Germany's ambassador to Russia, both participated in the German delegation at the peace talks. The question of a peace treaty with the Central Powers sparked an intense debate in the Russian CP Political Bureau in January and February 1918. While Lenin advocated immediately signing a treaty, the Left Communist faction led by Bukharin and supported by Radek opposed signing and called for waging a revolutionary war. Trotsky's middle position – declaring the war at an end but refusing to sign the treaty – was approved by the Central Committee on 22 January. After German troops began moving into Soviet territory on 18 February, the Central Committee adopted Lenin's position.

39 For the May 1923 assassination of Vorovsky, see p. 456, n. 12.

come but across the entire territory of British power in Asia. Curzon's retreat, his abandonment of the demand for withdrawal of the Russian ambassadors from Kabul and Teheran, resulted not only from resistance by British industrialists but also from the collapse of his hopes for support from the Allies and neutrals. Italy, in which he had placed the strongest hopes, pulled back. Italy needs Russia because it can sell industrial goods here in return for bread, while in the United States it must pay gold to buy bread. France, immediately after the Curzon note, admitted the Russian Red Cross mission to Marseilles and sent a trade commission to Moscow. This does not mean, of course, that France has made a final decision to put Moscow in the place of Britain, but it means that France was not prepared to put Curzon definitively in charge of its relations with Russia. Denmark signed a trade treaty with Soviet Russia precisely at the moment of the Russian-British conflict.<sup>40</sup> On 5 June 1923 the Liberal London *Daily News* wrote quite correctly:

These discussions with the most astute and unprejudiced men of all parties have shown that a breach between Great Britain and Russia would have negative results in Eastern Europe. The immediate economic interests of both countries demand that all legal means be employed to sustain trade. Good political relations between the two countries will promote trade, and the growth of trade, in turn, will promote political relations. These views are winning more supporters, and not only in Britain. The Italian government immediately recalled from Moscow its representative [Amadori], who had been compromised by his very indiscreet statements about Russian policy. At the same time, we receive news that the French trade commission has arrived in Moscow. We have no doubt that the British Government will understand the meaning of these occurrences. They show how the west wind is blowing.

Lord Curzon did not achieve his goal. He failed both in carrying out a breach with Soviet Russia and in aligning it with British policy. All he achieved was to profoundly offend the national feelings of the Russian popular masses. By refusing to establish an honest relationship with Soviet Russia in the Near East, Britain deliberately preserved the embryos of new conflicts. Now Leslie Urquhart, the industrial manager of intervention, has flown into a fury over the fact that Soviet Russia is not helping him create a capitalist-feudal principedom on Russian soil. He has once again demanded that the British government

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40 The treaty between Denmark and Soviet Russia was signed 23 April 1923.

break with Soviet Russia unless it gives back the factories to the British capitalists and pays its [tsarist] debts. He thus demonstrates why a section of the British industrialists is ready to support Curzon's Eastern-colonial tendency in its struggle against Soviet Russia. But Soviet Russia will not let itself be forced to its knees. If a foreign power attempts to challenge the conquests of the October Revolution, Soviet Russia will accept the struggle. That is why we see evidence of serious danger in the Russian-British conflict and say to the international proletariat: The danger of new interventions has not been extinguished. Curzon's defeat shows how the tendencies intersect. The collapse of Germany and the supremacy of the colonial tendency produced the note to Russia. But the British industrialists are not prepared to give up on Europe and are seeking a way to rescue their trade through Central Europe. The colonial tendency was thrown back. Given the lessons of the great World War, this indicates the end of an episode and that new battles are approaching.

The breakdown of Europe and of capitalism is continuing. The crisis in the Ruhr and the events in The Hague show that the only power that knows what it wants, refuses to be provoked, and clearly seeks the road forward is the first proletarian and peasant state, Soviet Russia. The others have no idea what to do.

[*Lausanne Conference*]

And Russia, comrades, is not the only danger faced by British imperialism. The second enemy in the East is the awakening world of Islam, which now has a state on which to focus, Turkey. There are only eight million inhabitants in independent Turkey, but 60 million Muslims in India. Turkey's struggle for independence acts as a first-rank force for revolution against British imperialism, the oppressor of India, because the Muslims of India themselves are in a state of ferment. That is why Britain attempted to strangle Turkey; that is why its Greek vassals threw themselves on Turkey.<sup>41</sup> Turkey was victorious. The Greek battle against the Turks made up part of Lloyd George's programme: agreement with Russia, which would evolve into a capitalist power and was to abandon its revolutionary role in the East, and, to this end, destruction of Turkey. Lloyd George did not win Russia for capitalism and did not defeat Turkey.

Curzon tried to divide the revolutionary forces of the East along different lines. He took up the policy of his old teacher Lord Beaconsfield: struggle against Russia; peace with Turkey.<sup>42</sup> Turkey is too weak to win Mesopotamia

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41 For the Greek-Turkish war, see p. 92, n. 10.

42 A reference to Benjamin Disraeli, British prime minister in 1868 and 1874–80, who in 1876

and Arabia, or in other words, to reconquer what Britain has captured. In addition, as Curzon sees things, it is easier to buy eight million Turks and use their influence to hold the conquered territories than to achieve an agreement with Soviet Russia. Curzon's policy led in Lausanne to one of the most striking reversals known to diplomacy.<sup>43</sup>

The French arrived in Lausanne as 'friends' of the Turks and tried to play off the Turks against Britain. But in the end the French became the enemies of Muslims while Curzon became the Muslims' prophet. This took place out of the force of circumstances. France had formerly been the main force in Europe providing loans. Sixty per cent of the Turkish debt was held by France. The French rentiers gave loans to exotic countries. Turkey's main creditor was France, not Britain. When the Lausanne Conference opened, the main emphasis was not on territorial issues like Mesopotamia and Arabia but on the question of what would be paid, how much would be paid, and what security would be provided for these payments. And that is where France's diplomatic game broke down. Britain negotiated quite cleverly, concentrating first on the British issues, struggling, making concessions, and finally giving France loyal 'support' in its concerns.

The first Lausanne Conference broke down over the financial demands of the French, while Britain tried to put Angora [Ankara] in the saddle, not only to eliminate Turkey as a revolutionary factor and to unhorse France in the Near East, but also for another reason. Turkey's friendship enabled Britain to secure Mosul at the cost of minor economic concessions to its ruling circles. Once the oil of Mosul had been secured, the attempt can be made to point Turkey toward Baku. This goal seems to me to be based on a misconception regarding the situation in the East. I referred to that in my last report. Turkey, with eight million inhabitants, has been at war since 1909. The condition of the Turkish peasantry is so bad that comrades who have seen the Russian regions that

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was named '1st Earl of Beaconsfield'. Foreign policy during Disraeli's second term was largely dominated by the Eastern question and relations with Russia and Turkey.

43 The Lausanne Conference referred to here met in two stages, from 20 November 1922 to 4 February 1923, and from 23 April to 24 July 1923. Its objective was to obtain a new treaty with Turkey to replace the Treaty of Sèvres, which the Turkish regime had renounced. The meeting was attended by a number of the imperialist powers, with Britain and France assuming the principal role. Britain conceded to France on the reparations question, while France agreed to Britain's occupation of the Dardanelles and Constantinople. The Treaty of Lausanne was signed at the conclusion of the conference, with Turkey agreeing to the British demand of 'freedom of the straits' and formation of a mixed Greek-Turkish commission to resettle displaced populations.

experienced famine say it is not as bad there as among the Turkish peasants. Turkey was able to win its war with Greece only thanks to the huge efforts of the government and the conviction of these peasants that they were fighting for their national independence. The attempt to lead these peasants against someone who has not attacked Turkey is a scheme that would have the same outcome as the Greek scheme of Lloyd George.

Lord Curzon is known as Britain's best expert on the East. The Fabians' magazine, *The New Statesman*, wrote of him that he knows everything about the East except what should actually be done there. Lord Curzon believes that Turkey today is still like it was in the time of Abdul Hamid. But we only need to consider a few facts about Turkey to perceive Curzon's error. The power of religion is greater in Turkey than in Europe. The Sultanate and Caliphate were joined for hundreds of years, investing the Sultanate with a religious aura. After the British gained control of the Sultanate,<sup>44</sup> it was separated from the Caliphate, the Sultan was dethroned, and the mullahs were not in a position to mount a significant popular movement against the government over these facts.

When we took a woman into the presidium at the Baku Congress, Eastern Communists came to us and said it would have been better not to do that, for women in the East are not supposed to take part in meetings with men, and we should go easy on this prejudice.<sup>45</sup> Now we read that three hundred women took an active part in an economic conference in Smyrna. This conference, organised by the government, divided into groups organised by class, where workers fought against merchants and merchants quarrelled with peasants. That shows the deep social differentiation brought about in Turkey by these years of struggle. This makes it impossible to evaluate the East in the fashion of Lord Curzon. He thinks that Britain need only speak the language of sovereigns to be sovereign in Turkey!

Moreover, Soviet Russia supported revolutionary Turkey, not because it had faith in every pasha who took the title of people's commissar and sent a telegram to Lenin,<sup>46</sup> but out of the deep conviction that the interests of Russian

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44 A reference to the British occupation of Constantinople from November 1918 to September 1923, which followed the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the First World War.

45 Three women were added to the Presiding Committee at the Comintern-organised First Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, held 31 August–7 September 1920. See Riddell (ed.) 1993, *To See the Dawn*, p. 158.

46 Presumably a reference to Kemal Pasha (Atatürk), who became Turkey's leader in 1920. Kemal sent a message to Lenin on 26 April 1920, promising to support Soviet Russia's 'fight

peasants coincide with those of peasants of the East, and these interests are aligned with those of Soviet Russia and the international proletariat. The result of this support is that the popular masses see Russia not as an enemy, but rather as the only power that helped them in their moment of difficulty.

Lord Curzon clings to the ideas of Lord Beaconsfield in a manner that reminds us of a Russian proverb about a man who sang a funeral song at a wedding and a wedding ode at a burial. One of Britain's best political writers, Sidebotham, writes in a political sketch that Lord Curzon is a man with ideas of the previous century.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, we in Russia had the duty not only of contending with the ideas of Russian landowners of a hundred years ago; it seems we must also sweep away the ideas and representatives of the eighteenth century in Britain. That is a hard duty. And we are convinced that new policies based on the masses will triumph over the old rubbish that Lord Curzon learned from ancient tomes.

### *[Liquidation of the Washington Agreement]*

Comrades, let me say a few things now about the fifth fact that has found expression in a changed international situation in recent months. The Washington Agreement of January 1922 among the powers involved in East Asia was supposed to stabilise the situation there.<sup>48</sup> Russia was not invited and not recognised as a great power with a stake in East Asia. And only a few weeks later we were in Vladivostok.<sup>49</sup> The great powers aimed for an agreement in Washington that would dispose of the East Asia question, which consists above all of the partition of China among the great powers. They had to be content with an arrangement to stabilise armaments during the period prior to a broader agreement. This arrangement has already been shot down.

It now looks as though even the treaty for the limitation of naval armaments, which was negotiated by the representatives of Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy, and Japan, might after all prove merely a scrap of paper.

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against imperialist governments', while requesting that Russia give him five million lire and armaments.

47 A reference to Herbert Sidebotham's 1921 book, *Pillars of the State*.

48 For the Washington Agreement, see p. 55, n. 2.

49 In May 1921 counterrevolutionary Russian forces backed by Japanese troops seized control in Vladivostok, then part of the pro-Soviet Far Eastern Republic. In October 1922 Japanese forces were forced to withdraw in face of the Red Army's advance, and Soviet power was re-established the following month.

Those are the words of Archibald Hurd, an outstanding British writer on naval affairs, in the January 1923 *Fortnightly Review*.<sup>50</sup> The Washington Agreement reduced the number of dreadnoughts and banned new construction of them. The resulting relationship was in this respect quite favourable for Britain and the United States. But Japan understood what this means – that it means Japan's strangulation in the future. Japan accepted the Washington Agreement but altered its own strategic plan. Previously, this had aimed at seeking battle in the Pacific and defeating the American dreadnoughts there, before they reached the Philippines. This plan was changed. Japan's strategic plan, as is evident in all its military steps, consists of letting the enemy take the offensive. Japan halted construction of dreadnoughts and threw itself into building submarines and fast cruisers. In 1925 Japan will possess at least 25 modern ships of the line and cruisers, as well as 70 submarines.

A British expert in naval affairs, Bywater, wrote recently that at the time of the Washington Conference Japan employed 153,000 workers in its construction dockyards.<sup>51</sup> Not a single worker was laid off, and 153,000 workers are still employed in the Japanese dockyards. Japan has shifted to a policy of defending the Chinese waters, so that it is easier to get into the Dardanelles than to attack Japan through the China Sea and the Straits of Tsushima. Japan has also reinforced its strategic position through the secret fortification of the Bonin (Ogasawara) Islands, which was carried out before the Washington Conference. The United States is also not inactive. Archibald Hurd's most recent article states:

It was said by idealists, that this war would end all wars; but it seems as though it had merely sown the seeds of further wars. The fact that no mean proportion of the nations are poverty stricken to the verge of bankruptcy, while some of them are so insolvent that they can never hope to pay any dividend to their debtors, appears to be without influence on the mad race in armaments which they are still pursuing. Leaders of thought and action in the United States protest that they will do nothing to help bind up the wounds of the maimed nations of Europe until those nations show their repentance in reduced armament budgets. But, in the meantime, in the Budget which has just been presented to Congress, the

50 Archibald Hurd, 'Is the Washington Naval Treaty Doomed?', in *Fortnightly Review*, 1 January 1923, pp. 13–27.

51 A reference to Hector C. Bywater. His 1921 book was titled *Sea Power in the Pacific: A Study of the American-Japanese Naval Problem*.

American people are themselves asked to devote 256,552,000 dollars to the support of the Army, and 289,881,000 dollars to the maintenance and increase of the Navy.

The USA is proceeding to multiply its small cruisers, destroyers, and the like, despite the fact that they have no need to defend scattered colonial possessions, like those of Great Britain. Hurd writes:

If accepted by the American public and endorsed by Congress, it may, indeed, prove the death-blow to the Washington Treaty.

Great Britain, for its part, shows its commitment to global reconstruction by spending £9 million to expand its military base in Singapore. This not only completely transforms the situation as concerns Britain, but also seems to be a step toward Britain going with the United States, a price that Britain is paying to the United States against Japan. This means drawing together the British grand fleet in the neighbourhood of the Pacific. So Britain, too, is evading in this fashion the Washington Agreement, which banned new fortifications in the Pacific. This situation in the Far East signifies a growing aggravation of the conflict between the United States and Japan. It makes Japan extremely dependent on Soviet Russia. The battle will be fought out on the territory of China. All China's internal struggles are to one degree or another conflicts of the imperial powers over possession of China. Russia and China are neighbours sharing a long border. Russia can attack Japan militarily from behind. That would force Japan to fight with divided forces. Japan strongly needs peace and friendly relations with Russia in order to make it more difficult for the United States to ally with Soviet Russia against Japan. This is why Japan is now seeking a peace treaty with Soviet Russia.

### *[Conclusions to be Drawn]*

These are the most important recent events. Now permit me to draw a few conclusions from these facts.

The first conclusion is obvious. The famous reconstruction of Europe has been replaced, to quote the title of a quite humorous Russian novel, by the Trust for the Demise of Europe.<sup>52</sup> Taken together, the policies of all the capitalist powers amount to a trust to shatter Europe. If that is the goal, this is precisely how it must be done. It confirms that – now as at the Fourth Congress – our

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52 A reference to the novel by Ilya Ehrenburg, *Trust D.E.: A History of the Demise of Europe*.

political line must be founded on expectation of major global disruptions. Despite the offensive by capital, we see no basis for its reconstruction, but rather quite the contrary. We are witnessing the constantly accelerating ruination of Europe.

American capitalism is stronger, for now, and there are small signs of economic improvement in Britain. But the old continent, where such struggles have raged, is headed not for peace and quiet but for renewed battles. John Kenneth Turner, who wrote an outstanding book on the role of the United States in the war that provides a better argument for the dictatorship of the proletariat than many of our propagandistic books, says in the introduction, 'Add up the totals of soldiers and armament expenditures: they are larger than before the war. The danger of war is now greater than it was in 1914.'<sup>53</sup> That is my first conclusion.

The second conclusion is that Soviet Russia, the only force for revolution, is now in danger. Yes, we are growing stronger and the capitalists' hopes to wear us down have come to nothing. But this very fact exposes us to danger. We ask you to bear in mind that the fortress of proletarian world revolution, Soviet Russia, is now in persistent danger. Lausanne and the Curzon note are alarm bells giving warning of the peril. Soviet Russia is strong, able to defend itself, and will not be overcome, even if it has to rely solely on its own resources. But it will be up to the international proletariat whether a new attack on Soviet Russia is repelled by Soviet Russia alone, or whether the entire proletariat will move forward to strike the counterblow.

The third conclusion is that the German working class now stands in great danger, and with it, the German revolution. Zinoviev said here, and I fully agree with him, that we are taking powerful strides forward in Germany. That is very true. The decay of the German bourgeoisie is increasing daily, and that creates great new dangers. The German bourgeoisie tried to convert the Ruhr strike into a Ruhr uprising, in an attempt to strike down the German working class before itself suffering defeat. The German party manoeuvred quite correctly. But the suffering of the working class is so great that the party cannot manage simply with the slogan, 'Don't give way to provocation.' It will have to struggle. And here lies the great danger. Germany is a massive colony of France. This colony cannot be exploited if it is gripped by revolution. That is why France has a stake in defeating the German revolution. Although Lutterbeck's offer was refused this time, if the dangers grow and the offer is repeated, it will be accepted. The German working class is between two fires: the German bourgeoisie

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53 John Kenneth Turner, *Shall It Be Again?*

and fascism on one side, and French imperialism on the other. Here we must say to the French comrades that even though the French party is still weak and still new, it must carry out major international duties.

The fourth conclusion is that the revolutionary movement in the East is in danger. The day before yesterday, we received news that the nationalist and half-democratic government in Teheran has been overturned by forces friendly to Britain with the aid of British money.<sup>54</sup> The situation in Turkey is clear. The same forces that are working there for agreement with the Entente and Britain are also trying to suppress the Communist movement, which has become the heart of the peasant movement. It is not enough to say that we, the Russian party, will carry out our duty in the face of this danger. Here we must appeal to our British comrades to turn their attention to colonial affairs. We are prompting them, new as they are, to take on a large part of the burden of supporting the revolutionary movement in the East. In doing this they will be defending not only this movement but themselves as well. MacDonald, leader of the Labour Party, gave a speech on the Curzon note, saying that if the Soviet government was supporting the revolutionary movement in the East, Curzon's complaints were justified. If the workers and peasants in Iran, Turkey, and India were to conclude, at a moment when they are struggling for power, that this is the viewpoint of the British working class, it would spell disaster for the British workers when they are battling for power, and everything depends on whether the peasants in Egypt or Persia will be their enemies or friends and will send them bread. This is the appeal that we make to the British comrades. Being British, they have a better understanding of world political questions than anyone else. They can build bridges between the European proletariat and the gradually developing working-class and peasant masses of the East.

These are my conclusions. I do not propose to you that we immediately depose Lord Curzon. That is not yet possible either for us or for you. We are not proposing bloodthirsty manifestos. We have brought to your attention the disintegrating political situation, the coming struggles, and the great role that we as a world party must carry out in our work for the proletariat struggling for its liberation. We have alerted you to the work that must be accomplished not at the moment of danger but right now, every day.

During recent months we have witnessed a fact whose horrific dimensions did not fully register with us. Before the occupation of the Ruhr, while all these

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54 The Iranian government at the time was led by Reza Khan – who had come to power in a February 1921 coup. His government had signed a friendship treaty with Soviet Russia and had renounced the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement. See Chaqueri 2010, pp. 47–8.

events were being prepared before the eyes of the proletariat, representatives of many millions of workers gathered in The Hague.<sup>55</sup> This assembly saw the dangers, understood them, and did not lift a finger. We have experienced 1914 for a second time – that is the overriding lesson. Had the bourgeoisie so decided, we would have had a new war, without revolution. We were not in a position to prevent this; we were too weak. We must at least grasp the full meaning of this fact and draw the conclusion to devote a thousand times more attention to the world political questions, not as spectators but as revolutionary fighters. (*Prolonged applause*)

**Neurath:** The following comrades are proposed for the Political Commission: Zetkin, Zápotocký, Varga, Newbold, Amter, and Radek. Comrade Stewart is proposed for the Commission on Centralism.

*(These proposals are adopted.)*

*(Adjournment: 5:30 p.m.)*

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55 For the Hague Peace Congress of 1922 sponsored by Social-Democratic workers' organisations, see p. 386, n. 8.

## World Political Situation – Discussion

*Discussion on world political situation.*

*Speakers: Neurath, Roy, Böttcher, Jackson, Hoernle, Trachtenberg, Brand, Katayama, Tan Malaka.*

*Chair: Böttcher.*

*Convened: 12:00 noon.*

**Alois Neurath** (Austria): The action in the Ruhr is not a question of merely local significance. The Executive Committee is far from indifferent to the positions taken on this question by our leading newspapers or leaders of the KPD. The most important task was either to win over or neutralise most of the petty-bourgeois and proletarian layers, and to carry out a policy that would permit the French proletariat to conduct the struggle against French imperialism with the greatest effectiveness.

How did we attempt to carry out this task? The question has been posed of how we can overcome this mood: should we link up with nationalist prejudices or relentlessly combat them?

In *Die Internationale*, the KPD's theoretical publication, an article appeared under the title, 'Some Tactical Questions of the War in the Ruhr'.<sup>1</sup> We find in this article the following sentence:

The German bourgeoisie, however counterrevolutionary it is in its essence, has been brought by the cowardice of the petty-bourgeois democracy (above all the Social Democrats) into a situation where it can act externally in an objectively revolutionary fashion. It is externally revolutionary (at least for a time) against its own will, as was the case with Bismarck from 1864 to 1870, and for analogous historical reasons.

In reality, the German bourgeoisie has not played an objectively revolutionary role in any sense. It has played a counterrevolutionary role.

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1 August Thalheimer, 'Einige taktische Fragen des Ruhr-Krieges', in *Die Internationale*, no. 4, 15 February 1923, and *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 26, 1923. An English-language translation appeared in *Communist International*, no. 25, 1923 (available online at Marxists Internet Archive).

The German party gauged the situation quite accurately. The political resolution of the German congress says, in part:

The working class and the middle layers of Germany find themselves in a dreadful situation that gets worse and worse. Moreover, the very existence of Germany is threatened. The only way out of this dilemma is for the working class to advance in solid formation against its own bourgeoisie and take the leadership of the nation into its hands.<sup>2</sup>

That means, therefore, that the German proletariat cannot successfully defeat French imperialism unless it first of all conducts a ruthless struggle against its own bourgeoisie. That is the only way the party can make it easier for the French proletariat to defeat the French bourgeoisie.

Comrade Thalheimer makes reference to the position of Marx and Engels on the German-French war.<sup>3</sup> If there is a parallel to be drawn, it is only this: Just as Thiers reached an understanding with Bismarck to cut down the revolutionary French proletariat, in the same way Lutterbeck, on behalf of the German bourgeoisie, reached an understanding with the French general with the goal of cutting down the German revolutionary proletariat.

In his reply, Thalheimer writes the following, in part:

It's either-or. Either the German working class has to carry out a defensive struggle now against French imperialism, which can only be the case if this defensive struggle objectively serves a revolutionary goal. Or there is no such revolutionary goal, in which case this struggle must be waged neither as a second or third priority, but rather not at all.<sup>4</sup>

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2 From 'Resolution über die politische Lage und die nächsten Aufgaben des Proletariats' (Resolution on the Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Proletariat), adopted by the Leipzig Congress of the KPD, held 28 January–1 February 1923. It can be found in IML-SED 1966b, VII/2, p. 244.

3 During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, Marx and Engels centred their fire on the war moves of the French Second Empire led by Louis Napoleon. While viewing the war as one for German defence and unity from the standpoint of working-class interests, they nevertheless emphasised the difference between German national interests and dynastic Prussian ones.

See the first and second addresses of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association on the Franco-Prussian War, both written by Marx, in *MECW*, 22, pp. 3–8 and 263–70, as well as other writings in *MECW*, 22.

4 Thalheimer, 'Noch einmal zu unserer Taktik im Ruhrkrieg' in *Die Internationale*, no. 8, 18 April

In my opinion the proletarian struggle against imperialism is in general, of course, a revolutionary goal. The question, however, is how the German working class can carry out this struggle in the most effective way. Here I must repeat that the struggle against French imperialism can be waged most effectively if the working class leaves no doubt that its first task is to defeat the German bourgeoisie – or at least take up a ruthless struggle against it – in order to establish a common front of struggle together with the French proletariat.

Somewhat earlier, in *Die Internationale* no. 5, Thalheimer said:

It was not a Communist objective to defeat French imperialism in the World War, but it is definitely a Communist objective to defeat it in the war in the Ruhr.<sup>5</sup>

I must tell you frankly that I do not understand this theoretical proposition at all. During the years 1914–18, was it a Communist and thus revolutionary, socialist goal to struggle against French imperialism? Yes or no? If the struggle against French imperialism in 1914 was not a Communist objective, then were the pro-Entente social patriots ultimately correct in presenting the struggle against the Hohenzollern dynasty as basically revolutionary?

In fact, from the first days of the war, the struggle against French as against every imperialism was a Communist, revolutionary objective. Every proletarian of every state had the obligation to struggle against its own bourgeoisie and thus create the preconditions to overthrow reaction on an international scale.

That was the situation between 1914 and 1918. And is it the same today? Comrade Thalheimer alerts us to the fact that things have changed since 1914. But what has changed? Thalheimer asks: What kind of imperialism exists in Germany? Where is its power? But his critique overlooks a trifling point: during and at the end of the war, the power of the German bourgeoisie was smashed. It clearly is no longer marked by militarism and thus does not come into question as a power similar to what it was in 1914 and later.

The German bourgeoisie is today the weakest; in the world structure of capitalism it represents the weakest point. Overthrow the German bourgeoisie,

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1923. An English translation appeared in *Communist International* no. 25, 1923, under the title '1914 and 1921 – Another Word on Ruhr Tactics' (available online at Marxists Internet Archive).

5 Thalheimer, 'Der Ruhrkrieg und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie', in *Die Internationale*, no. 5, 1 March 1923.

establish a workers' and peasants' government, establish an alliance with the Soviet government, and then, after the working class has triumphed, if there is no way around it, repeat Brest-Litovsk and make some kind of compromise with French imperialism. Along these lines it is possible not only to carry out the struggle successfully but to ensure that broad masses of petty-bourgeois and proletarian layers will find the road to communism. They will not find this road if we try to compete with the German nationalists. Instead, we must always emphasise in this critical situation our intransigent internationalism.

**M.N. Roy** (India): Radek's portrayal of the situation leaves very little to be desired. Still, I would like to mention some specific aspects and new tendencies of British imperialism. The International's activity has not yet fully accommodated these tendencies.

The British government knew that the time was not ripe for a war and that the border states could not be driven to battle against Russia. The entire manoeuvre was nothing but a bluff to intimidate Russia. The only surprising feature is that the [Curzon] ultimatum related not to European events but to propaganda in the East.

The British party's links to the colonial movement are complex in character. It was not necessary for the British delegation to protest Zinoviev's comments. They were directed not against the British party alone but against the entire stance of the International. Theory alone will not suffice; we must develop practical policies. The Communist parties must support the revolutionary and nationalist movement in the colonies.

British imperialism has altered its policy toward the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It finds it advantageous to reach an accommodation with the bourgeoisies of these countries, and this factor will work against the influence of the Russian Revolution in the Eastern countries. British capital has begun to flow into India in large amounts. That corresponds to the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie, which therefore sees no grounds to struggle against imperialism. The plan of British imperialism is to encourage the Indian bourgeoisie, and to intimidate it through the bogeyman of Bolshevik propaganda.

But the masses in India are hard hit. We must therefore determine which social classes are in struggle against imperialism. We must organise broad mass movements of workers and peasants against imperialism. In this way, we must demonstrate to the colonial bourgeoisie that they do not need to make any agreements with imperialism and play the role of a subordinate partner. Instead, based on the mass movement, they can demand power.

**Paul Böttcher** (Germany): Comrade Neurath went into the question of the German party's policy on the national question. I am not going to refute Comrade Neurath's presentation with a great many statistics. Instead, let me address the central issue. What role has history assigned to the German bourgeoisie in the Ruhr struggle, and what role has it actually played? The question is not posed in the terms presented by Comrade Neurath, namely, whether the German bourgeoisie is revolutionary. Rather what was posed was that now the German ruling class must defend German soil against Poincaré, that is, carry out the task that properly falls to the socialist republic. The German bourgeoisie failed in this role because of the internal contradiction between its function as a class and its leadership role in the German nation.

The task of the KPD was to demonstrate this contradiction and show that it is the revolutionary leader of the only class that is capable of leading the nation back to independence. It did so by placing itself at the head of the nation's interests. In this way, it exposed the betrayal of the German bourgeoisie and simultaneously opened the road to winning broader petty-bourgeois and proletarian layers.

Comrade Neurath says that the bourgeoisie's betrayal of national interests does not concern us as a Communist Party; we are intransigent internationalists. The German party, by contrast, responded that the struggle against Poincaré is revolutionary in character. Of course this does not mean that the struggle against Cuno is secondary in nature, but rather that the KPD led the struggle against Cuno and Poincaré with the same energy. The outcome of Neurath's policy would be to enormously strengthen fascism in Germany.

The bourgeoisie has now landed in a situation where it has to deflate nationalism, which it previously was promoting. It has the fascists against it on one side and the Communists on the other. In the Ruhr struggle, there were three forces: Stinnes, the fascists, and the Communists. The Social Democrats and the trade-union leaders were thrust aside in this struggle. They were not an independent force, but rather an appendage to the fascists.

If the German party had embraced nihilism on the national question, given this relationship of forces in the Ruhr, it would have suffered a catastrophic defeat there. It would have been much less able to maintain a link between the struggles in occupied and unoccupied German territory. Comrade Neurath's position was advanced in Germany at the convention of the Ledebour group by [Theodor] Lieb knecht.<sup>6</sup> He has the same point of view: namely, not a struggle against Poincaré and Cuno but against Cuno alone.

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6 For the rump USPD led by Ledebour and Theodor Lieb knecht (brother of Karl), see p. 477, n. 8. The organisation's convention was held 30 March–2 April 1923.

Comrade Zinoviev told us that in Germany today we are not a party of a craft guild but rather we need a party that has the psychology of leader of the nation. In that framework, the policy of Comrade Neurath would mean taking ten steps backward in the Communist International's policy. That would not expand the party's framework beyond that of a guild but would rather narrow its basis. I believe that there will not be any major disagreement over the fact that we reject being a craft-guild party of intransigent internationalism.

The KPD Zentrale stands fully behind the viewpoint of Comrade Thalheimer, and the workers in the German party have also understood its necessity. Of course this policy also involves major dangers. It would be absurd not to see the dangers of chauvinism and nationalism. However, the best way to overcome these dangers is by throwing ourselves into the situation with correct slogans and taking care, in the heat of struggle, to avoid lapses and correct any of them rapidly.

At the conference held in Moscow a few weeks ago to reconcile the [German] opposition and the party majority, Comrade Neurath did not say a single word about his point of view. Neurath neither criticised nor voted against the resolution that was drawn up at that time to express the outcome of the discussion.<sup>7</sup> I do not understand how a member of the Executive Committee, after the position of the ECCI on this question has already been presented, can here start over from scratch. It would be very helpful for the Communist International to know whether the Czech party is in agreement with the comments of Comrade Neurath on the national question.

**Radek:** The Czech comrades are for Czechoslovakian independence.

**Böttcher** (continuing): Comrade Radek drew the conclusion, in his report, that we must expect major disruptions, and that the German working class in particular stands in great danger. This seems to me to be really the core of future developments. What possibilities are there now in Germany? One is a workers' government, a second is passivity – that is, the danger of becoming a country like Austria. Let me say quite frankly: there is great danger that the German working class will become like the Austrian. We have to commit all our efforts to counter this danger. It would be very helpful if Comrade Radek in his summary would present his analysis of the relationship of forces on an international

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7 For the conference in Moscow between the Comintern leadership and the rival factions in the KPD leadership, see p. 397, n. 24.

scale and answer the question of whether the capitalist offensive has ended or whether it is continuing. In my view it is continuing, and the problem we face is still that posed by the Fourth Congress: organising the defence against this offensive and creating the preconditions for an offensive by the proletariat. In the recent period we were able to achieve important gains in this defensive struggle, as shown by the latest news from Germany.

**Thomas A. Jackson** (Great Britain): Radek has made an important presentation on the role of British imperialism in India and the East given the present world situation. Recent events wound up by placing Great Britain, for both economic and military reasons, in a life-and-death struggle for the survival of its empire.

The British party recognises the scope of its responsibility. It has the duty to support and utilise every national struggle against oppression and exploitation imposed by the British imperialist system. In particular, it must promote every move by workers and peasants within these movements to give expression to their class consciousness.

However, we must stress that the problem is exceptionally difficult. That can only be understood by those who are familiar with the great complexity and illogical structure of the Empire.

There is no need to speak here of Ireland and the policy modification that is needed there. Unfortunately, because a portion of the British delegation was not present, the documentation on the colonial question is not available.

Yet although the British party understands its obligations, it remains quite small and is confronted by a very experienced and clever bourgeoisie. We have made a beginning. The Union of Eastern Seamen was founded in order to bring together seamen and dock workers of all Eastern colonies.<sup>8</sup> We have also made contact with Indian students in Britain. We have utilised every opportunity to educate British workers and explain the true situation through our press and propaganda. But British workers' exceptional ignorance and indifference toward the Empire must also be borne in mind. Curiously, this ignorance was the reason why Lord Curzon recently aroused no enthusiasm for an attack against Soviet Russia when he claimed that the Empire was in peril. However, a portion of the British Labour Party was concerned by the danger threatening the Empire, because they hope one day to achieve power. Still, the masses of workers remained indifferent.

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8 The Union of Eastern Seamen (also known as the Oriental Seafarers' Union) was formed in April 1923 by Indian immigrants in Britain sympathetic to communism and who worked with the British C.P.

The British delegation is aware of its inexperience and would be thankful for advice from experienced members of the congress.

**Edwin Hoernle** (Germany): Comrade Neurath gave us the thought that we should not compete with bourgeois nationalism but rather stand for intransigent internationalism. His approach to this question shows how it is possible to come to quite incorrect conclusions that are dangerous to the proletarian revolution if these questions are approached abstractly instead of in the framework of the real relationship of forces. In 1914 nationalism was a tool of the bourgeoisie to pursue its imperialist goals. In the occupation of the Ruhr, the question is posed differently. What is at stake here is merely haggling for a deal that the German bourgeoisie wants to conclude at the expense of the German workers.

The German bourgeoisie stands ready to utterly betray the national interests of the broad masses, provided that it can protect its profits. The German bourgeoisie right now is acting not as leader of the nation but as its betrayer. The German party had the task of showing the masses that the salvation of the German nation could not be achieved under the leadership of the German bourgeoisie, but rather only under that of the German revolutionary proletariat. In contrast to 1914, proletarian revolution is no longer a topic for agitation but a current task of struggle.

The central point in Comrade Neurath's remarks was that our task is to struggle against Cuno, not against Poincaré. But to bring down the Cuno government, the Communist Party needs the broad masses. So it has to link up with the thinking of these broad masses. The success that the party has had in this work is evident in a report I received today. Because of the Ruhr strike, a brigade of a thousand fascists was to be raised in southern Germany and sent to the Ruhr. As a result of our propaganda, instead of 1,000 men, only 600 turned up. When they were on the point of leaving, word spread of Lutterbeck's letter and the party's appeal. More than half of them mutinied and declared that the Communists were quite right and it was the government that was betraying national interests. This is evidence of how our stance has an objectively revolutionary impact on the non-proletarian masses.

Protection of the German revolution is not a matter of defending Germany's frontiers. What is at stake is whether the revolutionary German proletariat will be torn apart by French imperialism through separating off one of its best components, the proletariat of the Ruhr, from the rest. The threat Poincaré has made against the German nation is in reality a threat against the German revolution. This places the national question in an entirely new light for us. For us it must not be merely a question of 'intransigent internation-

alism' but an application of living internationalism, just as was done by the Communist Party of Russia.

In the colonies the situation is somewhat different. There it is possible to actively involve the national bourgeoisie, which is now being born, in the struggle against the imperialism of the mother country. Communists can go a step further here by supporting a national movement led by the bourgeoisie and simultaneously driving forward the social movement of the poor peasants and workers.

**Trachtenberg (USA):** On behalf of the American delegation, I would like to say that Comrade Radek has not fully dealt with this topic. The International also has the duty to consider American imperialism. Radek mentioned American imperialism only in its connection with Europe, but it stretches from the Pacific to the Caribbean and into Central and South America and other regions. American imperialism is young. Like everything American, it is developing quickly and is very brutal.

American imperialism provided the driving force for revolutions in South and Central America. The National City Bank of New York, which represents large-scale American capital, encompasses South America in its activity. Mexico is a sore spot. These countries are small, but they suffer just as much from exploitation as the great countries of Asia, and they stand alone in struggle. Recent revelations regarding the cruel excesses of American capital in the colonies have finally aroused the interest of American workers. The American Federation of Labor felt compelled to convene two congresses on this topic,<sup>9</sup> but Gompers, instead of lending assistance to the working class, praised the conduct of American capital.

The time has come for the Comintern to deploy ways and means of exposing the role of American imperialism. Our comrades must take a great interest in this. A conference should be called of parties in the affected countries. The Profintern, too, could do good work here.

**Henryk Brand (Poland):** I would like to enlarge somewhat the world-political picture presented by Radek by encompassing Poland. Despite having devoured Upper Silesia, Vilna, and Eastern Galicia, Poland is not a factor for European stability. On the contrary, it poses a continual danger of war.

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9 A reference to the Pan-American Federation of Labor, initiated by the US AFL. The first congress was held in Laredo, Texas, 13–16 November 1918. The second was held in New York on 7–10 July 1919. A third congress was held in Mexico City 10–18 January 1921.

Only 62 per cent of the population is ethnically Polish. The rest belong to other nationalities that are subject to savage exploitation and oppression by the agrarian capitalist government. During the last three years, 60–70 per cent of government spending has been covered by printing paper money, while in Russia it was never more than 20–30 per cent, and recently even less. Only Germany approaches Polish conditions. Poland has an enormous territory. It has made conquests in the east, south, north, and west, and still it feels that it is weak. It is very afraid of Germany and therefore wants to make Germany even weaker.

The Polish Stamboliyski, Witos, a leader of the rich peasants, has made an agreement with the large landowners and capitalists, betraying the poor peasants. Polish peasants must now abandon hope of achieving through legal means the land they have been seeking for many years. The ongoing and growing inflation has depressed the standard of living of Polish workers and employees far below the level in Russia. It is similar to levels in Germany and Austria. The appearance of internal stability is maintained only by ruthless police violence. Internally, Poland has become a big prison for Ukrainians, White Ruthenians, Jews, Germans, and all Polish workers and peasants. It is also a great military encampment.

Over the last three years, an average of 20 Communists per month have been sentenced to an average of 70 years in prison. During the last four months it has been even worse: 130 condemned Communists with 400 years of hard labour. The present government is a tool of Entente capitalism and especially France. Poland is restrained from taking a more hostile attitude to Soviet Russia only by the fact that its master, France, is focusing on Germany right now.

Beyond any doubt, Poland will heed France's wishes and march against Soviet Russia, even though the economic situation in Poland urgently demands a rapprochement with Soviet Russia. In the present situation, in which peasants have abandoned all hope and oppressed nationalities have given up their hopes of aid from the Entente, we Communists are showing the road forward for all these masses. That is why we must welcome the workers' and peasants' government slogan, especially for Poland. There it means no war, no militarism, land for the peasants, rapprochement with Russia, cancel the treaty with France, and freedom for oppressed nations.

**Sen Katayama (Japan):** Japanese policy has shifted since the Washington Conference. Earlier Japan looked to Britain and played the role of Cerberus guarding India. But Britain was forced to give up its alliance with Japan, forcing Japan to alter its foreign policy. Japan won a diplomatic victory at the Washington Conference regarding China, but since then it has realised that without China

it would be quite isolated, and recently it has begun moving closer to China. Japan's intervention in Russia ended in failure,<sup>10</sup> which made enemies for the government among its own people. Militarists became unpopular. So Japan was compelled to change its policy toward Soviet Russia as well. Joffe's visit led to motion among the industrialists for a trade agreement with Russia.<sup>11</sup>

In my view, the revolutionary movement in Japan will make greater gains in a very few years than the European movement has made in the same number of generations.

**Tan Malaka** (Dutch Indies): I would like to speak of some new developments in the world situation. These can be divided into two categories: some are unfavourable; others are favourable. Against us is the occupation of the Ruhr and the flood of American capital into the East. The occupation of the Ruhr will end with a compromise between German and French capitalism, which will lead to an enormous expansion of capitalism in Europe and will greatly endanger the German revolution. The second point is the shift of capital from Europe to the East. Already in 1870 the British textile industry dominated the world market. Now leadership lies in Anglo-Indian hands.

This development was accentuated even further by the appearance of the United States on the world stage. The United States is investing countless millions in the East. There is now the danger of a compromise between the liberal revolutionary movement in the East and American capital. Such a compromise would be a defeat in terms of the world political and economic situation.

Among the favourable points, the competition between Japan and the United States in the Far East stands out as a factor that will surely lead to severe conflicts between these two countries. In addition, there is the rising power of Islam, which includes substantial revolutionary forces. The main task of our movement is to attempt to maintain Germany as a barrier protecting Russia. The diverse and divided nationalist and proletarian parties of the East need to be organised and coordinated and brought into contact with the European proletariat. In this regard, I'd like to make a special request of our British comrades to pay very close attention to the developments in the East caused by Britain's creation of a strong fleet based in Singapore.

*(Adjournment: 4:25 p.m.)*

10 For the Japanese intervention in Siberia, see p. 233, n. 13.

11 Soviet diplomat Adolf Joffe traveled to Japan in June 1923 to help lay the basis for establishing diplomatic relations.

## World Political Situation – Discussion and Summary

*Continuation of discussion and summary on the world political situation. In memory of Vorovsky.*

*Speakers: Newbold, Aparicio, Thibaut, Radek, Stewart.*

*(Amter opened the session at 6:15 p.m.)*

**Newbold** (Great Britain): The British delegation is in agreement with Comrade Radek's critical analysis of Lord Curzon and the policy he has pursued. But we have grounds to believe that Curzon is only acting as a tool and puppet of the king of England. In Britain, in principle, the king is not supposed to be responsible for his actions; it is the ministers who are responsible to Parliament. But there are good grounds for the assumption that the late King Edward gave his son and his nephew large amounts of shares and property not only in Canadian railroads but also in Iran and the Middle East. And the danger threatening these investments is one of the grounds for the attacks on Soviet Russia.

The Baldwin group, on the other hand, represents the interests of the major British banking corporations, which do not wish to see Britain's system of credit become even more disorganised.<sup>1</sup> Their policy is to induce Russia, through threats, not only to grant concessions to the Urquhart group but also to another group that has £20 million available and is led by a central figure in the Conservative Party.

Radek expressed his astonishment that in Britain, the most advanced bourgeois country, the aristocracy would have so much influence on the government. But the British aristocracy is not feudal but is rooted in finance. It originated primarily in the plundering of the monasteries in the sixteenth century. Some of the king's nephews own ships and one is even a manufacturer of artificial butter and soap. The British aristocracy is shot through with bourgeois interests.

It was impossible for the Communist Party to arouse British workers around the Ruhr conflict. The suspension of Germany's exports of steel, iron, and coal to France and Belgium raised European demand for British coal and, in this way,

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1 For Stanley Baldwin's role within the British capitalist class, see pp. 486–7.

reduced unemployment in the coal mines and the British metal industry. But a settlement of the Ruhr dispute, through which this territory would be internationalised, will place Britain in a position to acquire cheap coal from the Ruhr, driving down the living conditions of British workers and making it possible to carry out agitation successfully.

The British bourgeoisie maintains the appearance of good relations with France, but has recently begun a campaign of aircraft construction in order to be prepared for a war with France, for which Britain is today still too weak.

The British bourgeoisie succeeded in re-establishing London as the centre of world lending. It intends to reassert British global primacy on the basis of the power of money, secret diplomacy, and the expansion of its air force.

British workers' food supply is dependent on colonial production, and British bankers intend to break the economic and political power of the workers through the threat to cut off the supply of food and set up a hunger blockade. This threat was voiced by Lloyd George in 1919 against the coal miners. That is why British Communists must agitate for the general slogan, 'British machines and coal in exchange for Russian grain'. This will make the agitation for Russia more comprehensible for workers. The seamen must be organised to ease the transport of grain, and agitation for this goal must also be carried out in the navy.

The British Empire extends over an enormous territory, laying great responsibilities on the British Communists. I look forward to the advice of this congress.

**José Loredó Aparicio (Spain):** I will make a few remarks on the colonial question as it affects my country. The Spanish proletariat has been pouring its blood and money into Morocco for the benefit of French and British capitalists.<sup>2</sup> The Communist Party must speak out on this question. If it is victorious, these abominable conditions will end, and the party will be able to widen the gulf between British and French imperialism.

Britain holds Gibraltar, while France possesses almost all of Morocco. Britain cannot permit France to become mistress of the Mediterranean ports in the face of Gibraltar. Imperialist France cannot allow Britain to supervise the Mediterranean on its own. That is why the Rif insurgents and the Spanish soldiers in Morocco are now at each other's throats.

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<sup>2</sup> Spain, which had established a protectorate in one part of Morocco in 1912, was then in the midst of the Rif War, in which Moroccan Berbers were making gains in a guerrilla struggle against 140,000 Spanish troops. In 1925 troops of France, which dominated the rest of Morocco, entered the conflict, and were soon able to suppress the Berbers.

The Spanish Socialists have no solution for this problem. They limit themselves to raising the question of civil and military responsibility for the latest defeats in the Moroccan war. The Communists' slogan must be clear and unambiguous: give up Morocco!

**Thibaut** [Jean Crémet] (France): The financial apparatus of the French state has jumped clear off the tracks. The deficit is enormous. The Poincaré regime achieved power with a programme to carry out the Versailles Treaty, which supposedly would improve the situation. It announced that the occupation of the Ruhr would bring immediate results. It was counting on that. It also aimed in this way to deal a decisive blow at the Communist Party.

In terms of French politics, Poincaré's course led to a total fiasco. The French party carried out its duty. After the Essen Conference, it launched a broad action campaign across the entire country. Poincaré judged this to be a conspiracy and carried out arrests, but this did not hinder the movement's development. On the contrary, as a result of these reprisals, we grew closer to the CGTU, and the united front has become a real possibility, despite the Socialist Party's refusal to take part in one. After Essen the French masses clearly saw the dangers of imperialist policy in the Ruhr. Our agitation scored a major success.

Following the Frankfurt Conference, the masses no longer felt they were in such urgent danger. But we also had to cope with other difficulties. There are still many workers in France who believe that if Germany were to pay, this would improve their living conditions because their tax burden would be reduced. The party had to struggle against this belief, which is particularly common among the reformist workers.<sup>3</sup>

The occupation helped us. It had harsh effects on economic life. The cost of living increased and the exchange rate of the franc fell. It became urgently necessary to maintain wage levels. Strikes took place. It has been easy for us to demonstrate the disastrous results of the policies flowing from implementation of the Versailles Treaty.

In national politics, the Ruhr occupation resulted in the anti-Communist conspiracy, the Poincaré fiasco, and a movement to raise wages. In international politics it led to conflict within the French bourgeoisie itself, the crisis of the *Comités des Forges*<sup>4</sup> and the disruption of the Entente.

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3 For the Essen and Frankfurt conferences, see p. 386, n. 9.

4 The *Comité des Forges* was the official name of the French iron and steel capitalist combine.

### Summary of Discussion on World Political Situation

**Radek:** Most comrades who took the floor in the debate spoke primarily of the tasks that their parties face in the present situation and thus provided an elaboration of my remarks. In my summary I will deal primarily with the comments of two speakers.

The speech of Comrade Neurath actually did not belong under this agenda point, but rather to the discussion of Comrade Zinoviev's speech. For the German party was actually doing no more than what the Executive Committee had decided would be correct. Or it belonged under the report on fascism, where all forms of nationalism will be taken up. When we read the article by Comrade Neurath in the Reichenberg *Vorwärts*,<sup>5</sup> we stated that we were not in agreement with him because the circumstances of 1914 were being transposed too schematically to the year 1923. The article begins with quite incorrect presuppositions. Comrade Neurath is tilting at windmills. He says that the German bourgeoisie is reactionary and cannot carry out national defence. We know all that very well without the aid of Comrade Neurath. His speech was against a civil peace with Cuno. But when and where has the German party concluded such a civil peace or even proposed it?

Comrade Neurath does not understand the character of the national movement in Germany, and he therefore also does not grasp the policies that must be applied in the struggle against this nationalism. What is decisive here is the defeat of a great industrial nation, which was thrown back into the position of a colony. This defeat of the German bourgeoisie brought with it consequences with great revolutionary significance. The proletariat refused to accept being laden with the burdens of the Versailles Treaty. So the bourgeoisie, in order to avoid being heaved out of the saddle, had to take up arms against the Versailles Treaty. That is what they have done.

From a historical point of view, the Ruhr episode is an attempt by the German bourgeoisie to make the transition from passive to active resistance. They no longer said merely, 'We cannot pay'; they said, 'We do not want to pay any more.' So Poincaré, instead of plugging the holes in the French budget, is punching out new holes. The German bourgeoisie, instead of straightening out the German economy with the help of the Entente, has thrown it backwards by several years. These are developments of great revolutionary significance. Previously, nationalism was a means to reinforce bourgeois governments; now it is

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5 Alois Neurath, 'Eine verdächtige Argumentation' (A Suspicious Argument), in Reichenberg *Vorwärts*, no. 81, 7 April 1923.

a means to speed the destruction of capitalism. In order to fight its way through the Ruhr crisis, the German bourgeoisie had to unleash the dogs of nationalism. Now they have become prisoners of their own agitation. Something similar has happened to the French government.

We of course protest against every form of nationalism. Nonetheless we must ask whether it's the victory or the defeat of Poincaré that would signify a step forward. Poincaré's victory would immensely strengthen counterrevolution across the entire continent. His defeat, on the other hand, would devastate the Versailles system. It would thus be a revolutionary fact. On these grounds, the German party can only say, yes, the German working class and with it the working class of the entire world has an interest in the defeat of Poincaré.

Can this be called social patriotism? It is true that the German Social Democracy in 1914 also said that the overthrow of tsarism would be a revolutionary fact, but what conclusion did it draw from that? They supported the German government. The difference between then and today consists in the fact that the German Social Democracy was unable to draw revolutionary conclusions from the overthrow of tsarism. The Communist Party, on the other hand, declares that it is struggling simultaneously against Poincaré and against Cuno, and that it is preparing for every revolutionary opening.

Comrade Neurath says that Germany is being flooded by a tide of nationalism, which we must combat rather than adapting to it. The party has not adapted in the slightest; it sharply combats nationalism. The German party has not overlooked an important fact neglected by Comrade Neurath, namely the difference between nationalism and the revolutionary national interests of Germany, which at present coincide with the revolutionary national interests of the proletariat. The KPD cannot support any policy that would tear open a chasm between the German and French proletariat. It must struggle against the nationalists, whose attacks on the French troops drive the French workers and the workers in the occupation army into the arms of Poincaré. But the German Communist Party is experiencing a transition period in which it must say that every blow that strikes Germany down, tears it apart, and burdens it, constitutes a great barrier to the victory of the German workers.

Let me remind you of an episode in the history of the Russian Revolution. It took place, I believe, in September 1917, just after the defeat of the Kornilov uprising. We knew that we were headed toward the conquest of power. At that moment the German forces attacked Dagö and Ösel.<sup>6</sup> The Baltic fleet, in which

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6 On 12–13 October 1917, German naval forces occupied the Russian-controlled Estonian islands of Dagö (Hiiumaa) and Ösel (Saaremaa) at the northeast end of the Gulf of Riga, on the

we held a majority, issued an appeal in which it laid responsibility for the entire situation on Kerensky but also said, 'We, who will tomorrow be a component of peasant and proletarian power, will go into battle to defend Petrograd.'

Comrades, what goes by the name 'German nationalism' is not only nationalism but also a broad national movement of great revolutionary significance. Broad masses of petty-bourgeois and of technical intellectuals, who will play an important role in the proletarian revolution because of the fact that they are proletarianised under the bourgeois system – all these downtrodden, declassed, proletarian masses express their relationship to capitalism, which has thrown them down, in the form of a national revolt. Since they were linked in the past with a reactionary class and adhere to a national ideology, fascism today has purely nationalist, reactionary features. It serves mainly as an instrument of the same social class that hovers like a vulture over the German battlefield – Stinnes, Klöckner, and Krupp. But it would be foolish to focus only on the present moment. The German government knows better than Neurath why it fears surrender. It knows that the proletarian masses, who will bear most of the consequences of surrender, will be compelled to develop further, and in their majority they will be an active force in revolution.

We need to combat nationalist ideology in order to reveal to the masses whose interests it serves. We are not merely an oppositional workers' party. We are a workers' party that is taking up a struggle for power, and this means we must find the road to these masses. We will be best able to do so if we do not shrink back from responsibility but say yes, only we, the working class, can save the nation. And not only the working class but the great majority of the people will help us in this. Comrade Neurath will say he does not deny this, but we should do that only after we have gained power. But to achieve power, we must first win these masses, and our policies must be oriented to that.

A German comrade said, with the frankness and honesty that bourgeois folk call cynicism, that if we foresaw in Germany that we could make a temporary pact with Poincaré and thus come to power, a policy similar to what the Russians carried out at Brest-Litovsk would have been right for us: surrender a piece of territory in order to win power and go forward. But in fact we were only an isolated minority not only in the occupied but also in the unoccupied portion of the country. Our task during the Ruhr crisis lay in emerging from the status of a minority and finding the road to the broad masses who are not proletarian but are undergoing proletarianisation.

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approaches to Petrograd. The move was seen by the Bolshevik Party as a threat to the Russian Revolution itself, and Bolshevik sailors mobilised to resist the German move.

The German party did this by stating that in this transitional period we will fight against French imperialism until the French working class lifts this burden from our shoulders. Since French imperialism has broken in, posing the question of the victory of an imperialist power, we will fight against French imperialism, without shielding Cuno in any way. The German party did this correctly. Proclaiming proletarian hegemony in a dictatorship would be mere words if the party did not carry out this policy. That is why the Executive Committee accepts full responsibility for the policy of the Communist Party of Germany, and we do not conceal our regret that the struggle in the Ruhr ended in defeat. We believe it to be the duty of the working class to take up the struggle more forcefully than ever.

Now a few words regarding the remarks of the French comrades. The question of the Ruhr occupation is much simpler for French workers and peasants. Either the Germans pay, or the tax burden in France will grow enormously. Of course the party cannot create a movement artificially, but the time of great movements in France will come. Perhaps Poincaré, after a long struggle and despite the end of German resistance, will come up with nothing. Or perhaps he will achieve a victory and still be unable to give anything to the masses. Victory will not bring France anything, for Germany in the coming years has nothing with which to pay its debts, even if it wishes to. Even the question of an iron and coal cartel in the Ruhr cannot be resolved for many years. Poincaré reckoned on going to the voters in the elections of 1924 with German payments in hand. That was a miscalculation. There is no way for him to avoid a new levy of taxes that will load even greater burdens on French workers and peasants.

In the further course of our deliberations we will speak specifically through resolutions to the important national questions. The task of this debate was to present clearly to comrades the meaning of international events, since the international situation does not permit us to carry out our politics within a national framework without reference to the international situation. (*Loud applause*)

### In Memory of Vorovsky

**Stewart (Britain):** On behalf of the British delegation, I request the establishment of a two-year Vorovsky scholarship for students (workers and peasants) of the Eastern countries and the publication of a pamphlet dedicated to Comrade Vorovsky in the languages of the East.<sup>7</sup>

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7 For the assassination of Vorovsky, see p. 456, n. 12.

*(The motion of Comrade Stewart is adopted unanimously. The chair then reads an addendum to the British delegation's proposal, whereby the delegations of the British, French, Italian, Polish, Czechoslovak, North American, and Japanese sister parties declare that they will cover the costs of the Vorovsky scholarship. Loud applause.)*

*(Adjournment after 8:00 p.m.)*

## Centralism – Report and Discussion

*Reports and discussion on centralism question.*

*Speakers: Bukharin, Ström, Falk, Beuer.*

*(Amter opened the session after 12:00 noon.)*

### The Limits of Centralism in the Comintern

**Bukharin:** Comrades, in my presentation today I will try to outline and criticise the mistaken position of the Norwegian comrades without, for the time being, seeking compromises. I trust we will seek these compromises *after* the discussion in the Scandinavian Commission. It is important for the Norwegian party, as for the whole International, to first acquaint ourselves with the position of the Norwegian comrades with absolute clarity in order to see their mistakes clearly and be able to recognise concessions that may be made later, and not confuse these concessions with a pre-existing agreement with the Scandinavian comrades.

But first a brief note. The comrades from the Norwegian sister party have spoken here as if the Executive Committee or the Presidium of the Communist International underestimated the Norwegian party. I repeat here once again, so as to dispel this possibly persisting impression, that we consider the Norwegian party a great mass party of the working class, as one of the most important and best of our parties. But this does not diminish our duty to criticise the mistaken position of the Norwegian comrades. It is precisely because the Norwegian party is not an insignificant force for us that we must do this.

The question of centralism in the Communist International, the most important point at issue with the Norwegian comrades, is by no means new. It came to light most conspicuously after the collapse of the Second International. This collapse was rooted in part in the fact that in reality, the Second International was organisationally no more than a mere mailbox. It was not a unified fighting organisation, not an organisation for international mass action. Within it, national considerations always predominated. At their congresses there were various ceremonial speeches, but whenever real action was called for, the whole organisation promptly fell flat. Even the Hague Conference held last autumn was such a ceremony. Resolutions on a general strike were passed there, but when the time came to act, all these ceremonial resolutions were

transformed into mere scraps of paper – precisely because there was no unified centralised organisation.<sup>1</sup> It is certainly no coincidence that even as communist thought was first beginning to take on definite form, this organisational defect was pinpointed, partly by us, partly by Rosa Luxemburg. Even then, this concept was specified in the following thesis: The new International that we form must act as a unified organisation, in which the national element is completely subordinated to the international. This also means that national decisions shall be subordinated to the international decisions of the world organisation of the proletariat.

Much was written about this at that time, including in the Scandinavian press. I lived in Scandinavia back then, and on this question there was complete agreement between the representatives of the Russian party and the Scandinavian comrades. Everywhere – in Austria, Germany, and elsewhere – this concept of giving predominance to international consciousness, international decisions, and the international character of the world organisation of the proletariat was recognised by all the former Left Radicals, who later became Communists. We can see how this fundamental idea was increasingly implemented in practice during the prehistory of the Communist International – for example at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences<sup>2</sup> – and at the First Congress of the Third International.

After the Communist International was founded, when the Russian [Red] army was victorious and the Western European working class was conducting a great offensive, we noted that the importance of this basic principle had risen to a new level, along with that of realising it in practice. Even Comrade Bull, one of the ideologues of the majority of the Norwegian party, wrote at that time in *Social-Demokraten*: 'Either the new International will exist, in which case it will be the centralised general staff of the world revolution, or it will not exist at all.' So in the epoch of the great working-class offensive, when even the vacillating elements were filled with sympathy for the Communist International, the most notable ideological representative of the current Norwegian party majority also recognised the necessity of centralising our world organisation.

Now that the working class finds itself on the defensive, all the vacillating elements feel their sympathy with communism falter and they begin to criticise. The social basis of this critique – economic as well as sociological – is kept

1 For the Hague Peace Congress, see p. 386, n. 8.

2 A reference to two international conferences of socialists opposed to the social-patriotic position of the leading parties of the Second International during World War I. The conference in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, took place 5–8 September 1915. The conference in Kienthal, Switzerland, took place 24–30 April 1916. For excerpts from the proceedings and resolutions, see Riddell (ed.) 1984, chapters 7 and 12.

alive in the remnants of petty-bourgeois economy and ideology. We can also find Proudhonist views in the argumentation of the Norwegian comrades. That is understandable, because we are dealing here with representatives of parties that, in their petty-bourgeois countries, are rather isolated and exposed to the influence of this petty-bourgeois outlook.

The second cause lies in the mechanical transfer of what were quite correct methods of struggle against Social Democracy into our own organisation. The majority of today's Norwegian sister party originated in the so-called trade-union opposition. This opposition set itself the task of destroying Social-Democratic power in the trade unions. The unions were bureaucratic and opportunistic. Their strength consisted in the strong centralisation of the whole movement under the leadership of the opportunist forces. That is what we, the revolutionaries of all stripes, set out to destroy. We did that in some other countries as well, using such methods as raising a hue and cry against the bigwigs, etc., in order to break the centralised power of the opportunist bureaucrats in the party and trade-union institutions. But there persists a certain historical *vis inertiae* [force of inertia]. The methods that had previously been applied, rightly, toward the destruction of the Social-Democratic leaders' influence are now being applied to our own organisation. In Russia we too often had this *vis inertiae* in the heads of our party comrades, who even after the conquest of power by the proletariat persisted in their demands against centralising the army.

The third cause of the mistaken position of the Norwegian comrades is the situation in Norway and Scandinavia more generally. The Norwegian comrades did not live through the war and the revolutionary eruptions. The Scandinavian countries, unlike those of Western Europe, were not swept up in the great world-historic maelstrom. In a certain sense they are still living, as peculiar as it may sound, in a prewar epoch and perceive things in these terms. They have not recognised the importance of centralised struggle against the bourgeois state. They have not yet been beaten down by the bourgeois state, with all its characteristic brutality, which results in residues of a quite idyllic ideology slipping into their thought processes. They therefore live, as it were, on an island amidst the great world-historic maelstrom. They were more isolated from the whole movement of the proletariat than any other group of our tendency. This complex of causes is decisive for the ideology of the Norwegian party majority.

I will now take up the motivations. As so often happens, the most 'profound' one comes from a professor, Comrade Bull. Utilising his very good theoretical training, he always seeks to justify his position on tactical issues by taking things to their ultimate consequences. I will allow Comrade Bull to speak for himself:

There are differences between Russia, the East, Southern Europe, and Western Europe in terms of the working class, economic and social development, and so too the conditions for revolution. The Russian Revolution took place among an illiterate people, in a country where modern industry had existed for barely a generation, where the working class was therefore entirely new and had no traditions. This was in a country where the autocracy had barred the population from any participation in politics, where trade unions were impossible, and so on. Much the same conditions prevail in the East and in Southeast Europe.

In Western Europe conditions are exactly the opposite. Universal education, industry dating back a hundred years, a working class with strong traditions and extended participation in politics, trade unions that are old and strong, open public discussion, a strong and independent indigenous capitalist class. The conditions for revolution are therefore quite different here. It should now be obvious that these discrepancies dictate a difference in policies and organisational forms for a revolutionary movement.

And what conclusions does he draw from this for policy? He writes:

The International's outstanding leaders understand these things quite clearly, of course, in terms of theory. But in practice, they either do not draw the necessary conclusions or only do so inadequately, for two closely related reasons: (1) The main leaders are in fact Russian and their thinking is influenced by Russian experience. (2) The Executive Committee has now stopped looking at the revolution in Germany as an immediate practical task and places the main emphasis in its activity on the East and Southeastern Europe. There is a very great deal to be said for this political orientation, especially from the point of view of Russian foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

This is the theoretical foundation for all policy positions. Bull maintains, in accord with the bourgeois press, that the Communist International is a tool of the Russian government. The Western workers should not be compelled to conform to methods stemming from the backward conditions in the barbaric land of Russia.

I believe that this conference has already shown the Norwegian and Swedish comrades holding these views to be completely isolated in our ranks. So there

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3 The article by Edvard Bull was published in *Social-Demokraten*, 31 January 1923. A German translation can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/98.

is no basis to talk of the isolation of the Western European, including Swedish, proletariat from that of Russia; instead we have an isolation of the Norwegian and Swedish comrades. It arises from the following cause: We experienced three revolutions; the Germans and Austrians experienced one; and a number of other countries are undergoing very strong pressure from their bourgeoisie. They have been educated by blood and iron in the necessity of international centralism.

Initially, the Norwegians had the theory of uniting with the Western European proletariat against Russia in order to found a different organisation. When that did not work out, we got Comrade Falk's approach. He says that the Norwegian party, while Communist in nature, is based on its own traditions. That is something quite different, and it is true. I fully recognise that the Norwegian party has its traditions, its distinctive features, and that its evolution has created a specific organisational form. But how do we as a vanguard respond to these existing traditions? We must employ intelligent methods to overcome them and not conserve them.

If you want a federation instead of an organisation for proletarian struggle, you eliminate the starting point for our movement. First we are accused of wanting to radicalise the Norwegian party artificially, and then we are told we are too opportunist. Thus, for example, the entirely erroneous assertion has been made that the opportunist dangers are lodged in our centralisation. An article in *Arbeiderbladet* portrays the situation as if the Second International broke down because of its centralism. In reality, however, the Second International broke down precisely because it was not a centralised International. In an interview with Tranmael, it is said, for example, that Moscow – meaning the Communist International – builds from the top down. It reads, in part:

The form of organisation and membership that exists in Norway has great importance for the socialist movement, since it drives right into the centre of socialism, the social economy. The factories are thus to be won in the workplaces and with their workers – perhaps a lengthy process, but a sure one. With increased influence, we will achieve control over the life of the factory and production.<sup>4</sup>

So here we have the following conception: We will gradually win over the working class in the workplaces and take control of production first in some factor-

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4 The interview with Martin Tranmael was published in *Vestfold Arbeiderbladet*, 5 January 1923. A German translation can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/98.

ies, then in others, and finally in them all. Curiously enough, the bourgeoisie allows us to do this entirely undisturbed. This is a completely opportunistic starting point that figures in the thinking only of those who have never tried to take over production and have never been defeated by the bourgeoisie.

In our view, the starting point for revolution is that our struggle to win the means of production will be accompanied by civil war. But if you understand that revolution means civil war, in which we must coordinate and lead all our forces, entirely different organisational requirements flow from that. In such struggles, our losses will be minimised if we systematically centralise our struggle. The Norwegian party leadership's conception regarding the evolutionary course of events is rooted in the fact that the Norwegian comrades have not yet led a real struggle.

There is a syndicalist theory that goes, 'Let us leave the state in peace.' The Norwegian comrades should bear in mind that we have already seen a degree of evolution even among the French syndicalists. Through the experiences of war and revolution, a section of the French syndicalists have moved beyond this viewpoint. Comrade Rosmer personifies this in life. Where do things stand with the French syndicalists? Some of them are following in the wake of opportunism, and a second section has evolved toward communism, as we all know. And why? Because of experiences in war and revolution in Western Europe. But the Norwegian comrades do not have these experiences and thus believe that they do not need to develop further.

It is true, of course, that there are dangers in centralism, and they were particularly great in the peaceful era. And why? The entire selection of the leadership took place in the framework of this peaceful evolution. As a result, whoever was the best speaker, the best at formulating ideas, and the best at organisational work became the leader. That's how the choice was made. But we are now entering a different epoch. To be a leader today demands courage and a will to struggle – a preparedness for genuine revolutionary struggle. Of course, winning political power begins yet another epoch. The choice of leaders then does not depend on a readiness to sacrifice and an ability to go to the barricades. But in countries where we still face a bloody struggle for power, it is very dangerous to say that we do not want a general staff because it brings with it the dangers of bureaucratisation. In my opinion, this danger is countered by the entire nature of our epoch and the need for special leadership qualities suited to it.

The specific organisational concepts linked to the general point of view of the Norwegian comrades are best revealed in the so-called Kristiania proposal.<sup>5</sup>

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5 For the resolution of the 1923 congress of the Norwegian Labour Party in Kristiania (Oslo), see pp. 402–3, n. 31.

In a word, it would copy over democratic Wilsonism to our party.<sup>6</sup> The essence of this approach is to do this and that, but to say something different. In practice you do a number of necessary things including centralisation, but on the level of theory you talk about every conceivable right of self-determination. You say, 'The workers' liberation must be achieved by the workers themselves.' This viewpoint is best summed up in the following solemn declaration: 'The right to decide rests with the members.' That is the basis for all the other organisational proposals.

What is the real meaning of these words? The right to decide rests with the members. Does that mean that every member is completely autonomous and free to do whatever they want? That would be a true right of self-determination. But it would be anarchy. Tranmael and Bull maintain very strict discipline in their faction, but what they write is quite different, very much like Wilson, who held all the machinery in his hands while he wrote about the right of nations and peoples to self-determination and things like that.

I do not believe that Comrade Tranmael is being led; it's the other way around. They don't send any worker at random to an international congress; Tranmael comes, or Schefflo, or some other leader. But they don't want to tell the workers the truth; they don't want to speak openly about the inner workings of the party. If we are to win, the entire proletariat must understand that there is a vanguard of the proletariat. There are some who have leadership capacity, and they carry more weight than other comrades. That is the harsh reality. But they hide it, they – pardon me – they deceive the workers a bit. They do not portray things the way they are; instead they give workers an illusion that there are no leaders, that every member has the right to self-determination, and similar nonsense that actually does not correspond to reality in the slightest. You can feed the people on empty phrases, in a Machiavellian spirit, but the historical situation requires that the masses be educated about reality. Every member must grasp what's at stake. Failing to speak the truth, and replacing it with illusions and phrases, is a dangerous and bad business. For example, when the Norwegian comrades say that we are demanding blind obedience, I must say that we have more respect than they do for the proletariat, for we say quite openly what is the situation.

We say quite frankly that in the present epoch there are people who are not fully conscious, others who are more conscious, and others who are most con-

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6 A reference to US President Woodrow Wilson, who had called for a 'democratic' peace coming out of World War I and had championed the creation of the League of Nations. His position was seen in the revolutionary workers' movement as the height of imperialist hypocrisy.

scious, and we elect them as leaders. We say what corresponds to reality in a spirit both of respect for the proletariat and political expediency. You, however, express a small-minded and vulgar policy that in its essence shows contempt for the people. To sum up the Kristiania proposal, we can say that it contains phrases that do not lead to any outcome – a rather demagogic business that is quite impermissible in our times, during which we must tell workers the whole truth.

Comrades, it is an extremely difficult task to both educate the masses and also throw them into the struggle. In order to educate them, discussions are needed in which participants can speak freely, and every party member enjoys the greatest autonomy. We all understand that well. But on the other hand, for effectiveness in struggle we need to act quickly, immediately. And these two tasks are, to a certain extent, counterposed to each other; they stand in contradiction. So we have to manoeuvre. We have to achieve both, and for that we need what is termed democratic centralism. It gives full freedom to all party members, provided that the point at issue has not yet been decided. But when a decision has been taken, all must act as soldiers. Only under this condition can we achieve both goals. That is why we say to comrades who are still at the stage of being a discussion club that they will be required to do more than discuss; they will be forced to act. They must prepare for that and, for this reason, take all measures that are appropriate to prepare for that stage of the struggle.

Now a few words about some quite specific issues.

With regard to the question of binding mandates,<sup>7</sup> the position of the Norwegian party here is incorrect. Consider how this affects conflicts in the individual parties. Binding mandates can work out in such a way as to be directed against possible decisions by the Executive Committee. That would land us in a permanent conflict. How could we have resolved the dispute in France if the French delegates had binding mandates?

Also, as regards election of members to the Executive Committee, I believe that the Fourth World Congress acted quite rightly. The Communist International's world congress, as the embodiment of the entire Communist workers' movement, can elect a comrade who represents a minority faction.<sup>8</sup> Of course

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7 A reference to the practice of individual parties sending their delegations to world congresses or other leadership gatherings with binding instructions on how to vote.

A resolution of the Fourth Comintern Congress ('Decisions on the Reorganisation of the Executive Committee and Its Future Activity') stated: 'Imperative mandates are not allowed and will be annulled in advance, for such mandates contradict the spirit of an international, centralised, and proletarian party.' In Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1133.

8 A reference to the Fourth Congress action in electing Scheffo to the ECCI, representing the minority in the Norwegian party. See pp. 463–4, n. 10.

that would only be done in an exceptional case, when the situation requires it. The demand that a party's delegates to the Executive Committee be only those desired by the party itself is technically impossible and also politically inappropriate, just as is the demand that national conventions take place before the world congress.

If the national sections bind themselves through convention decisions before the world congress, and the world congress then takes different decisions, this will surely cause conflicts. The world congress integrates the experiences of all the sections. If delegates come with binding mandates, they are then incapable of altering their position. It's much different if a national *conference* comes first, then the world congress, and then the national convention.

Then there is the matter of resignations [from leadership committees] – namely whether the ECCI has the right to forbid resignations or whether this can be done only by the party leadership.<sup>9</sup> Experience has shown that often, in a matter of urgency, the ECCI must intervene. Is it good that Comrade Zetkin, Comrade Bordiga, and the leftist group in France did not resign? Or is it bad? I believe it is good and that we acted correctly.

As for the youth question, it is right that the youth organisation should be subordinate to its party in all matters, but when a dispute arises between the party and the Communist International, we cannot forbid the youth organisation from adopting the position of the International. This is where the situation in the Norwegian party is shown most clearly. First it is said that every member is really autonomous. But when this issue comes up in practice, the wonderful right of self-determination is cast aside, even for the entire youth organisation, and blind obedience is the rule. That approach is quite insincere.

As regards interference in internal affairs, it is quite difficult to separate off internal questions from international ones. Thus the national leadership's composition has international significance. Our dispute with the Norwegian party started with regard to the Executive Committee's conduct in the French question. Ask any French comrade: Was the world congress right in its actions, and has there been an improvement? Yes or no? We intervened in various other countries in the same way, most recently in Germany, and all these parties are doing better after the Executive Committee's action.

The task now is to create a different intellectual attitude toward the Communist International within the Norwegian and Swedish parties. We must overcome the mistrust of the Communist International. Comrades and parties that

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9 The Fourth Congress decision on the scheduling of party conventions and on resignations can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1134.

actually joined in founding the International know its value and trust it. That is how it must be with the Norwegian party. I will close by expressing my hope that the Norwegian sister party will overcome its deficiencies in the spirit of our principles.

**Otto Fredrik Ström** (co-reporter): There are no particular disagreements on politics or tactics between the Swedish party and the ECCI. We merely stress that the traditions and psychology of Swedish workers must be taken into account. We have achieved great success along these lines. An internal conflict can only do damage to these gains. Workers would lose their belief in the Communist Party's steadfastness, and if these internal conflicts caused new splits, the masses would abandon us.

We are in complete agreement with the ECCI on organisational questions. We are not enemies of democratic centralism, but we want to introduce this centralism gradually. The Swedish party's recent congress unanimously adopted statutes that are in accord with the Comintern theses.<sup>10</sup> Of course these statutes have to be applied intelligently. But they must also apply to organisations that are subordinate to the party, such as the youth and women's and trade-union bodies. Otherwise centralisation becomes a farce. We understand very well how essential centralisation is, and we therefore maintain that the Communist International must have the last word in all international matters.

Only in matters that are clearly local in significance, in our opinion, should the national parties make the decision. The constant interference of the ECCI in such matters will cause irritation and misunderstandings. As for the Swedish party's position on this question, after the Fourth Congress the expanded party leadership approved the actions of our delegates at the Fourth Congress and also the decisions that were made there. As regards the expanded authority of the Executive, this decision too was approved, although with the following comments:

The congress's decisions on the party executive confirmed its authority and indeed extended it. This marked a significant increase in the centralisation of the Communist movement. The Communist Party of Sweden recognises democratic centralism as one of the fundamental principles of the Communist International and stresses this commitment again now. But the expanded party executive cannot refrain from pointing to the danger that democratic centralism, in itself not only useful but neces-

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10 The Swedish CP's Fifth Congress was held 10–13 May 1923.

sary, will become cast in a form that is too mechanical and threatens the Communist movement with bureaucratisation. The party also believes that the tendency of the recent organisational decisions regarding the ECCI, if continued at the [Comintern] Fifth Congress, could lead to super-centralism, leading to an absolutist rather than a democratic leadership in the International. It is therefore desirable, in order to avoid such a development, that the ECCI work in close and intimate contact with the Communist parties and take its decisions as much as possible in agreement with them and their responsible leadership.

With regard to the Scandinavian parties in particular, the expanded leadership wishes to stress that opposition currents in the workers' movement in general in these countries have to contend with strong decentralist traditions, which have not yet been overcome. If centralisation is heightened too quickly, this would surely reduce the popularity of the Communist parties and their capacity to recruit among the masses. Centralisation must therefore be applied with great attention to local conditions in these countries. The National Committee therefore underlines what is already said about centralisation in the Twenty-One Conditions, namely that 'The Communist International and its Executive Committee must of course take into account in their entire activity 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.'<sup>11</sup> The expanded Central Committee, for its part, assumes that the ECCI will act in this manner.

The expanded Central Committee approves in particular the fact that the congress stressed several times the bounden duty of the ECCI to choose as fully empowered emissaries to and reporters on the individual parties only members of the ECCI and Presidium who are fully qualified and responsible. Their reports to the party executive and their interventions in the internal affairs of a party must always be carried out with great objectivity and care and in full accord with the responsible central leaderships of the party concerned or with its chosen representative. If this is not the case, the danger can easily arise that completely unnecessary conflicts will arise between the various sections and the central bodies of the Communist International.

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11 Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, p. 770. The translation has been modified slightly to align with the German text given here.

The Central Committee also reiterates that the Scandinavian request regarding the ECCI's duty to send out necessary texts to the sections in a timely way prior to each [world] congress should have been included in the resolution. The Central Committee hopes that the ECCI will take this demand into account in its future functioning, so that the parties can take up in detail the world congress agenda and express their opinion on the various agenda points.

Since the changes made recently in the statutes are only provisional in character and the proposals relating to this were not sent out in advance to the Communist parties for their examination, the leadership expresses these considerations in the hope that the Fifth Congress will examine the question before taking the final decision.

Our party's delegates met with the ECCI at a conference in Kristiania,<sup>12</sup> where these disagreements were dealt with in comradely fashion and this exchange resolved a number of misunderstandings. The party congress approved this resolution and adopted the following five theses:

1.) The party congress approves the conduct of party delegates at the Third and Fourth World Congresses, acting in accord with the instructions given by the expanded Central Committee. It approves the adopted decisions, which coincide with the party's general outlook and considers that they are not open to any principled objection. The party congress declares that these decisions are binding on the party.

2.) The party congress approves in particular that the commission and the party delegates made every effort to maintain the unity of the Communist movement in Norway and Denmark.

3.) With regard to programme, the party congress agrees that it should consist in part of a presentation of the theory of communism and its methods and goals, and in part of a presentation of general transitional demands, whose concrete expression serves as a programme for daily activity in every individual country.

4.) The party congress stresses in particular its agreement with the policy guidelines adopted at the Third and Fourth World Congresses for the Communist International. It regards the slogan of a proletarian united

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12 For the Kristiania meeting between ECCI representatives and the Swedish party leadership, see p. 436, n. 2.

front, in particular, as the correct path to strengthen and firm up the Communist movement and, through it, the entire working class.

5.) As regards heightened centralisation, the party congress approves the comments made by the National Committee, but it is also satisfied by the ECCI's statements made in response to the point of view presented by the party. The congress hopes that the approaching ECCI plenum will be in a position to resolve entirely the disagreements with the Scandinavian parties on this question, and expresses again its complete solidarity with the Communist International, the world party of the revolutionary working class.

As you see, we are not opponents of democratic centralism. We are in favour of a Communist International revolutionary general staff. However, we believe that we should not let ourselves be cut off from the masses through super-centralism. We are a vanguard, but we cannot win unless we encompass the rearguard of the masses. The pace of international centralisation should not be speeded up to the point that we lose touch with the masses.

Improvement is also needed in the organisation of the Communist International and its Executive Committee. The ECCI's methods when intervening in a party's affairs must be reformed; otherwise we risk having more disputes. Contrary to Bukharin's assertion, we do not harbour illusions. We are veteran Marxists who have sat at the feet of Lenin, Bukharin, Radek, and other comrades in Scandinavia, where we worked and struggled together. We are among the oldest friends of the Russian comrades. I will only recall how the Swedish left Social Democrats built the opposition against Branting and the reformists of all countries together with Lenin and Liebknecht at the congresses of Stuttgart in 1907, Copenhagen in 1910, and Basel in 1912.<sup>13</sup> We did not come yesterday to communism or the Communist International.

We also have some accomplishments, as the Russian comrades who fought together with us in Sweden and Scandinavia can explain. In 1905, 1909, 1916, 1917, and 1918 we carried out rather large actions.<sup>14</sup> Our leaders have often been

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13 A reference to congresses of the Second International at which Lenin and other revolutionary Marxists organised to oppose the growing opportunist trend within the Second International. See Riddell (ed.) 1984, chapters 1 and 2.

14 In 1905 mass working-class mobilisations helped prevent a war by Sweden's ruling class against Norway following the Norwegian declaration of independence from Sweden. In 1909 a lockout by Swedish employers touched off a month-long strike by 300,000 workers. In 1916 an antimilitarist campaign by left-wing socialists led to the trial and conviction

in prison. We have never been in the spell of petty-bourgeois illusions, and we are not so today. On the contrary, I must say. On the contrary. We consider that we should not let ourselves be cut off from the masses; indeed, that we even need to make policy concessions in order to avoid such separation and isolation from the masses. From whom did we learn this? Precisely from the Russian comrades.

As for the Norwegian question, we are closer on many points to the Schefflo current than to that of Tranmael. Both currents have made errors, and the parliamentary opportunism of the Schefflo current should really have been criticised here. We supported the Tranmael current because we did not want the Norwegian party to be split. Such a split would not only have severely shaken the Swedish party; it would have caused great harm to the entire International. We know that comrades here are also against a split, and we therefore hope that we can come to an understanding on this question.

There must be an end to playing off the youth federations in Sweden and Norway against the parties. I regret that Bukharin has quoted passages from an article by Höglund in a subjective way and presented him as a flagrant opportunist and petty bourgeois. This destroys Höglund's authority in Scandinavia, which can be of advantage only to our enemies. The fact that both Höglund and I have been demanding the arming of the proletariat for twenty years at Social-Democratic congresses shows that we are not opportunists.

**Erling Falk** (Norway): I have expressed the opinion of leaders of my party rather than my own view. The Norwegian party's opinion regarding what its relations should be with the International are set out in clause 4 of the so-called Kristiania resolution, which states that internal and local matters will be left to the national party, while in all other questions that go beyond national frontiers, the International has complete authority.

The party has decided to propose certain amendments to the International's Statutes.

It proposed withdrawal of the Fourth Congress decision by which the party is forbidden to give its delegate a binding mandate. The parties should be encouraged to discuss the questions proposed for the world congress agenda and

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for treason of three young Swedish socialists. In March and August 1917 Swedish socialists helped lead massive demonstrations and strikes for universal suffrage and constitutional reform. In 1918 a strike wave in Sweden involved over 60,000 workers; a number of the strikes demanded social reforms, such as improved living conditions and the eight-hour day.

express their opinions, so that the congress will reflect the viewpoints of its national parties. The intention here was to make it a general rule that delegates should receive binding mandates.

In addition, each party should choose its own representative to the Executive Committee. In addition, the delegates that the International sends to the party should be chosen after consultation with the party. The party convention should take place before and not after the world congress. This would put parties in a position to discuss the world congress's agenda and determine the views of their membership. After the congress, each party should decide for itself whether a further party convention is necessary. That was always the basis of each organisation that held to the principles of democratic centralism.

It should be left to the national parties and not the International to decide whether party members should relinquish their mandates, although the opinion of the ECCI in such cases is obviously of great importance. In the same way, the right to expel members from the party should lie with the national party and not the International.

These proposals did not aim at weakening the International. They arose from the conviction that the International could be reinforced only by strengthening the national parties of which it is constructed.

Bukharin stated here that he acknowledges the special features that characterise the Norwegian party and sees the issue as being whether these features should be perpetuated or not. The Norwegian party considers that the Social-Democratic features it has inherited should be overcome, but the traditions that make it a mass party should be preserved. The decision here should be made by the Norwegian party. If this large mass party could be maintained in conditions of the International's unrestricted authority, this authority would of course be welcome. The majority of the Norwegian party, however, believes that this is impossible.

The question of the youth movement, too, must also be taken up. There was no intention here of placing the youth movement under the supervision of the party leadership. It is to be expected that an energetic youth comrade will display a somewhat oppositional spirit. Certainly considerable freedom must be provided. The party asks what the International's opinion is on the relationship that should exist between the party and the youth movement. The situation becomes dubious and difficult if the Youth International's executive leadership or the ECCI organises against the party. In such cases the struggle creates the basis for two parties.

The party has submitted some further additions to the resolutions it has submitted to the [world] congress.

*(Asked by a delegate about the trade union question, Comrade Falk replied that to the best of his knowledge there was no conflict between the party and the International on this question, although there was within the party.)*<sup>15</sup>

**Gustav Beuer** (Czechoslovakia): We, the delegates of Czechoslovakia, are entirely in favour of strict centralism. The international economic and political situation, the way capital is organised internationally, the spilling over of social struggles beyond the national framework – all these factors make it absolutely necessary that the international organisation of the revolutionary proletariat have a centralised leadership. If the Comintern were to abandon centralism, it would mean nothing more or less than the abandonment of international revolutionary mass actions and, ultimately, a rejection of world revolution itself.

We place this great emphasis on the need for centralism because of our own experience. Until a few months ago, our party suffered from difficult struggles and disruptions. Given this situation, the ECCI intervened prior to the Fourth Congress. And although its measures at first ran counter to our viewpoint, it became clear in the course of internal discussions that they were appropriate, and we can report that they contributed significantly to consolidating the party.

But our stand for centralism is based not only on our immediate experiences and relations with the Executive Committee, but also on the structural features of our party itself. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is an international party, embracing Czech, German, Slovakian, Polish, and Hungarian workers. If the demand of the Scandinavian comrades that the International not intervene in the affairs of individual parties were heeded, there would be no authority, no body available where the internal conflicts within a party with such national complexities could be resolved.

In this regard, let me point to the situation in the Social-Democratic Workers Party of Czechoslovakia. Since the Hamburg Congress, the Czech and German Social Democrats [within Czechoslovakia] belong to the same International. These parties are sharply opposed on national and political issues and combat each other in a manner that is only found in battles between bitter political opponents. And given that, as we know, the foundations of the new Socialist International provide for autonomy of the individual parties in each country; there is no international authority that can exercise authority in this struggle of the two parties.

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15 This comment, absent from the German proceedings, is taken from the *Inprecorr* version.

Certainly a flawed application of centralism could bring with it dangers, but it is already clear that such dangers can be overcome in the course of experiences of both the Executive Committee and the individual parties – those that they have had and those still to come.

I would like to use this occasion to point out an insufficiency, even if it is by no means serious. Our comrades were of the opinion in March, for example, that the Executive Committee issued appeals to carry out far more numerous actions than the parties could possibly carry out on a mass scale and with success. But that is a trifling matter, which has nothing to do with the principle of centralism and can readily be corrected on the basis of experience. Moreover, Comrade Bukharin has already informed us in his report that the Executive Committee itself has taken measures to avoid a repetition of such minor abuses in the future.

*(Adjournment: 4:30 p.m.)*

## Centralism – Discussion and Summary

*Continuation of discussion and summary on the centralism question.*

*Speakers: Ewert, Amter, Schüller, Schefflo, Lévy, Kuusinen, Höglund, Koritschoner, Radek, Urbani, Stewart, Ström, Falk, Flieg, Bukharin.*

*(Gallacher opened the session at 7:30 p.m.)*

Ewert (Germany): Comrade Ström said that parties must have the right of self-determination in national issues. In the present stage of development of imperialism and revolutionary proletarian struggles, there are hardly any issues that have only a national, local significance. An incorrect policy in one country has effects that run beyond national borders and will be utilised by our opponents in other countries. The interview with Comrade Tranmael<sup>1</sup> also covers the party's relationship with the trade unions. The opinion is expressed there that the Norwegian party is restricted in its trade-union relations by its lack of independence, that is, by implementation of the decisions on centralism. This is completely wrong. The Communist Party must ensure that the trade unions act for the class interests of the proletariat.

In addition, this talk about the special conditions in the Norwegian party that do not permit it to carry out decisions is familiar to us in the history of our struggle with wavering forces in the German party. The fact that social conditions in Norway are less strained than in Central Europe does not change anything fundamental regarding the task of the Norwegian comrades to carry forward the struggle against opportunist deviations with full vigour. The Swedish comrades' task lies in helping the Norwegian party to implement the principles of the Communist International. Conditions on the continent are becoming steadily more challenging, and a close relationship with the other sister parties is more and more needed. That is why our Scandinavian sister parties also have the task of establishing closer relations with us in Germany and with the other parties.

In closing, let me refer again to the experiences of the German party with the Executive Committee's involvement in so-called internal matters. The ECCI reached a decision on the conflict in the German party quite recently, and it was accepted and carried out by both sides. We can already say that the Executive

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 532.

Committee's decision was correct. It speeded the party's consolidation. In our opinion, the International must go further down the road of stronger centralisation, and we appeal to delegates of the Scandinavian parties to join in this work of creating a genuine general staff of the proletariat. (*Applause*)

**Amter:** Like Bukharin, I believe that the Scandinavian comrades and parties seem to think they are living in the prewar era and are immune to the influence of imperialism. We must ask the Norwegian comrades and those in Sweden who support them what kind of party they want to build in their countries. It is peculiar that the leaders of the party are the ones who come here and maintain that they do not want a centralised party. It is no less strange that the Swedish party, which is a centralised organisation based on individual membership, is supporting a party based on entirely different foundations.<sup>2</sup>

Comrade Falk said that if members of the ECCI fall under the control of a specific group within the national party, the leaders would become strong. That is not what happened in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

As for binding mandates, we did away with that in the US even within the national organisations.<sup>4</sup> Members are sent to the party convention to represent specific tendencies and shades of opinion by the groups they represent. They are obligated to express this viewpoint. This should be the case in the International's congresses as well. But delegates must be free to be convinced by the International's greater experience and the broader knowledge. A true leader will be able to convince his party comrades, on his return, of the need to permit such a change of opinion. If he cannot do that, he is no leader, and the membership of his organisation will dispense with him.

There have been complaints because members of the Executive Committee are now elected at the [world] congress. The Comintern is a unit and it must fight as a unit. As Comrade Radek said, the Russians were compelled to

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2 The Norwegian Labour Party combined individual party membership with group membership via trade-union affiliation.

3 This may be a reference to an incident at the Comintern's Fourth Congress, when Billings (Otto Huiswood) objected to the inclusion of Charles E. Ruthenberg on the proposed ECCI, on the grounds that Ruthenberg represented a minority within the party. See Riddell (ed.) 2012, *4WC*, p. 1106.

4 A reference to the language federations within the US CP, which initially maintained a federated relationship inside the party. In 1923 seventeen such federations existed, comprising a large percentage of the party membership. With the encouragement of the Comintern leadership, the US party eventually put an end to the federated structure.

take the leadership because the comrades of other parties came to the International only as intermediaries and refused to take responsibility for the leadership.

In addition, the Norwegian party complained that the Comintern had intervened in the internal affairs of the party. In the United States, it was only thanks to the International's determined intervention that the two parties, after two years of persuasion, were forced to unify and the disruption that had prevailed in the American movement was brought to an end. And although an initiative had been taken in the United States for the party to function publicly, it was only upon the strong insistence of the International that this goal was finally achieved. As a result, in 1923, we now have a consolidated party that is one single unit.

Falk appears to think that the Norwegian mass party cannot be transformed into a Communist Party. Why not? He does not say. This was achieved in other countries; why can't it be done in Norway?

It is significant that Falk never suggested setting a target date by which the Norwegian party would be transformed. We are for the movement's unity, as we were in 1919. We need a centralised party that can be an organisation of struggle.

Every country has its peculiarities, just like Norway, and Norway must conform, just as other parties did, in order to become part of the Communist International's unity.

**Richard Schüller** (Youth International): The discussion seems to me to have advanced a step, because the Norwegian comrades no longer question the principle of international centralism. True, it is said that international centralism can be taken too far, but no one has yet seen that happen anywhere. The Swedish party, in particular, has the least cause to talk of that. In its interventions, the Comintern has always remained strictly within the limits marked out by the need for tact and the requirements of necessity.

Our Scandinavian comrades, however, say that yes, they are for international centralism, but all national questions must be left to be settled by the parties. This would take us fully to the organisational principles of the Second International. We must not differentiate between national and international questions. All issues before the individual sections are of concern to the International. It is exactly the same as if one were to say that the party leadership should not concern itself with what is happening in the individual local groups. Whenever the International intervened in this or that section, it was always in order to issue slogans to find a road to the masses. It does so today as well with regard to the Norwegian comrades by proposing to them the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government.

Our Norwegian comrades have said a great deal about the relationship of Communist parties to the Communist youth federations. It is quite awkward that the very comrades who spoke here for self-determination and decentralisation want to suppress all political initiative by the youth organisation in their own country. The Fourth Congress stated that the Communist youth federations are subordinate politically to the parties.<sup>5</sup> That means they have not only the right but the duty to take part in party life, not only as individuals but as an organisation. The Norwegian youth federation has in no way carried on sustained opposition against the party, but has rather taken positions on specific questions. It will make use of this right in the future as well.

I must take strong exception here to a statement by the Swedish comrades. It was said that the Communist International was inciting the Communist Youth in the Scandinavian countries to act as guerrilla bands against the parties. This military turn of phrase reminded me strongly of Longuet, who spoke once of Zinoviev's pistols.<sup>6</sup> Today Longuet is one of the most bitter opponents of the Communist International. I assure you that so long as the Communist International and the Communist youth federations exist, the youth will be vanguard fighters for communism, not only in Scandinavia but in every country. I hope it will be possible to achieve unity with our Scandinavian comrades. The first precondition for it is that we join in affirming the fundamental concept that the Communist International is a world party. (*Loud applause*)

**Scheflo:** On behalf of the minority of the Norwegian delegation, and in response to the comments of Comrade Ström about a possible split, I must say that in our opinion there is no such danger. We hope that our faction will win at the next party congress. If that does not happen, *we will not leave the party*. I believe that Comrade Tranmael as well can make such a statement.

**Georges Lévy (France):** We have often heard the objections that the Norwegians have made from our platform voiced by those who no longer belong to our party. No sooner were the decisions of the Fourth Congress made known than comrades, who have since called themselves oppositionists, left the party and founded a new party in opposition to the International.<sup>7</sup> They adopted a position similar to that of certain Scandinavian delegates. We have no idea how the

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5 See 'Resolution on the Communist Youth International' adopted by the Fourth Congress. In Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1025–9.

6 For Zinoviev's 'pistols', see p. 113, n. 13.

7 A reference primarily to Louis-Oscar Frossard, former CP general secretary, who split from the CP in January 1923 and helped found the Socialist-Communist Union.

Norwegian comrades will proceed, but it would be painful for the International if the difficulties and experiences of one section could not be useful to another.

A number of the main arguments raised by the oppositionists in France correspond to those of the Norwegians. 'The International is led by the Russians,' for example. The bourgeois and Social-Democratic papers were the first to talk along those lines. We are all aware that the Executive Committee has appealed countless times to the parties to send their most responsible and able fighters. Nonetheless, a quite justified influence exists in the International of those who have made the revolution.

'The International is a tool in the hands of the Russian Revolution,' Trotsky has already disposed of this pathetic argument. The Russian Revolution and the International are indissolubly linked. The defeat of the first would mean the end of the second, and the other way around. It has also been asserted that the International wants to impose an exaggerated discipline on the national sections. But our discipline is voluntary and active, a discipline in action after fraternal discussion. National traditions have been advanced as an excuse, just as during the French crisis. There has been talk of binding mandates for the delegates, as if the International congresses could have any purpose if comrades arrived there with unalterable decisions. It is only natural that the delegates of sections receive general directives from their parties, but it must be possible for international experience to be of use.

Just like the Norwegians, our oppositionists claimed to restore the revolutionary policy of the party, which they said had been damaged by the decisions of the Fourth Congress. We do not want to dispute the worth of our Norwegian comrades' conduct in their country. But there is a detail that gives us pause: Their newspaper still bears the name *Social-Demokraten*.<sup>8</sup>

The Norwegians have repeated today the arguments advanced yesterday by the French opponents of the International. Our oppositionists of yesterday now point to the Norwegians and their example. Thus their conduct strikes against the International itself, even when they try to restrict themselves to its effects in their own country. It is wrong to counterpose the national to the international in this manner.

Our experience should be of help to the Norwegian comrades. Let us hope they take it into consideration. There is still time for second thoughts and to accept the International's directives without reservations. Doing so is in their interests, and also in ours.

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8 *Social-Demokraten* in fact changed its name to *Arbeiderbladet* on 3 April 1923.

**Otto Kuusinen** (Finland): Comrade Tranmael's articles repeatedly accuse the Communist International of having inherited two weaknesses of the Second International: opportunism and centralism. But as we know, the history of the Communist International from its inception is one of ruthless struggle against opportunism. Comrade Tranmael's claim that the Communist International inherited centralism from the Second International cannot be accepted just like that. He is of course well aware that the Second International leadership was really only a mailbox. The Second International was completely decentralised, and that is still the case. So I can only conclude that Comrade Tranmael is using the epithet 'centralism' to designate something different than what the rest of us have in mind. This probably comes from the traditions and the best experiences he has had in the workers' movement, namely, in his struggle against the old trade-union bureaucracy.

In the old workers' movement there was no centralism, but rather a kind of dualism between the bureaucracy and the 'people'. This dualism has carried over to some extent into the Communist movement. If this is what Comrade Tranmael is referring to, then I think he is right to refer to the possibility of dangers. Comrade Bukharin himself has referred to this, and the Third Congress theses tell us:

Even the revolutionary workers' movement cannot avoid being influenced to some degree by the formalism and dualism of the bourgeois environment. The Communist Party needs to thoroughly overcome such contradictions through systematic, ongoing political and organisational work, marked by repeated improvements and changes.<sup>9</sup>

These sentences from the pen of Comrade Lenin present us all with the task of fighting against these tendencies to formalism and dualism. But how are we to do this? We say that we strive for democratic centralism. Perhaps this concept is a bit unclear, such that it is not fully and correctly understood by Norwegian comrades of Comrade Tranmael's tendency. Also, it is not completely adequate. 'Democratic centralism' – If you take these words literally, you could say that even Bonapartism in the state represents democratic centralism, that is, centralised force based on democracy.

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted from the 'Theses on the Organisational Structure of the Communist Parties and the Methods and Content of their Work', drafted by Kuusinen in collaboration with Lenin. In Ridell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 979–80.

But what we understand by democratic centralism is a fusion, a synthesis, of proletarian democracy and centralism.

**Bukharin:** Very true!

**Kuusinen:** We are referring above all to a centralisation of revolutionary activity rather than to a centralisation of power in the party. If you try within a democratic framework to carry out centralism purely mechanically, that is, if only power is centralised, this leads of course to bureaucratisation. But if you strive for the centralisation of revolutionary activity, then you can say that in this framework there is actually no absolute limit to centralism. There are only relative limits, namely, only so much centralism as is required to make revolutionary work effective – only so much and not more.

The Norwegian and Swedish comrades, at least some of them, were thrown into alarm by the slogan of a world party at the Fourth Comintern Congress. In my opinion, this was the most important slogan from that congress. It was not really new. It was not clearly articulated until the Fourth Congress, but it was already implicit when the Communist International was founded. The Norwegian comrades should not think – and in fact I do not believe they think this – that we have suddenly decided to found a world party and now it exists. We have not achieved that yet. This is a slogan, a goal, and I cannot grasp why we should not strive for this goal. We can talk about the different measures needed in each country to reach this goal, but we must not deviate by a millimetre from this path. It must be our goal, and the Norwegian comrades too should express their agreement with this goal.

Building a world party is a major task, and so far the Communist International has only made a start in this direction. What has been achieved so far by the Comintern leadership is mostly a matter of ‘intervention in the internal affairs’ of the different parties. When the Comintern celebrates its fifth anniversary, we will probably write a short history of these interventions, and I believe that on the whole it is a gratifying history. Of course, such interventions do not all achieve immediate satisfaction, and I think we can say that this is usually the case. We can conclude, based on what we now see in many countries, that even the many small cases of friction, if overcome, have led to be a solid and useful outcome for both the sections and the Comintern leadership.

Unity in struggle between the leadership and the section leads to a true sense of community, which is of greater worth than the idealistic support for the Comintern that prevailed at the outset, when there were still very great differences of opinion on various questions. The German comrades have spoken about their experiences in this regard.

Comrade Šmeral spoke in the commission about the Czech party's experiences. An old fighter from Poland spoke about those of his party.<sup>10</sup> He stressed in particular that the Russian comrades in the Comintern leadership provided a service in strengthening more and more the ties between the international leadership and the sections. Comrade Ewert, who spoke today of the German party's experiences, was quite right in saying this does not come exclusively from Russian experiences. The Comintern leadership is surely in large measure an achievement of the Russian comrades – not only because they have gone through the Russian struggles, but also because of their broad international experience. We need only review the experiences gained by comrades in the Comintern leadership in recent years to see the wealth of international experiences, which can only be of assistance in bringing about better and increasingly firm relations with the sections. Perhaps the most eloquent recent example is the Executive Committee's success in its recent involvement in internal affairs of the American party. Comrade Amter has already spoken of that. He did not mention, however, that in this dispute he himself belonged to the current that suffered utter defeat here at the Fourth Congress.<sup>11</sup> It is thus all the more important that he is the one to take the floor here and say that this decision by the international leadership was correct. I say this all the more readily since I myself had great reservations on this question, and favoured a bad compromise in order to maintain good relations with the section.

Relations in the Scandinavian countries right now are somewhat unusual. As Comrade Bukharin has explained, this is inevitably so, because they have not experienced wars and revolutionary struggles. But as Comrade Bukharin has already noted, disparities in circumstances merely provide the movement with a different starting point, a different level of development. They do not justify a different direction of development or a clinging to the starting point or the previous traditions. The Norwegian and Swedish comrades should certainly grant that point. For my part, I would not lay so much weight on various opportunist statements that can be found in the Norwegian and Swedish press, not even when they defend freedom of religion in the party. And I would tend to oppose including in the resolution a condemnation on this particular point. Anyone who reads extensively in the Scandinavian press will accept such articles with resignation. This is caused in part by the different level of

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10 A reference to the remarks of Warski (Adolf Warszawski) to the 23 June session of the Scandinavian Commission.

11 At the Fourth Congress, Amter had supported the faction opposing moves toward legalisation of the US Communist Party.

revolutionary development there. In my opinion, the Scandinavian comrades, in comparison with other sections, enjoy a certain limited 'right' to make such gaffes. I think these gaffes are only mosquitoes; the elephants must be sought elsewhere.

But where? The Norwegian comrades say that the Executive Committee is carrying out a policy in Norway that will make it impossible to sustain a mass party there. That is not true. What is the situation? Certainly there is a mass party in Norway but consider, Comrade Tranmael: Is it really a Communist mass party? Comrade Radek, during his stay in Norway, wrote us here that, surprisingly, there were few members at the meetings prior to the congress at which the most important questions before the party were posed for decision. An unexpectedly narrow layer of the membership took part in these meetings; indeed only a narrow layer is at all active. This is a bad sign, indicating that their mass party exists in large measure only on paper, that indeed it must develop out of the present party. That is the issue here. I concede that Comrade Tranmael strongly emphasises the Communist activity of the membership. He wants to develop Communist cells, and this is good. But we have a party here where local groups still do not exist and the regional groups are quite undeveloped; most regional leaderships have not yet been formed. Given these facts, Norwegian comrades, you must conclude that in addition to forming cells, the party's activity must be increased in every respect. Even peasants should be drawn into the Communist Party's activity.

Comrade Tranmael is asking, at least unconsciously, for guarantees against the danger of opportunism in Norway. In this regard I think his fear is at least partially healthy. But he should recognise that guarantees are present in the international leadership. Comrade Bukharin referred to the fact that the character of the present period itself provides certain guarantees. They are present in the conduct of the Norwegian bourgeoisie; it is preparing for violent struggle against the Norwegian proletariat. That is also, to some degree, a guarantee against the opportunism of Scheffo, that old fox.

In Sweden the party is smaller. It is harder to make a start there because a large Social-Democratic Party is still present. Industrial capitalism in Sweden is older, and that entails a difficulty, namely the ideology of a broad layer of the labour aristocracy. Overcoming this ideology is the biggest difficulty facing the Swedish comrades.

I am prepared to sign with both hands what Comrade Ström said: that they in Sweden should not isolate themselves from the masses. That is correct. But they cannot achieve this yet, because they have not yet found the right connection with the broad mass. That is what they must find. In many trade-union federations there is already a revolutionary opposition movement. I do not deny

that this is an achievement of the Communist comrades. But I believe that the Swedish party leadership has not done everything it could to enable this revolutionary oppositional movement in the trade unions to mature.

Comrade Ström spoke of the danger of a split. In my opinion, this danger is only minimal in Sweden, and I can assure you that the Communist International will never aggravate this danger, just as it has not done so in Norway. Comrade Tranmael will confirm this. What happened after the decisions of December 1921, when you yourself were already dangling between the Communist International and some international non-party status?<sup>12</sup> After this incident, the Communist International actually saved party unity in Norway. Every example from the Comintern's activity shows that we always try to unify tendencies locked in dispute. We do not always succeed, and there are a couple such cases. But even there we hope to achieve success.

The relationship of the Swedish comrades to their youth federation is not good. In this regard I must say the following to Comrade Höglund in particular. I wish that he, who was once the leader of the youth federation and the pioneer in this field in Sweden, would be true to his tradition, just as Comrade Tranmael is true to his in Norway. Comrade Höglund should link up again with the youth federation. Victory cannot be won without them; that is certain. Höglund said in the commission that there were only old men in the youth federation. Comrade Höglund, if these blossoming youth are old men, what exactly are *we* then? (*Laughter*) I question whether we would then still be among the living.

In Norway elements of the coming, genuine Communist party are already evident in the framework of the present Labour Party. But in Sweden the situation is somewhat more difficult. A section of the forces for a Communist party there are outside the framework of the present party. Of course your party, as it now exists, is not the party that will lead a victorious social revolution. It must still win many workers, for example among the ranks of the present syndicalists. There are many revolutionary workers who you must still win over. There are also many revolutionary workers in the reformist trade unions who do not yet belong to your party. In the coming years you must do everything you can to win these workers for the Communist Party.

Scandinavian comrades, I only wanted to point out that you really have major tasks in your internal affairs. You have misunderstood the situation when you came here and said that the Communist International should now head

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<sup>12</sup> Tranmael was part of a Norwegian Labour Party delegation that went to Moscow in November 1921 to hold discussions with Comintern leaders about their relations with the International, in particular with regard to the Profintern.

in a different direction. You yourselves now stand at a crossroads, and I am addressing particularly Comrades Höglund and Tranmael. You must go in a different direction, one that makes a shift, if a small one, toward the Communist International. Then everything will turn out very well. So, Comrade Tranmael, shake hands with your companions in this dispute, the old fox Schefflo, and the youth leader Furubotn, and together let us build the Communist Party of Norway and together vanquish the capitalists.

**Höglund** (Sweden): It is true that, as Comrade Kuusinen says, we do not yet have a mass party in Sweden, but our influence in the working class is growing. We have not tried here to impose our will on the Executive Committee; all we did was provide an extensive motivation for our present position. We were always for democratic centralism and are for it still. The question is only how and at what tempo it can best be implemented, and how we can avoid the danger of super-centralism and bureaucracy. The ECCI must proceed more cautiously on the Scandinavian question than in the past.

I protest the fact that Comrade Bukharin has presented us as pacifists on the basis of one article. During the Swedish-Norwegian crisis of 1905, we called even then for a general strike and an armed uprising. This also happened in 1916, to which Comrade Bukharin can testify, since he was then living in Sweden.<sup>13</sup> We do not advocate peaceful evolution, nor does the Tranmael current in Norway. But we are now going through a different phase of development, and it would be absurd for us to call today in Scandinavia for arming the proletariat. Heightening centralism would make demands on the party executive that it cannot fulfil, and we therefore oppose such a move.

**Koritschoner** (Austria): We who come from the Zimmerwald Left, which encompassed the founders of the Swedish youth federation, have viewed with growing unease the evolution in the Scandinavian countries. The way that Comrade Falk, representing the Norwegian party, spoke here today seemed to me to be a clear provocation. The Communist International is an indivisible whole, and we must hold firmly to its defence. Many comrades may consider that what the Executive Committee did in this or that situation was inexpedi-

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13 A reference to the war threats accompanying Norway's efforts to gain independence from Sweden in 1905. Following negotiations, Norway's independence was recognised in October of that year, ending almost a century of Swedish rule.

The reference to 1916 presumably concerns the threatened outbreak of war between Germany and Norway in October and November of that year, over the sinking of Norwegian ships by German submarines during World War I.

ent. That is why we must strive to shape centralism in such a way as to become an effective International of the deed. Giving our International a federal structure would make it impossible to struggle in the face of the concentration of forces that is already under way in the opportunist camp. The Scandinavian comrades must be reminded of their duty toward the workers of Central and Western Europe. Each step they take against the Communist International, each loosening of its centralised structure, hinders us in our difficult struggle in exposed positions against world capital and international reformism. We anticipate that the masses of Scandinavian workers and their leaders will recognise that they are part of a world movement and must carry out their obligations.

**Radek:** The question of democratic centralism is far more important for the Comintern now than it was in the period of proletarian offensive. The struggle demonstrates to us the clear and unconditional necessity of centralising our forces. It arises of itself, so to speak. We are now in a transitional period. That makes the formation of a central international leadership and strict centralisation of our international organisation much more difficult. In every instance where the Executive Committee found it necessary to intervene in supposedly internal party matters, this involved not minor, local issues but rather questions that were also of international importance.

During my stay in Norway, I came to the firm conclusion that the party there can advance successfully. Whether the current that now stands for consistent application of the International's decisions is strong or weak, one thing is certain: when the day comes for struggle on the issue, 'With the International or against it?' the fate of our opponents will be sealed. They will be defeated without any doubt. My only fear is that in this struggle we will lose comrades whom we do not want to lose. Comrade Tranmael, for example, is not just an individual but a piece of the Norwegian workers' movement itself, and that is the reason for our obliging and patient approach. However, we are convinced not just that we can come to a *modus vivendi* with the Norwegian comrades, but also that they will become convinced that our policies are correct.

We will also have no grounds for complaint against the Mot Dag group if they carry out revolutionary Communist work among the intellectuals, instead of threatening the party with reformism. As for the relationship of the Swedish party leadership to the Communist Youth and that of the youth and party in Norway, the oppositional stance of the youth is a disturbing sign for the party. The Communist Youth contain the most eager and convinced supporters of communism, and if they are in opposition to the party leadership, that alone is a sign that these leaders' policies are weak and inadequate.

To wrap up, we cannot give up any of the general principles of the Communist International; they are not up for exchange. In each individual case, a specific agreement regarding the application of our principles is possible. Issues of 'more or less' will never provoke a conflict with the Executive Committee. However, we must be fully clear regarding what our revolutionary movement requires, and we bend every effort to meet these needs.

**Urbani** [Terracini]: I am making the following statement on behalf of the Italian delegation.

An attempt has been made to present the Italian Communists as allies against centralism. We must decidedly reject any such curious alignment. The Italian party and its leader, Bordiga, have called for energetic adherence to the decisions regarding centralism. The Italian youth federation also opposes the Scandinavians' assertions. If the Communist Party of Italy is at all relevant to this matter, it is as supporters of centralism, not as its opponents. (*Loud applause*)

**Bob Stewart** (Britain): The Norwegian comrades state that they do not aspire to any change in the International's position on centralism. They are correct in that, because no matter what their expectations may have been, it is certainly clear that the International has not the slightest intention of budging even an inch from democratic centralism.

When I asked Comrade Falk in the commission what degree of centralisation the Norwegian party would accept, his answer amounted pretty much to saying that it was not acceptable to have any centralisation at all.

Each party that was against the so-called interference of the Executive Committee had to concede, in time, that this intervention had a beneficial effect. I am speaking on behalf of a party that expects a rather substantial and drastic intervention.

Do the Norwegian comrades expect that their bourgeoisie is going to permit them a pretty little Scandinavian revolution that is in step with the idiosyncrasies of their national conditions?

Democratic centralism was adopted with the goal of avoiding the errors of earlier Internationals. The proof of its beneficial influence is the growing power of the Third International in comparison with the decreasing influence of other Internationals.

**Ström**: I must correct some statements made in the debate. We do not believe that the class struggle in Scandinavia is idyllic, and Comrade Bukharin knows

this himself, since he sat in a Swedish prison.<sup>14</sup> Comrade Ewert misunderstood me in saying I was opposed to centralism. We adhere to centralism, but in some specific issues of a local character we must have special freedom of action. It is also incorrect to say that we believe there to be too many Russian comrades in the leadership of the Communist International. I say, 'Quite the contrary.' Thank god that the Russian comrades have so much influence in the International. In reply to Comrade Schüller, I must say that we have not the slightest objection to freedom of discussion in our youth federations, but what we cannot permit is for the youth federation to develop into a faction directed against the party. Comrade Radek says it is a troubling fact that the youth federation is opposed to the party. I would like to know where there is a party that has not experienced at some moment an opposition from its youth. There are many tendencies against which we must be on the alert.

**Falk (Norway):** Comrade Stewart has repeated the often-heard accusation that the Norwegian party does not desire any form of centralisation but rather wants full freedom for the party, its local groups, and every member. That is incorrect. It demands strict centralisation both for the party and for its members. In this regard there is no disagreement. At issue is only in what manner this centralisation should be carried out.

In Sweden and Denmark the parties are small. In Norway the Communist party embraces the broad mass of the working class. The question before us now is whether the party should be maintained as a mass party. The living conditions of workers in Norway are not different from what they are in Sweden and Denmark, and there is thus a danger that if the same policies are pursued in each of these countries, the results will also be the same.

The Norwegian party expressed certain reservations prior to its affiliation to the Third International in order to maintain itself as a mass party of the working class. Proceeding incautiously could destroy it as a mass party.

Statements like that of Scheflo contribute neither to the party's unification nor to its split. It is the daily practice of the party that is decisive. In response to Scheflo's declaration, the majority of Norwegian delegates wish to state that the resolution unanimously adopted at the Norwegian party congress on relations between the International and the party presupposed that the struggle between the two currents was over. The party majority has held loyally to

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14 Bukharin lived in Sweden in 1915–16. While there, he was arrested and jailed on suspicion of conspiracy to blow up bridges.

this resolution, but the struggle was resumed at the congress, and it is now impossible to foresee the results. At the very least, things will be more difficult than previously.

The majority of the Norwegian party wishes to alert the Enlarged Executive Committee to the fact that maintaining the party as a mass organisation demands that the ECCI's authority not be employed the way it was during the past year.

**Leopold Flieg** (Sweden): Comrade Ström claims that the Swedish party is too centralised and that the statutes also apply to the youth, since they were drawn up in collaboration with the youth's representatives. He says that we have had enough internal disputes in the party, and it would not tolerate the youth federation developing into a party within the party. We agree completely. Certainly, we have had many internal disputes, but why did they arise? Only because Höglund and Ström always claimed that they were for the ECCI decisions but could not translate them into practice right at that moment. I believe that this plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee will contribute to creating better relations in the party so that we in Sweden and across Scandinavia can unite our forces in good work for the common cause. I agree with the statement of Comrade Radek that if the party does not oppose the Communist International it can count on the collaboration and support of the Communist Youth.

### Summary of Discussion on Centralism Question

**Bukharin:** The agenda point on democratic centralism was intended as a discussion with the Scandinavian comrades. The fact that it became directed against the Scandinavian comrades is not our fault. Comrade Falk stated that he would not address the theoretical side of the question. That is not accidental; Comrade Falk lacked any counterarguments. Initially the Scandinavian comrades took the offensive. As they perceived that almost the entire International was against them, they went over to the defensive.

Comrade Höglund says, 'We are innocent and are asking only for a bit more attentiveness regarding Scandinavian issues.' We agree with that, but we must ask the Scandinavian comrades also to be somewhat more attentive to the International as a whole. During the discussion representatives of almost every party confirmed that the Executive Committee, in its involvement with national issues, has acted correctly in almost every case. Why did our Scandinavian comrades not also speak to this? Even if it could be said that we made mistakes in Scandinavia, we must examine the overall balance sheet. The dis-

cussion showed that the Executive Committee of the Communist International has led the world proletarian movement as a whole, and that is decisive. Why would our leadership, which is recognised as having acted well in all other countries, have acted so badly precisely in Scandinavia? I can hardly believe that the fault lies here with the Executive Committee; it must be located on the other side.

In his final speech, Comrade Falk referred to the reservations that the Norwegian party had in coming to the International. I believe that these reservations are responsible for the present situation, together with the Norwegian party's isolation. Comrade Höglund is all too prone to manoeuvre, but does not always do so skilfully. Comrade Ström says he adheres to the centralist viewpoint. Höglund, on the contrary, defends the viewpoint of the Norwegian comrades who are blatantly opposed to it.

I have been accused of drawing caricatures. But every caricature incorporates what is distinctive in its subject. I have pointed up certain opportunist tendencies. Have we heard arguments against that? Comrades polemicise against the danger of a split, but who wants a split? We are accused of wanting to undermine the authority of this or that comrade. Exactly the opposite is true. The comrades are undermining their own authority through their conduct. Comrades reproach me for having taken some isolated sentences of an article by Höglund out of context, without explaining the specific situation in which they were written. There is a French saying, '*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*' [to understand everything is to excuse everything]. But that is not true for us as Marxists.

Comrade Höglund also said that it would be stupid to arm the workers in Norway and Sweden. I call that a distortion. When I criticised Tranmael on this point, I did not reproach him for failing to raise the slogan of arming the workers, but rather for his antimilitarist ideology. Höglund does not understand that. Ström says that I must surely know very well that conditions in Sweden are not at all idyllic since I spent time in a Swedish prison. But when you make a comparison with events in Central Europe, the Ruhr, Yugoslavia, Italy, Hungary, and now Bulgaria, I must still insist that what you have in Scandinavia are idyllic conditions. Comrade Ström maintains that the Swedish party is for centralism. Very well, you are for centralism, but on the Norwegian model, with major reservations, such that at the critical moment they could be supporting another tendency.

According to Comrade Falk, I am quite correct in saying that the point at issue here is to decide whether the various distinctive features of the Norwegian party should be conserved or overcome. But in his second speech, by contrast, Falk says that on this question all he has heard from our side is con-

tempt. Which view is correct? What exactly are the distinctive features of the Norwegian party? Falk says that it is a mass party, but don't we have other mass parties? The German, Czechoslovak, and Russian parties – are they not mass organisations? So that is not what is distinctive.

What is distinctive is that the Norwegian party has come to the International with reservations. That is the bad feature that needs to be overcome. Comrade Falk maintains that the present discussion will rekindle the faction struggle in the Norwegian party. Yet can any sincere person protest against the fact that we speak of such questions in the Executive Committee? We must clarify the point of view of our Norwegian and Swedish comrades and of the Executive Committee to all our sister parties.

A lot has been said here about blind obedience in the Russian party. I advise our Scandinavian comrades to study our party a bit more closely. I do not know whether the Norwegian comrades are familiar with our factory cells. In many factories these cells are made up of only five or six comrades, but even these tiny units take up all political questions. There is no party whose internal life is so active as ours. Our discipline is not blind; it is unity in action.

We cannot claim that we never make a mistake, and we have no objection to being criticised. On the contrary, when we are shown that we have made a mistake, we want to correct it, with your help. We tell you now that we want to reach an understanding as quickly as possible between the Norwegian party and the ECCI, and we will therefore make all possible concessions to the comrades in the commission.<sup>15</sup> But we consider it our duty to criticise every serious symptom of deviation from the point of view of the Communist International. Our task is to do everything possible in the commission in order, after this Executive Committee plenum, to march together into battle against the bourgeoisie. (*Applause*)

(*Adjournment: 12:40 a.m.*)

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15 A stenographic record of discussions between Comintern leaders and the Scandinavian delegation to the Third Enlarged ECCI Plenum can be found in Comintern 1923b.

## Trade Unions – Reports

*Reports on trade-union question.*

*Speakers: Lozovsky, Böttcher, Walcher.*

*(Gallacher opened the session after 12:00 noon.)*

### The Trade-Union Question

**Solomon A. Lozovsky:** The decay of reformism in the international trade-union movement has been under way for some time and has gone further since the Communist International was founded. Meanwhile, the will to struggle of the working class has found expression in the demand for a united front advanced by the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions.

The organisers of the Hague Peace Congress did not foresee that this great demonstration would discredit them so profoundly. Only three weeks later, the occupation of the Ruhr exposed the incompetence and irresolution of the reformist International's leaders. The decisive moment had come, and they turned out to be unable to translate their resolutions into action. Since then the worker masses have begun to get a better grasp of the gravity of the International situation. The March conference in Frankfurt reflected a decisive shift.<sup>1</sup> There one could observe Social-Democratic and independent forces declaring their preference for a united front with the Communists as compared to a united front with the bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup> An influential left wing had taken shape in the framework of the Amsterdam International, without the knowledge of its leaders. The reformist leaders believed they had saved the situation in Hamburg. The essential meaning of this Hamburg Congress is well expressed in a sentence from the speech with which the German Social Democrat Wels opened the congress: 'The stronger we are against communism, the stronger we will be against reaction.'<sup>3</sup>

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1 For the Frankfurt Conference see p. 386, n. 9.

2 The translation of this sentence is based on the *Inprecorr* version. The German *Protokoll* gives the opposite meaning.

3 For Wels's speech at the Hamburg fusion congress of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, see Labour and Socialist International 1923, pp. 15–16.

But no sooner was their conference over than the shift among the reformists came to light at the international conference of transport workers.<sup>4</sup>

Given that our united-front policy gives us entry into the mass organisations, all Communist parties need to develop this policy further and perfect it. The transport workers' conference has now presented a very feasible action programme for the united front. It resolved to establish an international committee of transport workers for the struggle against fascism and the danger of war. Inspection commissions are to be established on the borders, in the ports, and at nodal points of the railway network to watch for transport of war materials, measures are to be taken for armed resistance against fascism, and, finally, an international congress of transport workers is to be convened, with all interested trade unions invited to take part. This demonstrates that the formation of a united front is the first step toward reconstitution of the trade-union movement.

When the reformist leaders enter into negotiations with us about the united front, they pose unacceptable conditions, demanding of us above all that we stop criticising them, as if we were doing this for the fun of it. Some Communist circles also seem to believe that the united front means an armistice with the reformists. Nothing could be further from the truth. It means only an armistice with respect to action, and even that only so long as the reformists are effectively contributing to the proletarian cause.

The conference of transport workers showed how an agreement between the revolutionary trade unions and the left wing of the Amsterdam current can come into being.

In speaking of this left wing, I am not referring to the declared supporters of the RILU that belong to Amsterdam organisations. I am speaking of the left wing that has grown up within the reformist wing of the Amsterdam International and is linked to it by a common ideology and practice, but is gradually changing its political course. It was clear at the transport workers' conference that the left wing of the Amsterdam International aims to rescue this International by trying to push it over to a class standpoint. This faction fully understands that the road taken by the Amsterdam International leads to ruin, that this International is bankrupt, that it is built on contradictions, and that the class collaboration on which it is based is responsible for the workers' movement's failures. It was not easy to find a common platform with this left wing. There were disagreements, especially regarding Communists' course of action in the trade unions.

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4 For the May 1923 conference in Berlin between the International Transport Workers' Federation and Soviet trade unions, see p. 394, n. 18.

The German and French representatives to the conference tried to impose on us strictures regarding our conduct as conditions for our continued presence in the trade unions. But when we formulated our own proposals, they had to abandon their demands and carry the struggle against the adopted agreement into their own organisations. The agreement is based on the following platform:

- 1.) Soviet Russia is the focal point of proletarian resistance against world reaction, and the overthrow of Soviet power would be a deadly blow against the international workers' movement.
- 2.) Struggle against the threat of war through mass action, including the general strike.
- 3.) Creation of an international parity committee for propaganda and action against war and fascism.
- 4.) Ongoing inspection of transport of war materials.
- 5.) Convocation of a world congress of transport workers to re-establish unity nationally and internationally.
- 6.) Common defence by the transport workers of all countries ravaged by fascism; a common fund for aid.
- 7.) A common call by the International Federation of Transport Workers and the Russian trade unions to railway workers and seafarers of all countries.
- 8.) Ongoing propaganda against fascism, which is a weapon of the bourgeoisie.
- 9.) Utilisation of the parliamentary platform for the struggle against fascism.
- 10.) Armed resistance against fascism.
- 11.) Surveillance of fascist transport and troop movements.
- 12.) To this end, establish contact and develop common work with all interested workers' organisations.
- 13.) Fortify the transport workers against reactionary influences.
- 14.) Acknowledge the need to re-establish trade-union unity and appeal to all international and national organisations to follow the example of the transport workers.
- 15.) Recognition of the principle that common action is possible only on the basis of class struggle.

This agreement was made possible because the leaders of the International Federation of Transport Workers became convinced that if they really wanted to struggle against the bourgeoisie, this had to be done in a united front with the Communist workers.

The reformist German leaders are of course making efforts to prevent these resolutions from being carried out. The French delegate Bidegaray is doing this in France, but he has run into resistance from his own supporters. Rivelli of

the seafarers' federation has written an article entitled 'With Fimmen' declaring his support for the Berlin resolutions.<sup>5</sup> The Amsterdam International has passed an extremely flexible resolution saying that they are not committed to the Berlin agreements. We interpret their moderation as a sign of fear. They are afraid to attack the left wing. Certainly they would like to thwart the decisions of the transport workers' conference, but they cannot do this openly. In order to bring about this united front, we displayed considerable moderation. It is now necessary that the transport workers' platform be adopted by the entire international trade-union movement.

We ran into two obstacles in this struggle. We were resisted not only by the reformist splitters but also by revolutionaries in independent formations, created out of necessity, that they wish to maintain. We believe the campaign for unity must be driven forward everywhere. In France our comrades adopted a correct position. In Czechoslovakia, however, the revolutionary trade-union federation did not work methodically, and this was an error.

Factory councils are both a result and a weapon of revolution. They grow in strength when the revolution advances and grow weaker when it declines. This is evident in the rise and decline of the factory committees in Britain, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany. They are now entering a period of more intensive activity, and energetic work is needed to create factory councils. Many comrades consider that the trade unions can be replaced by factory committees.<sup>6</sup> In our view the factory councils should form the foundation of the unions. That is the way things developed in the Russian Revolution.

The fundamental principle of the trade-union movement consists of organising on a class rather than a national basis. We are decidedly against any division of unions on the basis of nationality, which is even worse than division on the basis of politics. In this regard we are encountering significant difficulties.

In Czechoslovakia there are two organisations of textile workers, one German and the other Czech. The Czech federation of agricultural workers has long been in conflict with the parallel Slovak federation. Both of them are revolutionary. And now the Slovakian Communists are organising a new autonomous

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5 The article by Ange Rivelli, 'Avec Fimmen', was published in *Bulletin d'Information de la Fédération Internationale des Ouvriers du Transport* no. 11/12, 15 June 1923.

6 In most European workplaces at the time, trade unions did not embrace the entire work force, which led many workers and Communists to favour factory councils, which included all workers in the factory.

For the Comintern's resolution on the role of factory councils adopted at its Second Congress, see 'Theses on the Trade Union Movement, Factory Committees, and the Communist International'. In Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, pp. 625–34.

federation! We do not make any concessions to national prejudice, of course, but that is not the same thing as recognising the legitimate claims of workers who want to have their own organisation in the framework of a large common organisation.

Up to the end of the war, there was no national question in France. Now France has two million German inhabitants, in Alsace-Lorraine and the Saar,<sup>7</sup> who are organised according to the principles of German trade unions. The Alsace-Lorraine workers are a link between the German and the French proletariat. Clearly, the institutions of the French bourgeois state will press down on them ten times harder, and the French bourgeoisie will attempt to find support in the national spirit of French workers. The Communist Party and the CGTU must be able to give effective support to the proletariat in the eastern regions of France and must be closely attentive to their needs.

Our party and trade unions have done far too little for the trade-union movement in the colonies. The British trade unions and the Labour Party have skilfully crept into India in order to play a leadership role there. But our British Communist Party has done nothing along these lines. It is clear that we will not be victorious unless we induce the British workers to take action and display initiative.

As to the matter of relations among RILU supporters that are organised in different trade unions, this is posed in almost every country. In some countries, such as France, a split took place right down the line, and the question of relations between revolutionary trade unions and minorities is not posed. Almost all the forces that support the revolutionary trade unions left the reformist CGT. But France has always been the exception in this regard. Recently, by the way, an oppositional current has appeared within the reformist CGT.

In Spain there are two parallel confederations, one reformist and one revolutionary.<sup>8</sup> The first has expelled individual revolutionary groups, which raised an urgent practical question: Should those expelled from the General Union join the National Confederation? Our Spanish comrades of the RILU came out correctly for this solution, while our comrades of the Spanish Communist Party

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7 Alsace and Lorraine – predominantly German-speaking territories that had been ceded by France to Germany following the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 – were allocated to France by the Versailles Treaty of 1919. The treaty also stipulated that the coal-rich Saar Basin, formerly German-held, was to be administered by the League of Nations for fifteen years, after which a plebiscite would be held there on whether it would belong to France or Germany. During that time, coal from the region was to go to France.

8 A reference to the General Union of Labour (UGT), closely tied to the Spanish SP, and the anarcho-sindicalist National Confederation of Labour (CNT).

favoured forming new autonomous groups. We must fight for the expelled to be readmitted. But given that we have two parallel trade-union confederations, the isolated existence of autonomous trade unions is absolutely not going to work.

In Czechoslovakia the opposition has broad influence in the reformist trade-union federation, and it would be foolish to found special trade unions or even locals in the existing federation. But the question is then urgently posed of how to coordinate the activity of all revolutionaries, independently of the organisation they belong to. There is a tendency to pull all the oppositional forces out of the reformist trade unions and integrate them as quickly as possible in a united organisation. But this approach can bring us only bad results, and we must oppose it actively. In Germany we have strong RILU cadres and Comintern supporters in the free trade union [ADGB]. In this case, maintaining the expelled trade unions with a view to their reintegration is much more important than organisational unification with the [syndicalist] Federation of Manual and Intellectual Workers. In the United States the struggle continues between the Trade Union Educational League and the small independent unions. The TUEL's merit is to have overcome the unfortunate habit of forming parallel trade unions. It has achieved great things. Its best form of action is to build action committees and coordinating bodies to organise joint actions of different groups.<sup>9</sup>

It is important that we unify the oppositional movement everywhere, stop the splitting process, and through unifying the revolutionary movement come to the goal of unity of the trade-union movement as a whole. It must be emphasised what an error it was for some comrades to have wished to dissolve the RILU. There is no doubt about the RILU's present gains. Nonetheless, we still see signs that various sections of the Comintern have not established correct relations with the RILU. That was evident above all in the conduct of the British Communist Party on the trade-union question. The party devoted too little attention to this question and did not assist the work of the British RILU bureau.<sup>10</sup> In Norway we have been grappling for three years with the question of affiliation to the RILU, without success. We believed for a rather long time that our Norwegian comrades were in substantial agreement with us and postponed

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9 The Trade Union Education League, formed in November 1920 by William Z. Foster, became associated with the CP after Foster joined the party. The TUEL was strongly opposed to 'dual unionism' and to independent unions being outside of the AFL.

10 The RILU's British Bureau based in London was one of four RILU centres outside of Moscow. The others were the Central European Bureau based in Berlin, the Latin Bureau based in Paris, and the Balkans Bureau based in Bulgaria.

their affiliation only out of tactical considerations. But it appears this is not so. They have left Amsterdam, but they declined to send a delegate to the coming conference of the RILU general council – not even as a guest to gather information. That tells us that the Norwegian Labour Party is moving backwards. We express our deep concern regarding unity. In the Netherlands, in a referendum on RILU membership, 7,300 votes were in favour and 6,400 against. We advised the Dutch secretariat not to affiliate, in order to avoid a split.<sup>11</sup> But would the unity of the Norwegian trade unions really be endangered if they had a delegate right now in Moscow? We must say frankly that the Norwegian Labour Party is making a major error in not working systematically for the RILU.

All in all, the RILU has become a significant force. But it must be stressed that the successes achieved by the Communist parties in the trade-union movement fall short of reflecting the relationship of forces in the workers' movement. In general we can say that the Communist parties in the trade-union movement have not developed sufficient activity in the union movement. Every Communist must be aware that our most important and immediate task is to win over the trade unions.

The prospects for this are outstanding. The breakdown of the reformist International means that the entire international workers' movement is heading toward the Comintern and the RILU. It will not take more than a few years before the reformists are driven from their last strongholds. So what we must do is work, work, and yet again work! (*Applause*)

**Böttcher** (chair): A congress of the White Russian [Belorussian] agricultural and forest worker federations, representing more than 80,000 agricultural workers, has sent a telegram of greetings. In addition, telegrams have arrived from a meeting of 2,000 miners in the Red Don Basin and from a conference of the International Workers' Aid in Berlin.

**Jakob Walcher** (second reporter): Although most sections of the Communist International acknowledge the importance of work in the trade unions, there is often unfortunately still a deep chasm between acknowledgement and application of these principles. In Czechoslovakia, a large Communist Party exists but

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11 At its 1–2 April 1923 meeting, the syndicalist National Labour Secretariat of the Netherlands voted to hold a membership referendum on the question of the federation's affiliation to the RILU. Following the vote in favour of affiliation, the factions supporting and opposing affiliation agreed to a compromise not to affiliate with either the RILU or the Amsterdam International before 1925, while attempting to unite the two trade-union Internationals.

has almost no fractions in the trade unions, and it seems to me that the differences there on trade-union issues would be inconceivable if we had fractions in the unions, which would create a bond of unity.

In Britain the situation is even more grave. Comrades there report that we have had strong influence on various occasions and enjoyed the support of a majority in entire districts, but that this wave of support fell as quickly as it had arisen. Comrades say that the party is too weak to consolidate such support. In the United States, Foster's TUEL holds ideological influence over about two million workers. As for the formation of fractions, however, despite the gains made recently, the progress is far from adequate. In France we still face the failing that the party has too little influence among union members. As for the situation in the Scandinavian countries, Comrade Kuusinen reported on this briefly yesterday. We receive many reports about the party's work but little regarding activity in the unions. It is absolutely necessary that the Communist parties influence workers in the unions more from the base. We are already prompted to do this by the shift that has begun in the Amsterdam International. We must build Communist fractions even where we already hold the leadership. In such conditions a fraction will be a pillar of support for the leadership. Unfortunately, that rarely happens. Our fractions are still forced to act as supervisory bodies for these leaderships. The lack of fraction work is excused by referring to the insufficiency of our forces. In my opinion, it would be more correct to say that we will increase our forces through this work. We must struggle to win the trade unions not only in order to sweep the reformists from the field but also in order to win the needed organisational and technical capacities.

Only in this struggle for the trade unions will our comrades gain the necessary capacities. The truth of that statement is shown by a look at the Russian party. The reason why this party towers so high above all the others is simply that the entire party hardened every one of its members and developed them into revolutionaries with all the needed virtues.

In Germany efforts are under way to organise the party as much as possible along Russian lines. Factory cells are being organised to work at politicising the factory. These fractions are linked to local federations. We have found it necessary to extend these local associations to the regional level and beyond. The fractions are united in a so-called local alliance, which meets fortnightly and takes positions on general questions. Beyond that, they are united regionally and nationally.

Each party leadership must assign a comrade with special responsibility for Communist work in the unions. Wherever means are available, this comrade can be put on staff. In Germany it has turned out that the decision of the last

Profintern congress to collect dues from members of opposition groupings in the unions has turned out to be inexpedient, since the reformists seized on this to move against our comrades. Therefore, we collect a special contribution from party members for work in the unions that is collected by the Communist trade-union fraction. That has the great advantage that our comrades in the trade unions are accurately recorded in the party organisation.

The fraction must not exist only on paper; it must help the party lead in the trade-union struggle. To make that possible, we must supply comrades with material, which can happen only through circulars or, even better, through personal letters to appropriate comrades, through leaflets, and finally through publications of the oppositional trade unionists, which already exist in some countries. The Communist press must also be encouraged to devote the necessary space to trade-union questions. In addition, our comrades must be convened to hold discussions at regular intervals. The German party has also assigned a comrade to give presentations across the whole country for trade-union functionaries. In the party school, a special part of the curriculum is devoted to the trade unions.

We must ensure that the relationship between the party and the unions is clarified, in order to spare us difficulties of every kind. Communist fractions are governed by party discipline, but this is not true of the trade unions as such. Prolonged work by Communist cells in the trade unions can enable the party to reach a level where the trade union as a whole follows the party's advice.

All sections of the Comintern must make it their members' duty to join trade unions. We must attempt to penetrate all the unions' subordinate divisions, especially those for women and youth.

In order to portray the German party's work in the trade unions, I will cite only two federations. The construction workers' union has about 551,000 members in 749 local payment offices. We have 525 Communist fractions in this federation. Communists hold a majority in 65 local groups with 67,200 members; our strength is equal to the Amsterdammers in 250 local groups with 331,000 members. We have organisational influence over about 260,000 members.

The metalworkers' federation has 1.6 million members in 750 local offices, among which many are extremely small and are organised only as local offices because they are so far from the major centres of industry. At present we have about 500 fractions. There is a Communist majority in 81 administrative divisions, including some quite large ones such as Stuttgart, Halle, Merseburg, Jena, Suhl, Essen, Solingen, and Remscheid, which together have 260,000 members. In 26 local offices with about 500,000 members we are as strong as the Amsterdammers. We can say that about 720,000 members of the metalworkers'

federation are influenced by us organisationally. Without these numbers, the conference in Friedrichshafen would not have ended as favourably as it did. It would have been very difficult for the reformists to reject the application of the Russian metalworkers' federation to join the International while admitting at the same time an arch-reactionary American federation. So they had to bring themselves to accept the Russian metalworkers' union.<sup>12</sup>

The secretary, Ilg, posed a condition, namely that our Russian comrades should bring about a reunification in every country where there was a split within the trade unions. That has been the goal of the Red International of Labour Unions for a long time already, but its attempts have always been rejected. That was the case in France, in particular.

All in all, we have 2,688 Communist trade-union fractions in Germany at present. There is a Communist majority in 494 local offices; in 731 local offices we are about as strong as the Amsterdamers, and in another 4,348 we have only a quite small minority. Based on our fractions, we have organisational influence over about 2,433,000 members. Organisationally speaking, we are well on the road to winning the trade unions. But there is an enormous amount of work that remains to be done. Unfortunately, the reformists are still quite strong in Germany, and their strength is located especially in the unions. Still, there is no reason for pessimism.

We should not imagine that winning the trade unions will take place by first gaining a majority in the regions, then in the provinces, and finally across the entire country. Rather, it will happen more by establishing points of strength everywhere in the unions through our fractions, which win the confidence of the masses, so that when the masses come into motion they will follow the leadership of our fractions rather than that of the reformists. That was the case in the recent Ruhr struggle. In Dortmund, previously one of the last strongpoints of the reformists, they were sharply thrust aside in this strike. That is typical of the transformation that is now taking place in broad layers of the proletariat.

If we succeed in having our sections devote greater attention to the trade unions, we will win the broad masses, decisively defeat the reformists, and lead the proletariat toward victory. (*Loud applause*)

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12 On 18 May 1923 a conference was held in Friedrichshafen, Germany, between the Amsterdam Bureau's International Federation of Metalworkers and the All-Russian Federation of Metalworkers. The meeting resulted in mutual-assistance pledges and the provisional admission of the Russian unions to the federation.

**Böttcher:** A Trade-Union Commission has been established consisting of Comrades Johnson (United States),<sup>13</sup> Rosmer (France), Gramsci (Italy), Zápotocký (Czechoslovakia), Gallacher (Britain), Tranmael (Norway), and Schüller (youth organisation).

*(Adjournment: 4:00 p.m.)*

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<sup>13</sup> Johnson (Charles Scott) was actually from Canada.

## Trade Unions; Report on Fascism

*Conclusion of trade-union discussion. Summary on trade-union question. Report on the struggle against fascism.*

*Speakers: Urbani, Wieser, Zápotocký, Gallacher, Katayama, Johnson, Meshcheriakov, Lozovsky, Zetkin.*

*(Böttcher opened the session at 11:45 a.m.)*

**Urbani** [Terracini] (Italy): Clearly, the transport workers' congress in Berlin is opening a new period of action for Communists. Nonetheless, I must note that the agreement arrived at there also offers considerable possibilities for the opportunists.

The Scandinavians have left Amsterdam but have not yet come to Moscow. The opportunists can do something even worse. They can say, 'We have established contact with Moscow, and that has achieved the unity of the international trade-union movement. So the workers who want action do not need to leave Amsterdam. They can stay here, work for future unity, and win over Amsterdam from within.' In order to prevent some opportunists from utilising such arguments, the Enlarged Executive Committee must give a simple slogan to all Communists active in the unions: 'To Moscow!'

Lozovsky showed that the work in factories and workplaces forms part of the preparatory period of revolution. Our experience in Italy demonstrates that it also belongs to periods of reaction. The trade-union organisations have been destroyed in Italy, but even so, the fascists are defeated in the factories again and again. In the April elections of factory committees, they were placed in a minority again and again, even in cities in which the proletariat is encompassed in their corporations.<sup>1</sup>

Given this reality, the Communist Party of Italy has been able to develop a temporary programme of work for this period of trade-union reorganisation, proposing that the proletariat join in factory and workplace committees whose efforts would be coordinated by a national plan. The goal was to attempt in this framework to win the reformist masses and even the leadership of the reformist CGL.

The Italian delegation accepts fully the proposals of Comrade Lozovsky.

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to fascist unions, which were called 'national corporations' and included both workers and bosses.

**Fritz Wieser** (Switzerland): The Swiss delegation fully agrees with the comments of Comrades Lozovsky and Walcher on the character of trade-union work. In our efforts to build fractions, carried out energetically for two years, we have reached the point where fractions exist in all the most important localities and trade unions. We have not yet reached the point of linking the fractions together nationally, because of difficulties arising from the weakness of our Swiss organisational apparatus.

Regarding the paragraph in the Lozovsky-Walcher trade-union resolution about a major shift in the reformist trade-union movement, we consider this to be exaggerated.<sup>2</sup> The resolution could awaken illusions among the workers as to the real situation. This is particularly true in Switzerland, because Ilg, the chair of the metalworkers' federation, is one of the worst splitters. He is the one who signed the agreement against efforts at splitting, together with representatives of the Russian metalworkers.

Our influence is quite strong in the metalworkers' union, as elsewhere in Swiss unions. We succeeded in establishing an investigations committee to avoid a split, and it took decisions under our pressure against a split. But it was precisely the metalworkers, under Ilg's leadership, that refused to carry out these decisions. We ask, therefore, that this passage in the trade-union resolution be more carefully formulated.

Currently the problem of unemployment in Switzerland is quite serious. As a result, the number of trade-union members has fallen considerably. Our conduct regarding unemployment enabled us to achieve major successes. At the trade-union congress in May 1922 we were still a small minority, but the union conference on unemployment held in February 1923 adopted all our motions with a large majority.<sup>3</sup> We ask that the resolution's passage on unemployment be more precisely formulated.

**Zápotocký** (Czechoslovakia): The situation in the trade-union movement in Czechoslovakia is no less complicated than it is in the political arena. There has never been a unified trade-union movement. There are independent Amsterdam trade unions, divided along national lines, and also the nationalist and social-Christian federations. The struggle of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to revolutionise the unions in the Amsterdam confederation has proceeded at different tempos in the Czech and German movement. That was

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2 See p. 669 for point 1 of the trade-union resolution.

3 A congress of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions was held in Bern on 27–28 May 1922. The Swiss trade-union conference on unemployment took place on 26 February 1923.

the main reason why two separate red textile worker sections emerged from the two Amsterdam federations. That should have been prevented by previous efforts to fuse the Czech and German Amsterdam organisations. Only then, that is, in the unified Amsterdam trade-union organisation, should the struggle for affiliation to the RILU have been undertaken.

The second difficulty was that federations and groups expelled from the Amsterdam confederation had different views regarding the organisational form of the unified federation in which they were to unite. This was not a matter of national currents. That is clear from the fact that these disagreements also existed between the leaders of some Czech red unions and the leadership of the unified federation. The executive body of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia did not approve of the formation of two red textile worker unions, but it preferred to play a mediating role. It was decided to leave final resolution of this issue to the expanded conference of the RILU.

Similarly, the creation of a Slovakian union of agricultural workers cannot be explained by national considerations. When we won over the agricultural workers' union in Slovakia, the leadership made tactical errors resulting in the emergence of a current that was not for autonomy but for affiliation to the unified federation. That would have meant a split in the existing agricultural workers' union. The executive body of the Czechoslovak Communist Party therefore rejected the demand of the Slovakian comrades and told them to negotiate with the agricultural workers' union. The secretary of this union in Slovakia, Mihalus, then turned to the Central European Bureau of the RILU in Berlin, and I understand that it has given him permission to establish an autonomous union.

We dissolved the autonomous agricultural workers' union of Slovakia and affiliated the Slovakian groups to the international union. In the meantime, the agricultural workers' union had decided at its congress to become a section of the unified confederation. Representatives of the dissolved union were summoned to Moscow. This reinforced the centrifugal efforts of some, and it later became clear that a few of the disruptors had been in the service of hostile forces.

Comrade Lozovsky said that the united front was not sufficiently carried out. But at the last world congress, by contrast, efforts for the united front in Czechoslovakia were praised as exemplary.<sup>4</sup> The executive body of the Czech-

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4 In the report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International to the Fourth Congress, Zinoviev stated, 'The Czechoslovak Party applied the united-front tactic in what we can call exemplary fashion'. In Riddell (ed.) 2012, *4WC*, p. 108.

slovak Communist Party has not missed any opportunity to utilise the united-front slogan, and the RILU unions have fully supported the party's initiative in all these instances. It is true that fraction work is not yet fully developed among us and is often replaced by a system of stewards.

**Willie Gallacher** (Great Britain): Based on Comrade Lozovsky's speech, it is plain to see that we must expect major upheavals in the international trade-union movement in the near future.

The day of the Amsterdam International is over. It was based on a satisfied working class and was concerned more with what it should not do than with what it should do. In Britain, compromise forms part of trade-union tradition and the leaders take pains to suppress every allusion to class struggle. But even there, a desire for international action gradually arose among the masses. What the working class needed was specific demands that it could take up in order to draw its attention to the international working-class movement.

Lozovsky's portrayal of the situation in Britain was incorrect. The party did not demand that it be entrusted with all the work in the trade unions. It asked only to control the work being done in the unions through the RILU bureau or similar bodies. The RILU bureau and the party reached an agreement in this matter. A Communist cell is needed in every union local to recruit members to the party. As part of the larger union organisation, however, it would act on the initiatives of the bureau and seek to bring the worker masses to the Profintern. The idea that the party should limit itself solely to political work was absurd.

It is also not true that the change in name of the party newspaper from *The Communist* to *Workers' Weekly* was an attempt to counter the work of the bureau. This change arose from a change in the party. There was a desire for it to become a mass party and for the paper to be a paper of the masses.

**Katayama** (Japan): I missed in Comrade Lozovsky's speech any mention of the Far East, even though work among the workers and peasants of this region is extremely important. The Chinese workers are among the most oppressed in the world, because they suffer from the pressure not merely of their own capitalists but also of those from abroad. Nonetheless, the Chinese workers, although backward and poorly organised, are taking up the struggle against their oppressors. It's particularly necessary to organise the Chinese transport workers. In Japan the workers' organisation is in a pitiable condition. The capitalist offensive destroyed the unions. Unemployment is widespread, and in addition the fascists help to keep the

workers' movement down. Nonetheless the influence of trade unions is growing, even among the peasants.

**Johnson [Scott] (Canada):** There are signs of a general awakening of the American workers' movement. For example, note the broad support won by the TUEL and its campaign for unity. The yellow Socialist Party was forced to conclude an agreement with Samuel Gompers and the other reactionaries. This alliance of Hillquit, Berger, and Gompers aimed to combat all radical tendencies, including the attempts to achieve unity. In addition, they made not the slightest attempt to reconstruct their own rundown unions. These gentlemen fear a mass movement above all else. In addition, there is no doubt that the governments of the United States and Canada are assisting this group in their struggle against radical currents. This was shown in Nova Scotia, where armed police were brought in to provoke the miners into an open clash.<sup>5</sup>

The Comintern and the Profintern must be cautious in what they publish regarding relations between Communists and trade unions and also between the independent unions and the federations. Although the TUEL membership stands at more than two million, Communists are not strong enough to take up the struggle against the Gompers group. It is also necessary to organise industrial unions. I favour a levy to support trade-union activity and the organisation of party cells in the unions.

**Nikolai L. Meshcheriakov (Russia):** The Amsterdam trade-union International has made contact with the International of cooperatives,<sup>6</sup> which is the most backward and most right-wing force in the workers' movement as a whole. Sensing their coming defeat, the reformist leaders of the trade-union movement are now seeking support from the right-wing current in the cooperative movement.

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5 A reference to the strikes and massive labour battles of Cape Breton coal miners and other unionists during the early 1920s over union recognition and resistance to wage cuts. During these conflicts, the armed forces and provincial police were brought in to suppress the workers.

6 A reference to the International Cooperative Alliance, with 42,500 affiliated cooperative societies in thirty-six countries.

### Summary of Discussion on Trade-Union Question

**Lozovsky:** Is there really a shift within the Amsterdam organisation? Comrades Wieser and Meshcheriakov asked us not to exaggerate this phenomenon. Of course we must not do that. Wieser referred to Ilg, who signed the unity resolution and then moved to expel revolutionary metalworkers in Switzerland. That is certainly true. However, we are speaking about a shift among the masses, who sense the need for new policies. What is going on in the heads of the leaders is quite another question. The new tendencies can have a decisive effect if the Amsterdam Left reaches an accord with the revolutionary forces in the international workers' movement.

Urbani [Terracini] was right to point out that the opportunists can make use of the agreements arrived at by the transport workers' conference. These agreements can also contribute to a certain Communist passivity. There is even a tendency in our movement to consider the problems of the trade-union movement and the RILU as something other than a challenge for Communists. And there is also a tendency to view standing aside from both Moscow and Amsterdam as a way to promote the cause of trade-union unity, as for example in Norway.

We have to struggle against these errors, intensify our work, and build on the results of the transport workers' conference. If we do not make use of these results, our opponents certainly will do so.

There are thoroughly reformist leaders who consider this understanding with us as necessary to save their position and their organisations. So there are two types of people uniting with us: those who sincerely believe in the effectiveness of class organisation and those who want to continue to deceive the workers by saying that we are with the revolutionaries, so you have no need to seek a closer link with them. In order to head off such manoeuvres, we must heighten our activity after every such international conference like that of the transport workers.

Let me take up Urbani's comments on factory councils. In France there was an effort to organise the miners' factory committees in three different types of organisations, consisting of either: (1) only members of the CGTU; (2) miners belonging to all unions; (3) all miners whether or not they are in unions. In our opinion all workers should be grouped around their factory committees. It is our task to get our candidates elected to these committees, and where that does not happen, it just proves we are working badly.

Now let me take up the national question. Dragging the national question into the trade unions the way it has happened in Czechoslovakia can have a bad effect. Zápotocký says that the RILU's Berlin bureau promoted formation

of an autonomous union in Czechoslovakia. If our Central European bureau did that, we will disavow this action and give them formal instructions regarding such situations in the future. But the Czechoslovak Communist Party, for its part, has not done anything to make up for these errors.

In Britain members of our party who constitute the RILU bureau have quite incorrect conceptions regarding the party and the unions. The party, they say, does the political work, and the unions take care of the economic work. On the contrary, the party work in the British unions must be carried forward tirelessly, and the party too will be strengthened by it. It would be foolish to postpone taking up this urgent work until the party has become stronger.

In the United States we have to contend with the reactionary traditions of Gompers and the revolutionary traditions of the IWW. The struggle against dual-unionism is very good in itself, but it should not be taken too far. When we are dealing with a dual union we must succeed in working within it as well.

Katayama asked why the trade-union report did not take up the movement in the Eastern countries. This was because we did not want to give a comprehensive report but rather merely take up the pressing problems. We want to add, of course, that there is also a colonial problem in the union movement. What are the French, Dutch, and British parties doing to support trade-union work in the colonies? Very little. The British Labour Party, however, is making efforts to extend its influence to India, and that is a form of imperialist influence in the colonies. We must do a great deal more for the colonial movement. That is a vital question for the revolution.

All in all, the Communist Party's activity in the trade unions is inadequate. Our parties have not utilised a tenth of the opportunities afforded them by events. The masses are regaining their will to action. We must do more and display greater energy. Then we will be able to overcome anarchism, reformism, and confusionism. The persistence of individualism among the workers, the confusion, the attitude of '*Je m'en fiche*' [I don't give a damn] demonstrate the inadequacy of Communist Party work in the union field.

In France there are still small railway unions with 30 members. Not long ago, at a congress of the eastern railway network, there was mention of 12 unions with 366 members in all. This illustrates that the challenge of organising unions by branch of industry, as decided by the RILU congress in accord with the CGTU, has not been met in France.

There have been doubts about the RILU in the past, but it has grown into a major force. We must now increase our activity, penetrate the entire workers' movement, and strengthen our organisation. (*Applause*)

## The Struggle against Fascism

**Clara Zetkin** (reporter): (*She is ill and has to be carried into the hall, where she speaks while seated. When she appears, she is met by enthusiastic applause.*)

Fascism confronts the proletariat as an exceptionally dangerous and frightful enemy. Fascism is the strongest, most concentrated, and classic expression at this time of the world bourgeoisie's general offensive. It is urgently necessary that it be brought down. This is true not only with respect to the historic existence of the proletariat as a class, which will free humankind by surmounting capitalism. It is also a question of survival for every ordinary worker, a question of bread, working conditions, and quality of life for millions and millions of the exploited.

That is why the struggle against fascism must be taken up by the entire proletariat. It is evident that we will overcome this wily enemy all the sooner to the degree that we grasp its essential character and how that character is expressed. There has been great confusion regarding fascism, not only among the broad masses of proletarians but also within their revolutionary vanguard, among Communists. At first, the prevailing view was that fascism was nothing more than violent bourgeois terror, and its character and effects were thought to be similar to those of the Horthy regime in Hungary.<sup>7</sup> Yet even though fascism and the Horthy regime employ the same bloody and terrorist methods, which bear down on the proletariat in the same way, the historical essence of the two phenomena is entirely different.

The terror in Hungary began after the defeat of an initially victorious revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. For a moment the bourgeoisie trembled before the proletariat's might. The Horthy terror emerged as revenge against the revolution. The agent of this revenge was a small caste of feudal officers.

Fascism is quite different from that. It is not at all the revenge of the bourgeoisie against the militant uprising of the proletariat. In historical terms, viewed objectively, fascism arrives much more as *punishment because the proletariat has not carried forward the revolution that began in Russia*. And the base of fascism lies not in a small caste but in broad social layers, broad masses, reaching even into the proletariat. We must understand these essential dif-

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7 Miklós Horthy was leader of the counterrevolutionary regime in Hungary following the overthrow of the Hungarian soviet government that had existed from March to August 1919. In the ensuing counterrevolutionary terror, an estimated 5,000 were executed, 75,000 jailed, and 100,000 forced to flee the country.

ferences in order to deal successfully with fascism. It cannot be defeated by military means alone – if I may use that term – we must also wrestle it to the ground politically and ideologically.

*[The Social-Democratic View of Fascism]*<sup>8</sup>

The view that fascism is merely a form of bourgeois terror, although advanced by some radical forces in our movement, is more characteristic of the outlook of many reformist Social Democrats. For them fascism is nothing but terror and violence – moreover a bourgeois reflex against the violence unleashed or threatened against bourgeois society by the proletariat. For the reformist gentlemen, the Russian Revolution plays the exact same role as biting into the apple of paradise plays for believers in the Bible. They view it as the origin of all expressions of terrorism in the present period. As if there had never been wars of imperialist piracy; as if there were no bourgeois class dictatorship! Thus fascism, for the reformists, is the consequence of the Russian Revolution – the proletariat's original sin in the Garden of Eden.

It was no less than Otto Bauer who put forward the viewpoint in Hamburg that the Russian Communists and their co-thinkers carry special responsibility for present-day worldwide reaction by the bourgeoisie and for fascism; it is they who split parties and trade unions. In making this bold assertion, Otto Bauer forgot that the notoriously harmless Independents [USPD] split from the Social Democrats even before the Russian Revolution and its morally ruinous example. Bauer explains that world reaction, which reaches its highest point in fascism, is also caused in part by the fact that the Russian Revolution destroyed the Menshevik paradise in Georgia and Armenia.<sup>9</sup> He finds a third cause of world reaction in 'Bolshevik terror' in general. In his remarks, however, he felt compelled to admit the following:

We in Central Europe are today obliged to confront the violent fascist organisations with the proletariat's defence guards. For we have no illusions that we can overcome direct violence through an appeal to democracy.

<sup>8</sup> Subheadings in this report have been supplied by the editor.

<sup>9</sup> For the Georgian Menshevik regime and its ouster by pro-Soviet forces, see p. 277, n. 17.

A portion of Armenia, formerly divided between the Ottoman and Russian empires, became independent after the First World War, under the rule of the Dashnaks, a nationalist party. In September 1920 Turkish forces attacked the country; in November, as Armenian military resistance collapsed, Soviet troops entered the country in support of a rebellion by pro-Soviet forces, leading to the creation of the Armenian soviet republic.

You would think that he would draw from this observation the conclusion that force must be met by force. However, reformist logic goes its own way, unfathomable, like the ways of heavenly providence. Otto Bauer's concoction continues as follows:

I am not talking about methods that often do not lead to success, such as insurrection or even general strike. What is needed is coordination of parliamentary action with extra-parliamentary mass action.

Here Otto Bauer does not reveal to us the secret in his chaste political bosom as to what form of political action he favours in parliament and, even more, outside parliament. There are actions and then there are actions. There are parliamentary and mass actions that, from our point of view, consist of bourgeois rubbish, pardon my words. On the other hand, an action either inside or outside parliament can have a revolutionary character. Otto Bauer remains silent regarding the nature of the reformist actions. And the end product of his remarks on the struggle against world reaction is quite exceptional. It is unveiled as an international information bureau that will give precise reports on world reaction. Bauer explains:

The foundation of this International will possibly be met with scepticism. If we did not understand how to establish a news bureau that provides us with necessary information on reaction, this scepticism would be justified.<sup>10</sup>

What lies behind this entire conception? It is the reformists' faith in the unshakable strength of the capitalist order and bourgeois class rule, along with distrust and cowardice toward the proletariat as a conscious and irresistible force of world revolution. The reformists view fascism as an expression of the unshakable and all-conquering power and strength of bourgeois class rule. The proletariat is not up to the task of taking up the struggle against it – that would be foolhardy and doomed to failure. So there is nothing left for the proletariat but to step aside quietly and modestly, and not provoke the tigers and lions of bourgeois class rule through a struggle for its liberation and its own rule. In short, the proletariat is to renounce all that for the present and future, and patiently wait to see whether a tiny bit can be gained through the route of democracy and reform.

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10 Otto Bauer's speech to the Hamburg Congress can be found in *Labour and Socialist International 1923*, pp. 21–30.

[*The Social Roots of Fascism*]

I have the opposite point of view, and so too, I'm sure, do all Communists. Specifically, we view fascism as an expression of the decay and disintegration of the capitalist economy and as a symptom of the bourgeois state's dissolution. We can combat fascism only if we grasp that it rouses and sweeps along broad social masses who have lost the earlier security of their existence and with it, often, their belief in social order. Fascism is rooted, indeed, in the dissolution of the capitalist economy and the bourgeois state. There were already symptoms of the proletarianisation of bourgeois layers in prewar capitalism. The war shattered the capitalist economy down to its foundations. This is evident not only in the appalling impoverishment of the proletariat, but also in the proletarianisation of very broad petty-bourgeois and middle-bourgeois masses, the calamitous conditions among small peasants, and the bleak distress of the 'intelligentsia'. The plight of the 'intellectuals' is all the more severe given that prewar capitalism took measures to produce them in excess of demand. The capitalists wanted to extend the mass supply of labour power to the field of intellectual labour and thus unleash unbridled competition that would depress wages – excuse me, salaries. It was from these circles that imperialism recruited many of its ideological champions for the World War. At present all these layers are experiencing the collapse of the hopes they had placed in the war. Their conditions have become significantly worse. What weighs on them above all is the lack of security for their basic existence, which they still had before the war.

I base these conclusions not on conditions in Germany, where the bourgeois intellectuals face conditions of extreme impoverishment that are often more severe than the poverty of workers. No, go to Italy – I will speak of that shortly – the ruin of the economy there was decisive in causing social masses to join with fascism. Consider another country that, in contrast to other European states, emerged from the World War without severe convulsions: Britain. Just as much is said there today in the press and public life about the distress of the 'new poor', as about the gigantic profits and luxury of the few 'new rich'. In the United States the farmers' movement responds to the growing plight of a large social layer. The conditions of the middle layers have worsened markedly in every country. In some countries this worsening leads to a point where these social layers are crushed or annihilated.

As a result there are countless thousands seeking new possibilities for survival, food security, and social standing. Their number is swelled by lower and mid-level government employees, the public servants. They are joined, even in the victor states, by former officers, noncoms, and the like, who now have neither employment nor profession. Social forces of this type offer fascism a

contingent of distinguished figures who lend to fascism in these countries a pronounced monarchist hue. But we cannot fully grasp the nature of fascism by viewing its evolution solely as a result of such economic pressures alone, which have been considerably enhanced by the financial crisis of the governments and their vanishing authority.

*[Failure of Proletarian Leadership]*

Fascism has another source. It is the blockage, the halting pace of world revolution resulting from betrayal by the reformist leaders of the workers' movement. Among a large part of the middle layers – the civil servants, bourgeois intellectuals, and the small and middle bourgeois – who were proletarianised or threatened by that fate, the psychology of war was replaced by a degree of sympathy for reformist socialism. They hoped that, thanks to 'democracy', reformist socialism could bring about global change. These expectations were painfully shattered. The reform socialists carried out a gentle coalition policy, whose costs were borne not only by proletarians and salaried workers but by civil servants, intellectuals, and lower and mid-level petty bourgeois of every type.

These layers lacked in general any theoretical, historical, or political education. Their sympathy for reform socialism was not deeply rooted. So as things turned out, they lost their belief not only in the reformist leaders but also in socialism itself. 'The socialists promised an easing of our burdens and suffering, plus many beautiful things, and a reshaping of society on the foundations of justice and democracy,' they said. 'But the top dogs and the rich carry on and rule with even more severity than before.' These bourgeois who were disappointed in socialism were joined by proletarian forces. All the disillusioned – whether bourgeois or proletarian in origin – nevertheless abandon a precious intellectual force that would enable them to look forward from the gloomy present to a bright and hopeful future. That force is trust in the proletariat as the class that will remake society. The betrayal by the reformist leaders does not weigh so heavily in the attitude of these disillusioned forces as another fact: namely, that the proletarian masses tolerate this betrayal, that they continue to accept the capitalist yoke without rebellion or resistance, indeed that they come to terms with a suffering even more bitter than before.

In addition, in order to be fair, I must add that the Communist parties as well, setting aside Russia, are not without responsibility for the fact that even within the proletariat there are disillusioned people who throw themselves into the arms of fascism. Quite frequently these parties' actions have not been sufficiently vigorous, their initiatives lacking in scope, and their penetration of the masses inadequate. I set aside errors of policy that led to defeats. There is no

doubt that many of the most active, energetic, and revolutionary-minded proletarians have not found their way to us or have turned around on this path because they found us not energetic and aggressive enough. We have not succeeded in making them sufficiently aware of why we too, on some occasions, must hold back – even if unwillingly and with good cause.

*[Fascism's Mass Character]*

Masses in their thousands streamed to fascism. It became an asylum for all the politically homeless, the socially uprooted, the destitute and disillusioned. And what they no longer hoped for from the revolutionary proletarian class and from socialism, they now hoped would be achieved by the most able, strong, determined, and bold elements of every social class. All these forces must come together in a community. And this community, for the fascists, is the nation. They wrongly imagine that the sincere will to create a new and better social reality is strong enough to overcome all class antagonisms. The instrument to achieve fascist ideals is, for them, the state. A strong and authoritarian state that will be their very own creation and their obedient tool. This state will tower high above all differences of party and class and will remake society in accord with their ideology and programme.

It is evident that in terms of the social composition of its troops, fascism encompasses forces that can be extremely uncomfortable and even dangerous for bourgeois society. I'll go further and assert that these elements, if they come to understand their own best interests, *must* be dangerous for bourgeois society. Precisely! If this situation arises, then these forces must do what they can to ensure that bourgeois society is smashed as soon as possible and communism is achieved. But events up to now have nonetheless demonstrated that the revolutionary forces within fascism are outstripped and restrained by the reactionary forces.

What we see here is analogous to events in other revolutions. The petty-bourgeois and intermediate social forces at first vacillate indecisively between the powerful historical camps of the proletariat and bourgeoisie. They are induced to sympathise with the proletariat by their life's suffering and, in part, by their soul's noble longings and high ideals, so long as it is not only revolutionary in its conduct but also seems to have prospects for victory. Under the pressure of the masses and their needs and influenced by this situation, even the fascist leaders are forced at least to flirt with the revolutionary proletariat, even though they may not have any personal sympathy for it. But when it becomes clear that the proletariat itself abandons the goal of carrying the revolution further, that it is withdrawing from the battlefield under the influence of the reformist leaders, out of fear of revolution and respect for the capitalists – at

this point the broad fascist masses find their way to the spot where most of their leaders were, consciously or unconsciously, from the very start: on the side of the bourgeoisie.

*[Bourgeoisie and Fascism]*

The bourgeoisie naturally welcomes its new allies with joy. It sees in them a major increase in its power, a determined pack prepared for every form of violence in its service. The bourgeoisie, accustomed to rule, is unfortunately much more experienced and wise in judging the situation and defending its class interests than the proletariat, which is accustomed to the yoke. From the beginning the bourgeoisie has clearly grasped the situation and thus the advantage that it can draw from fascism. What does the bourgeoisie want? It is striving for the reconstruction of the capitalist economy, that is, the maintenance of its class domination. Under present circumstances, the precondition for achieving its goal is to considerably increase and intensify the exploitation and oppression of the working class.

The bourgeoisie is well aware that alone it does not possess the instruments of power to impose this fate on the exploited. Tormented by the scorpions of an upsurge in poverty, even the proletarian with the thickest skin finally begins to rebel against capitalism. The bourgeoisie can only conclude that over time under such circumstances, even the mild and conciliatory sermons of the reform socialists will lose their dulling effect on the proletariat. It reckons that the proletariat can now be subjugated and exploited only through force. But the means of force available to the bourgeois state are beginning, in part, to break down. The state is losing the financial strength and moral authority needed to maintain blind loyalty and subjugation among its slaves. The bourgeoisie can no longer rely on its state's regular methods of force to secure its class rule. For that it needs an extralegal and non-state instrument of force. That has been offered by the motley assemblage that makes up the fascist mob. That is why the bourgeoisie offers its hand for fascism's kiss, granting it complete freedom of action, contrary to all its written and unwritten laws. It goes further. It nourishes fascism, maintains it, and promotes its development with all the means at its disposal in terms of political power and hoards of money.

It is evident that fascism has different characteristics in every country, based on specific circumstances. Nonetheless, in every country it has two essential features: a sham revolutionary programme, which links up in extremely clever fashion with the moods, interests, and demands of broad social masses; and the use of brutal and violent terror.

[*Fascism's Rise in Italy*]

The classic example of fascism's development and character today is Italy. Here fascism found its breeding ground in the disintegration and weakness of the economy. This might seem not to apply, given that Italy was among the victorious powers. Nonetheless, the war had a devastating impact on Italy's economy. The bourgeoisie returned from war victorious, but mortally wounded. The country's economic structure and development was decisive here. Only in northern Italy had a modern industrial capitalism emerged. In central and especially southern Italy, agrarian capital still reigned, to some extent still under feudal conditions, allied with a finance capitalism that had not yet scaled the heights of modern development and importance. Both were not imperialist in orientation; both were hostile to the war; both gained little or nothing from the slaughter of millions. The non-capitalist peasantry suffered under them fearfully, and with it the urban petty bourgeoisie and proletariat. True, the artificially nourished heavy industry of northern Italy stashed away fabulous profits. Nonetheless, this industry lacked deep roots – Italy has neither coal nor iron – and its bloom soon faded.

All the evil effects of the war rained down on Italy's economy and governmental finances. A dreadful crisis unfolded. Industry, handicrafts, and trade ground to a halt; one bankruptcy followed another. The Banca di Sconto and the Ansaldo company, both creations of imperialism and war, collapsed.<sup>11</sup> The war left behind hundreds of thousands searching for work and food, hundreds of thousands of cripples, widows, and orphans needing nourishment. The crisis augmented the army of those returning home in search of work and positions with crowds of laid-off working people, both men and women, both labourers and clerks. A massive wave of misery flooded through Italy, reaching its high point between the summer of 1920 and the spring of 1921. The industrial bourgeoisie of northern Italy, which had agitated so unscrupulously for war, was incapable of restoring the ruined economy. It did not have the political power to mobilise the state for its goals. It had lost control of the government, which fell back into the hands of the agrarian and financial capitalists under Giolitti's leadership. Even if that had not happened, the state, creaking in every joint, would not have possessed the means and opportunities to cope with the crisis and misery.

Thanks to this situation and in pace with its evolution, Italian fascism was able to sprout up. The predestined leader awaited in the person of Mussolini.

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11 For the Banca di Sconto bankruptcy, see p. 82, n. 9. The Ansaldo engineering company, one of Italy's largest corporations, went bankrupt in 1921.

In the autumn of 1914, Mussolini had been pacifist Socialism's renegade. With the slogan 'war or republic' he became the most fanatical of warmongers. In a daily paper founded with money from the Entente, *Popolo d'Italia*, he promised the masses of producers heaven on earth as the fruit of the war. Together with the industrial bourgeoisie he waded through the bloodbath of war; together with them he wanted to reshape Italy into a modern capitalist state. Mussolini had to woo the masses in order to be able to intervene as an active force in a situation that refuted all his prophecies and went counter to his goals. In 1919, he formed the first *fascio di combattenti* (league of frontline soldiers) in Milan, with the goal of assuring the survival and flourishing of the nation by 'securing the revolutionary fruits of the revolutionary war for the heroes of the trenches and the working people'. Fascist groups were formed in a number of cities. The new movement engaged from the start in a bitter struggle against the revolutionary workers' organisations, because these, Mussolini asserted, had 'divided and weakened the nation' by putting forward a perspective of class struggle. Fascism also turned its spears against the Giolitti government, which it held to be wholly responsible for the horrific suffering of the period after the war. Fascism developed very slowly and weakly at first. It was still held back by the trust of the broad masses in socialism. In May 1920 there were in all of Italy only about 100 fascist groups, none of them with more than 20 to 30 members.

[*Demoralisation and Terror*]

Soon fascism was able to draw nourishment and strength from a second major source. The objectively revolutionary situation led to the rise of a subjectively revolutionary mood in the Italian proletariat. The glorious example of the Russian workers and peasants had a strong influence here. In the summer of 1920, the metalworkers carried out the occupation of the factories.<sup>12</sup> Here and there reaching into southern Italy, agricultural proletarians, small peasants, and tenant farmers occupied estates or rebelled in other ways against the large landowners. But this great historic moment found the workers' leaders to

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12 Beginning at the end of August and continuing through the end of September 1920, over half a million workers, led by the metalworkers, seized factories throughout Italy, creating a revolutionary situation in the country. Workers began to organise production under the leadership of factory councils, and in many places workers organised Red Guards to defend the seized factories. The strikes spread to the railways and other workplaces, and many poor peasants and agricultural workers carried out land seizures. The Italian Socialist Party and the trade-union federation, however, refused to see this revolutionary movement as anything more than a union struggle, and the movement eventually foundered.

be feeble in spirit. The reformist leaders of the Socialist Party drew back in fear from the revolutionary perspective of broadening the factory occupation into a struggle for power. They forced the workers' struggle into the narrow confines of a purely economic movement, whose leadership was the business of the trade unions. In concord with D'Aragona and other officers of the General Confederation of Labour, they betrayed the rebellious wage slaves through a shameful compromise with the employers, benefiting from superb collaboration from the government, especially Giolitti. Leaders of the Socialist Party's left wing, from which the Communist Party later crystallised, still had too little training and experience to take command of the situation in thought and action and steer events in another direction. Moreover, the proletarian masses proved unable to go beyond their leaders and drive them forward in the direction of revolution.

The occupation of the factories ended in a severe defeat of the proletariat, causing discouragement, doubt, and timidity in its ranks. Thousands of workers turned their backs on the party and the trade unions. Many of them sank into indifference and mindlessness, while others joined bourgeois associations. Fascism won growing support among the disillusioned and also in the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeois population. It had achieved victory politically and ideologically against a working class infected with reformism. In February 1921 there were about 1,000 fascists. Fascism won the masses through sham revolutionary demands advocated through unscrupulously demagogic agitation. Its pompous verbal radicalism was aimed above all against the government of Giolitti, 'betrayed of the nation'.

It was with fire and sword, however, that fascism proceeded against its second 'enemy': the international workers' organisations, the enemies of the fatherland. Mussolini demanded, in keeping with his republican, anti-monarchist, and imperialist views, the dismissal of the royal dynasty and the literal beheading of Giolitti. His followers began to 'discipline' the 'anti-nationals', that is, class-conscious workers' organisations with direct, bloody terror. In the spring of 1921 the fascists undertook their first 'punitive expeditions'. They struck out against the rural proletarians, whose organisational headquarters were devastated and burned out and whose leaders were murdered. Only later did the fascist terror extend to the proletarians of the large cities. The prosecutors let all this take place without regard to law and justice. The bourgeoisie, whether industrial or agrarian, openly sponsored fascist terrorism, supporting it with money and in other ways. Even though the workers' occupation of the factories ended in defeat, the bourgeoisie feared a future revival of proletarian power. In the municipal elections, the Socialists had won a third of the 8,000 councils. Preventive action was necessary. To be sure!

### [*Fascist Electoral Gains*]

The government then had cause and opportunity to forcibly strike down fascism, which was moving in on it threateningly. But in the prevailing situation, that would have caused a strengthening of the workers' movement. Better the fascists than the Socialists and revolutionaries, Giolitti thought. The sly old fox dissolved parliament and decreed new elections in May 1921. He created an 'alliance for order' of all the bourgeois parties and brought into it the fascist organisations. During the electoral campaign, fascism engaged in boisterous republican appeals. This anti-monarchical and anti-dynastic agitation fell silent now that the Agrarian Party leaders and masses were joining it.<sup>13</sup> The fascist gains in the election were largely due to this support as well as the extension and growing strength of the *fasci*, which in May 1921 had 2,000 groups. Mussolini was indisputably exposing himself and his cause to the risk inherent in flooding the fascist movement with agrarian forces. He recognised that by halting sham revolutionary anti-monarchical agitation, he was giving up a strong incentive for the masses to join the fascists.

When the electoral battle was over, Mussolini wanted to go back to his slogans of 1919. In an interview with a reporter from *Giornale d'Italia* – which represents the interests of heavy industry – he stated that the elected fascists would not take part in the opening of parliament because it was impossible for them to shout, 'Long live the king!' after the speech from the throne. This announcement had the effect of showing the strength of the agrarian wing in fascism. Some deputies elected with support of the fascist groups quit to join the monarchists and nationalists. A meeting was called of the fascist deputies together with regional delegates of the *fasci* in order to settle the dispute. Mussolini and his proposal were defeated. He reined in his republicanism with the explanation that he did not want to split fascism over this question.

### [*Fascist Apparatus*]

This defeat prompted Mussolini to set about constituting fascism as an organised centralised party; until then it had been only a loose movement. The transformation took place at the first fascist congress in November 1921. While Mussolini won on this point, he was defeated in the selection of the party leadership; he did not have it fully under his control. His personal supporters made up only one half; the other half were monarchist Agrarians. This situation is significant. It indicates a conflict within fascism that has continued

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13 The Agrarians were a right-wing party representing the interests of Italy's large landowners.

and intensified up to the present day, a conflict that will contribute to fascism's decay. It is the conflict of agrarian and industrial capital or, in political terms, between monarchists and republicans. The party now has 500,000 members.

Constituting fascism as a party was not enough in itself to grant Mussolini the power to become master of the working class and to compel the proletariat, through even more dismal drudgery, to contribute to the reconstruction and further development of the capitalist economy. For this purpose he needed a dual apparatus. One apparatus to corrupt the workers, and another to suppress them with armed force and terrorist means.

The apparatus to corrupt the workers' movement was created by founding the fascist unions, named 'national corporations'. They were to carry out systematically what fascism had done from the start: combat the revolutionary workers' movement, indeed every independent movement of the workers. Mussolini always rejects the charge that he is conducting a struggle against the working class. He continually gives assurances that he wants to raise the working class materially and culturally and not lead it backwards into 'the harrowing conditions of a slave-like existence'. But all that in the framework of the 'nation' and subordinated to its interests; the class struggle is sharply rejected.

The fascist trade unions were founded with the explicit goal of providing an antidote against not only the revolutionary organisations of the proletariat but also against class organisations of any kind. Every proletarian class organisation is immediately suspected by Mussolini and his henchmen of being revolutionary in character. Mussolini created his own trade unions, encompassing all workers, employees, and employers in a given trade or industry. Some of the organised employers have declined to join Mussolini's unions, as has the agricultural league and the league of industrialists. Nonetheless, despite their heresy, they are not called to account by fascist punitive expeditions. These forays take place only where proletarians are concerned, who perhaps are not even in the revolutionary movement but nonetheless struggle in accordance with their class interests. Tens of thousands of workers have been forced to join the fascist unions, which are said to include about 800,000 members.

The fascist groups for terrorist subjugation of the working class in Italy are the so-called squadrons. These constitute a military organisation that has evolved out of the agrarian punitive expeditions. Bands of 'punishers', which here and there formed spontaneously, became permanent organisations of paid mercenaries, who carry out terror as a profession. The squadrons developed over time into a purely military force, one that carried out the coup and underpins Mussolini's dictatorial power. After the seizure of power and

the establishment of the fascist state they were legalised as a 'national militia', a part of the bourgeois state. They are committed, as was officially declared, 'to the service of God, the nation, and the prime minister' – please note: not the king. There are various estimates of their strength. At the time of the fascist coup<sup>14</sup> they numbered between 100,000 and 300,000; now they are half a million.

[*The Failed General Strike*]

Just as the failure and betrayal of the reformist leaders helped give birth to fascism, so too fascism's conquest of state power was preceded by yet another reformist betrayal and therewith also another defeat of the Italian proletariat. On 31 July [1922] a secret session took place of the Italian reformist workers' leaders – from both unions and the [Socialist] party; Turati was there, just like D'Aragona. It decided to proclaim a general strike through the General Confederation of Labour on 1 August, a strike that was not prepared and not organised.<sup>15</sup> As things stood, it could end only in a dreadful defeat for the proletariat. In many localities the strike began only after it had already collapsed elsewhere. This was a defeat just as great and fateful as the occupation of the factories had been. It gave courage to the fascists for their coup, while discouraging and demoralising the workers so that, passive and hopeless, they refrained from further resistance and let everything happen. After the coup the betrayal of the reformist leaders was sealed when Baldesi, one of the most influential leaders of the Italian trade-union confederation and the Socialist Party, declared on orders of Mussolini that he was ready to join the fascist government. This shameful alliance collapsed – what a disgrace – not because of the reformists' opposition and protest, but because of the resistance of the fascist Agrarians.

Comrades! This short overview will have enabled you to recognise the inter-connection in Italy between the development of fascism and the economic decay that impoverished and deluded the masses; between the development of fascism and the betrayal of the reformist leaders – cowards who aban-

14 A reference to the fascists' 'March on Rome' of 22–29 October 1922, at the conclusion of which Mussolini was asked to form a cabinet.

15 On 31 July 1922 the Alleanza del Lavoro – grouping the CGL federation and other unions – declared a general strike against the Mussolini regime, to begin the following day. Coming after waves of fascist attacks carried out with virtual impunity and amid growing working-class demoralisation, the poorly organised strike met with a weak response by workers, as well as fierce repression. As a result, the leaders capitulated and called off the strike on 3 August.

doned the proletarians in the struggle. The weaknesses of the Communist Party also played a role here. Quite apart from its numerical weakness, the party surely also made a policy error in viewing fascism solely as a military phenomenon and overlooking its ideological and political side. Let us not forget that before beating down the proletariat through acts of terror, fascism in Italy had already won an ideological and political victory over the workers' movement that lay at the root of its triumph. It would be very dangerous to fail to consider the importance of overcoming fascism ideologically and politically.

*[Fascist Promises vs. Performance]*

It is evident that, in terms of its organisation and strength, fascism could evolve in the way briefly outlined here only because it had a programme that was very attractive to the broad masses. We face a question that is important to proletarians of every country: What has fascism in Italy done since taking power to realise its programme? What is the nature of the state that is its chosen instrument? Has it shown itself to be the promised state standing above class and party, granting justice to every layer of society? Or has it shown itself to be a tool of the propertied minority and especially of the industrial bourgeoisie? This is best judged by comparing the most important demands of the fascist programme with the way they have been implemented.

What did fascism promise, in political terms, when it stormed in like Samson with wild, flowing hair?

A reform of the right to vote and consistently implemented proportional representation. What do we see? The old and flawed proportional representation law of 1919 is to be repealed and replaced by an electoral law that is a joke, a bloody mockery of proportional representation. The party that gets the most votes is to receive two-thirds of the seats in parliament. There has been a debate on whether it should be two-thirds or three-quarters. According to recent press reports, the fascists will be content for the strongest party – namely their own – to get two-thirds, and the remaining third to be distributed proportionally among the various other parties. That's some electoral reform!

Mussolini promised women the right to vote and to be elected. Recently an international bourgeois conference for women's suffrage met in Rome.<sup>16</sup> Mussolini graciously honoured the women by his presence and explained to them

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16 A reference to the Ninth Congress of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance, which met in Rome 12–19 May 1923.

with a sweet smile that women would obtain the right to vote – but only for the municipal councils. Political rights would thus still be denied them. Moreover, not all women would gain rights in municipal elections, only those who could give evidence of a certain level of education, plus women with ‘war medals’, and women whose husbands possessed a sufficiently large bag of money to pay a certain level of taxes. That’s how he keeps his promise with regard to equal rights for women.

Fascism included in its programme the abolition of the senate and the creation of an economic parliament, standing alongside the political one. We hear nothing more about the economic parliament. But when Mussolini made his first address to the senate, that junk room of all reactionaries, he celebrated its magnificent contributions in the past and confirmed its great achievements in the present – all of which required an enhancement of the senate’s influence in lawmaking.

The fascist programme called for immediate summoning of a national assembly to reform the constitution. Where does that stand? Not a word has been said about this assembly. On the contrary, constitutional reform looks like this: the parliament – made up as I have described, which means fascism as its majority party – proposes a prime minister. The proposed fascist prime minister must then be affirmed by the king. The prime minister puts together his government any way he wants, presents himself and his cabinet to the parliament, and receives a vote of confidence, after which parliament leaves the scene, adjourned for four years – that is, for the entire period of its term in office.

Let us also compare the fascists’ promises in the social sphere with their performance. Fascism promised legal protections for the eight-hour day and the establishment of a minimum wage for both industrial and agricultural workers. The law now proposed on the eight-hour day has a hundred exceptions and concludes with a provision that it can also be set aside in some cases. What is more, the eight-hour day has already vanished in practice for broad layers of the proletariat, especially for the railway workers, the postal employees, and other communications and transport employees, for whom – exactly on the model of ‘that miserable dog Groener’<sup>17</sup> – eight hours spent on-call at work is replaced by eight hours of work actually performed.

What is the situation regarding the establishment of a minimum wage? Thanks to the terrorist shackling and destruction of the trade unions, thanks to the conduct of fascist ‘corporations’ pledged to ‘civil peace’, the employers’ res-

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17 For the antiworker actions taken by German railway minister Groener, see p. 69.

istance against wage demands has been so reinforced that workers have been unable, given the bad economic situation, to defend even their previous wage levels. Wage reductions of 20–30% on average have taken place – 50% for a great many workers. Indeed, there are even cases where the wage reduction comes to 60%.

Fascism talked about insurance for the elderly and for invalids, which would shield them against the worst levels of poverty and suffering. And what happened to this promise? The very weak beginnings of social welfare for the elderly, infirm, and sick, which took the form of a fund of 50 million lire, have been abolished.<sup>18</sup> The 50 million lire was simply stricken from the budget 'to save money', so that those suffering from poverty no longer have access to any welfare provisions. Also stricken from the budget are the 50 million lire for employment agencies and support to the unemployed and 60 million lire for the cooperative credit unions.

Fascism had raised the demand that workers take part in the technical leadership of the factory – in other words, control of production. It was promised that fascism would subject public enterprises to the technical supervision of factory councils. Now a law is being considered that simply abolishes the factory councils. Further, public enterprises are to be handed over to be operated by private employers, and this has already been done in part. The manufacture of matches, previously a state monopoly, has now wound up in the hands of private profiteers. So too have the postal package business, telephone traffic, the radio-telegram business, and also the railways. Mussolini has stated that the fascists are 'liberals in the classic meaning of the word'.

Let us consider some of the fruits of fascism in the financial field. Fascism promised a thorough tax reform. Their 'authoritarian' state was to use its power to levy a general and strongly progressive tax on capital, which was supposed to be, to some extent, an 'expropriation of capital'. But what followed was the elimination of various taxes on luxury goods, such as on carriages, automobiles, and the like. In justification, it is said that such taxes 'restrict national production and destroy property and the family'. In addition, it is now planned to expand indirect taxes, with an equally fanciful justification, namely that extending these taxes would reduce consumption and thus promote exports abroad. Moreover, the requirement for securities to be held in the name of their owner – the so-called 'nominality of securities' – has been eliminated, opening wide the doors to tax evaders.

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18 In 1923 50 million lire equaled US\$2.3 million.

Mussolini and his cronies called for confiscation of church assets. Instead of that, the fascist government has brought back into effect a number of old and long-ago-terminated concessions to the clergy. Religious instruction in the schools was abolished fifty years ago; Mussolini has brought it back, and a crucifix must now hang in every school.

Fascism had demanded that government contracts for war supplies be modified and that up to 85 per cent of war profits pass over to the government. What happened? Parliament set up a commission to review the contracts for war supplies. It was supposed to present a report to the parliament as a whole. Doing this would no doubt have deeply compromised most of the captains of heavy industry, the patrons and benefactors of fascism. One of Mussolini's first decisions was that this commission would report only to him personally, and that anyone revealing anything of the report's contents would be punished with six months' imprisonment. As for seizing war profits, on this point all the fascist trumpets fell silent, while billions were approved for heavy industry to cover deliveries of various types.

Fascism also wanted to fundamentally overhaul the armed forces. It demanded abolition of the standing army, a short period of service, limitation of the army to defence of the country as opposed to engaging in imperialist wars, and so on. How was this programme carried out? The standing army was not abolished. The time of compulsory service was raised from eight months to eighteen months, which enlarged the 250,000-man army to 350,000. True, the *Guardia Regia*, a sort of militarily armed and organised police, was abolished. Was this perhaps because it was quite unpopular with the people, and especially the workers, after it had intervened in assemblies, strikes, and the like? Quite the contrary! Mussolini considered it too 'democratic' because it answered to the ministry of the interior rather than to the general staff, and Mussolini feared that these forces could come into conflict with his squadrons and act against him.

The *Guardia Regia* had included 35,000 police. To make up for it, the size of the *Carabinieri* was increased from 65,000 to 90,000. In addition, the number of police was doubled – even the detectives and the customs police. In addition, the fascist government converted the 'blackshirt' squadrons into a national militia. Their number was initially estimated at 100,000, but a recent decision in the fascist camp will raise it in the future to half a million.

The squadrons were infiltrated by the nationalist 'blueshirts' – agrarian-monarchist forces – a fact that must have made Mussolini tremble with fear of an uprising against his dictatorship. From the moment when the squadrons first appeared, he took measures to place them under the political leadership of the party, that is, subject to his supremacy. He believed that goal to have

been achieved by placing the squadrons under a national supreme command chosen by the party leadership. But the political leadership could not prevent conflicts within the squadrons, conflicts that became increasingly sharp when the nationalists, the 'blueshirts', entered the squadrons. In order to break their influence, Mussolini arranged for a decision that obligated every party member to join the national militia, so that its strength became equal to that of the party. Mussolini hoped in this way to politically subdue the agrarian forces that were resisting him. Nonetheless, bringing party members into the militia will embed in it the political conflicts, and these conflicts will develop further there until they lead to decay.

The armed forces were to serve only to defend the fatherland. That was the promise. But the burgeoning size of the army and the enormous scope of armaments are oriented to major imperialist adventures. The artillery has been enormously expanded, the size of the officer corps has increased, and the navy is receiving special support. A large number of cruisers, torpedo destroyers, submarines, and the like are on order. The air force is developing in an especially conspicuous fashion. Orders have already gone out for 1,000 new planes and many airfields have been built. The air force has its own commission, and hundreds of millions of lire have been approved for heavy industry to build the most modern machines and murderous instruments of death.

When one compares the programme of Italian fascism with its actual implementation, one thing becomes evident: the complete ideological bankruptcy of the movement. There is a blatant contradiction between what fascism promised and what it delivered to the masses. All the talk about how the fascist state will place the interests of the nation above everything, once exposed to the wind of reality, burst like a soap bubble. The 'nation' revealed itself to be the bourgeoisie; the ideal fascist state revealed itself to be the vulgar, unscrupulous bourgeois class state. This ideological bankruptcy must lead sooner or later to political bankruptcy.

### *[Fascism's Contradictions]*

And that day is now approaching. Fascism is incapable of holding together even the different bourgeois currents with whose silent and beneficent patronage it came to power. Fascism wanted to secure the power for social rebirth by seizing control of the state and utilising its apparatus of power for its own ends. It has not even succeeded in fully subduing the bureaucratic apparatus. A sharp struggle has broken out between the old entrenched bureaucracy and the new fascist officials. The same antagonism exists between the old regular army with its officer corps and the fascist militia with its new leaders. The conflict between fascism and the bourgeois parties is growing.

Mussolini had a plan to create a unified class organisation of the bourgeoisie in the shape of the fascist party as the counterpart of the revolutionary proletariat. That is why he devoted so much effort to smashing or absorbing all the bourgeois parties. He succeeded in absorbing one single party, the nationalists.<sup>19</sup> As we have seen, there are many indications that this fusion is two-sided. The attempt to unify the bourgeois, liberal, republican, and democratic groups in a conservative framework failed miserably. Quite the contrary: fascist policies have led the remnants of bourgeois democracy to draw on their previous ideology. Confronted with Mussolini's drive for power and use of violence, they have taken up a struggle 'to defend the constitution and restore the old bourgeois liberty'.

Fascism's incapacity to consolidate and deepen its hold on political power is well illustrated by its relationship to the Catholic People's Party,<sup>20</sup> indisputably the largest and most influential bourgeois party in Italy. Mussolini counted on being successful in breaking away this party's agrarian right wing and unifying it with the fascists, while thereby weakening the left wing and securing its dissolution. Things worked out differently. At the recent congress of the *popolari* in Turin, there was a true outcry against fascism. Those on the party's right wing who tried to speak favourably and protectively of fascism were shouted down. The most severe criticisms of its policies, by contrast, were met with enthusiastic agreement.

Behind these conflicts – those I have mentioned and others – is the class conflict that cannot be talked out of existence by organisational manoeuvres and sermons about civil peace. Class contradictions are mightier than all the ideologies that deny their existence, and these contradictions find expression despite fascism, indeed thanks to fascism and against it. The conduct of the *popolari* reflects the awareness of broad layers of urban petty bourgeois and small peasants regarding their status as a class and their antagonisms to large-scale capital. This is extraordinarily important with regard to the fascists' hold on power in Italy, or more properly, for the disintegration that it is headed towards. These layers, and especially the women within them, are deeply influenced by Catholicism and the church. Mussolini has therefore done all he could to win the Vatican. But the Vatican has not dared to counter the first stages of anti-fascist rebellion among the peasant masses in the People's Party.

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19 The Italian Nationalist Association joined Mussolini's Fascist Party in March 1923.

20 A reference to the Christian-democratic Italian People's Party.

The small peasants see that fascism brings the bourgeoisie lower taxes, increased possibilities for tax evasion, and fat contracts. Meanwhile, the small peasants feel the weight of heavier taxes through indirect payments and notably through a recalculation of agricultural income. The same holds true for the petty-bourgeois masses in the city. They are provoked into sharp opposition by triumphant fascism's abolition of rent control; landlords once again have unlimited power to impose high rents. The growing rebellion of small peasants and agricultural workers finds pointed expression precisely in the rural regions where fascism imagined its squadrons to have broken all resistance. For example, in Boscoreale near Naples more than a thousand peasants stormed the town hall in protest against oppressive taxes. In three localities in Novara province, the agricultural workers were able to assert with success their previous wages and working conditions. They did this by occupying a number of estates, indeed with the support of fascist squadrons. It is evident that the idea of class struggle is beginning to sink roots even within the ranks of fascism.

*[Proletarian Awakening]*

Of particular importance is the awakening of sections of the proletariat that were intoxicated and poisoned by fascism. Meanwhile fascism is incapable of defending the workers' interests against the bourgeoisie, and incapable of keeping the promises that it made, particularly to the fascist trade unions. The greater its victories, the more incapable it is of posing as the proletariat's protector. Fascism cannot even force the employers to hold to fascist promises about the advantages of common organisations.<sup>21</sup> Where only a few workers are organised in the fascist trade unions, it may be possible for a capitalist to pay better wages to these few. But where the masses are herded into the fascist organisations, the employers do not take into consideration the 'fascist brothers', because it would cost too much – and where moneybags and profits are concerned, capitalist gentlemen do not display kindliness.

The awakening of the proletarians has been speeded up in particular by the large number of workers thrown into the street with no sustenance, not only in private concerns but also in public enterprises. Soon after the fascist coup, 17,000 railway workers were laid off. Further layoffs followed and more are definitely in store. The governmental army workshops were closed, leaving 24,000 workers with no income and delivered over to unrestricted exploitation in the private workshops.

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21 A reference to the fascist unions, called corporations, which were supposedly 'common organisations' of labour and capital.

A fervent rebellion against fascist economic policies is emerging precisely among the workers organised by the fascists themselves. In Turin, Naples, Trieste, Venice, and a large number of other cities it was the fascist trade unions that took the lead without exception in joining with workers of other parties and organisations – including the Communist and syndicalist workers – in a massive public rally against the layoffs and closure of workshops. Several hundred war invalids who had been dismissed from the army workshops travelled from Naples to Rome in order to protest the injustice they had suffered. They hoped Mussolini himself would grant them justice and protection, and instead, as reward for their faith, they were arrested the moment they got off the trains. The dockworkers of Monfalcone and Trieste, the workers of many localities and industries – all of them members of fascist organisations – have moved into action. In some places factory occupations have once again come about, carried out in fact by workers in fascist unions, with sympathetic toleration or support by the squadrons.

These facts show that ideological bankruptcy leads to political bankruptcy, and that it will be the workers above all who will quickly begin thinking once again in terms of their class interests and responsibilities.

*[Who Will Topple Fascism?]*

There are many conclusions to be drawn. First, we must not view fascism as a homogenous phenomenon, as a block of granite, against which all our efforts will shatter. Fascism is contradictory by nature, encompassing different conflicting forces that will lead it to internal decay and disintegration. We must take up the struggle more energetically not only for the souls of proletarians that have fallen to fascism but for those of small and medium bourgeois, small peasants, intellectuals – in a word, all the layers that are placed today, by their economic and social position, in increasingly sharp conflict with large-scale capitalism.

However, it would be extremely dangerous to assume that the ideological and political decay in Italy will lead quickly to military collapse. True, fascism's military decay and collapse will come – it must come – but this may be a lengthy drawn-out process because of the inertia of the available instruments of power. The proletariat in Italy will break free of fascism. It will again grow conscious, stronger, and more purposeful in the struggle for its interests. It will take up again the revolutionary class struggle for its freedom. But during this process, the Italian comrades and the proletariat must reckon with the fact that fascism, while perishing ideologically and politically, will assail them with military terrorism, with unsparing and unscrupulous violence. We must be prepared! A monster, even in its death throes, often succeeds in dealing out devastat-

ing blows. For that reason the revolutionary proletarians, Communists, and Socialists must follow the path of class struggle, prepared and armed for harsh battles.

The worst thing we could do would be to allow our historical understanding of fascism to sway us toward inactivity, toward waiting, or toward the postponement of arming ourselves and struggling against fascism. Yes, fascism is surely condemned to decay internally and to fall apart. Only temporarily can it serve the bourgeoisie as a tool of class struggle; only temporarily can it reinforce, whether legally or illegally, the power of the bourgeois state against the proletariat. Still, it would be disastrous for us to fall into the role of clever and refined observers of this process of decay. On the contrary, it is our bounden duty to drive this process forward and hasten it by every possible means.

[*Fascism in Germany*]

Such is the special duty of the proletariat not only in Italy, where this process will probably take place first; *it is also the task of the German proletariat*. Fascism is an international phenomenon; we all agree on that. Thus far, next to Italy, its strength is greatest in Germany. Here the war's outcome and the failure of the revolution have been favourable for its growth. That is understandable, bearing in mind what we know regarding the roots of fascism.

In Germany, the economy has been especially devastated by the lost war, the burden of reparations, and the Versailles Treaty. The state is shattered down to its roots. The government is weak, without authority, a plaything in the hands of Stinnes and his cronies. In my opinion, there is no country where conflicts are so great as in Germany between the objectively mature conditions for revolution and the subjective immaturity of the proletariat, as a result of the betrayals, the outlook, and the conduct of the reformist leaders. Nowhere did Social Democracy collapse so shamefully when the war broke out as in Germany. Here capitalist industry was highly developed, here the proletariat could be proud of its strong organisation and lengthy Marxist schooling. We can concede that the British, French, and Austrian Social-Democratic parties, and all the organisations united in the Second International had their strong points. But the leading party, the model party, was the German Social Democracy. Its breakdown is therefore a more unforgiveable and outrageous crime than the breakdown of other workers' parties. There are more grounds to excuse or forgive the collapse of the other parties when the war broke out than there are for the German Social Democracy. The impact of this collapse recoiled on the proletarian masses in particularly strong and destructive fashion. When German imperialism was shattered by Entente imperialism, the preconditions here were particularly favourable for fascism to shoot up rapidly.

But despite everything, I am convinced that the Versailles Treaty and the occupation of the Ruhr with all its deeds of violence have not promoted fascism in Germany as much as Mussolini's coup. That coup gave a bigger boost to the German fascists than any other event. It gave them self-confidence and faith in their victory. The defeat and collapse of fascism in Italy would immediately deal the greatest blow of demoralisation to fascists in Germany, and would greatly encourage the proletariat. All the more so if the proletariat can say: Fascism in Italy was victorious and for a while enjoyed the height of power, but now it is no more, not only because it had to be torn apart by its internal contradictions, but also because of the strong and purposeful action of the proletarian masses there. This understanding would spread internationally, whatever the situation in individual countries.

So it is our duty internationally to work with all our power to overcome fascism in Italy. But in this effort, we must not forget that there is a precondition for successfully overcoming fascism abroad, and that is for us to also combat organised fascism in our own country with all our strength and thoroughly defeat it. I have outlined the development of fascism in Italy rather fully – although far from fully enough – because it is mature, clearly defined, and complete before our eyes. The Italian comrades will fill out my remarks. I am not going to portray fascism in other countries; this can be done by delegates of our parties in these countries.

*[Combating Fascism's Appeal]*

In the resolution I have proposed,<sup>22</sup> various methods are outlined for us to employ, various tasks that we have to carry out, in order to win mastery over fascism. I will not discuss the resolution in detail; I believe it speaks for itself. I only want to stress that these tasks run along two lines. One group of tasks aims at overcoming fascism ideologically and politically. This task is enormously important. It demands to a certain extent a rethinking or a more precise evaluation of some social phenomena that are peculiar to fascism in its essence. Also, it demands intense activity. We must remain aware that, as I said at the outset, fascism is a movement of the hungry, the suffering, the disappointed, and those without a future. We must make efforts to address the social layers that are now lapsing into fascism and either incorporate them in our struggles or at least neutralise them in the struggle. We must employ clarity and force to prevent them from providing troops for the bourgeois counterrevolution. To the extent that we do not win such layers for our party and our ideals and are

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22 See pp. 664–9.

unable to incorporate them into the rank and file of the struggling revolutionary proletarian battle forces, we must succeed in neutralising them, sterilising them, or whatever word you want to use. They must no longer threaten us as warriors for the bourgeoisie. The preconditions for our success are present in the living conditions that bourgeois class rule imposes on these layers in this stage of historical development.

In my view, it is extremely important that we purposefully and consistently carry out the ideological and political struggle for the souls of those in these layers, including the bourgeois intelligentsia. We must understand that, incontestably, growing masses here are seeking an escape route from the dreadful suffering of our time. This involves much more than filling one's stomach. No, the best of them are seeking an escape from deep anguish of the soul. They are longing for new and unshakeable ideals and a world outlook that enables them to understand nature, society, and their own life; a world outlook that is not a sterile formula but operates creatively and constructively. Let us not forget that violent fascist gangs are not composed entirely of ruffians of war, mercenaries by choice, and venal lumpens who take pleasure in acts of terror. We also find among them the most energetic forces of these social layers, those most capable of development. We must go to them with conviction and understanding for their condition and their fiery longing, work among them, and show them a solution that does not lead backward but rather forward to communism. The overriding grandeur of communism as a world outlook will win their sympathies for us.

*[To the Masses!]*

In contrast to the Second International, the Comintern is not an International for the elite of white proletarians of Europe and America. It is an International for the exploited of all races. Thus the Communist Party of each country must now be a vanguard fighter not just for the wageworkers in the narrow sense of the term, not only a tribune of the interests of proletarians engaged in manual labour, but it must also be a champion of intellectual workers, a leader of all social layers whose vital interests and whose longing to attain a more advanced culture places them in growing contradiction to the capitalist order. I therefore gladly welcome the decision of our plenum to take up the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government. The new slogan is not only irrefutably applicable to the largely agrarian countries of the Balkans like Bulgaria, Romania, and so on; it is also of great significance for Italy, France, Germany, and especially the United States. The slogan is virtually a requirement for the struggle to defeat fascism. It requires that we go among the broadest layers of exploited peasant producers and agricultural workers and bring to them the joyful message of

liberating communism. The task is to show all social layers in which fascism is recruiting a mass following that we Communists defend their interests through intense activity against bourgeois class rule.

There is something else we must do. We must not limit ourselves to struggle with and for the masses with our political and economic programme. True, the political and economic demands press their way to the fore. But how can we offer the masses more than just defence of their bread? We must at the same time bring them the entire noble inner substance of communism as a world outlook. If that is done, our movement will sink roots in all social layers, and especially among bourgeois intellectuals who recent historical developments have rendered insecure in their thinking and their striving, who have lost their old world outlook without being able to find a new one in the turmoil of these times. Let us ensure that these seekers do not go astray.

In the spirit of this line of thought, I say, 'To the masses!' But let me underline a precondition for success. We must not forget the words of Goethe, '*Getretener Quark wird breit, nicht stark*,'<sup>23</sup> We must maintain our Communist ideology in all its strength and clarity. The more we go to the masses, the more necessary it is for the Communist Party to be organisationally and ideologically unified. We cannot pour ourselves out broadly like a puddle dissolving into the masses. That would lead to damaging opportunism, and our efforts among the masses would collapse in humiliating defeat. If we make concessions to the masses' 'lack of understanding' – and I mean both the old and the new masses – we then abandon our true vocation as a party. We lose what is most important for the seekers – that which binds them together: the flame of a new social life that warms and illuminates, bringing hope and strength in the struggle.

What we need is to reshape our agitation and propagandistic methods and our literature in line with these new tasks. If the mountain will not come to Mohammad, Mohammad has no choice but to go to the mountain. If the new masses that we must attract do not come to us, we must find them and talk to them in their own language, one corresponding to how they see things, without giving up the slightest bit of our Communist outlook. We need special literature for agitation among the peasantry, special literature for civil servants and the small and middle bourgeois of every type, and also literature devoted to work among intellectuals. Let us not underestimate the role that intellectuals can play not only in the revolution but also after the revolution. Let us recall

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23 Literally 'trampled cheese spreads out but does not grow strong'. From Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*. The lines that follow clarify Goethe's meaning: 'Hammer it firmly into a strong mold and it takes on form – a strong brick for construction.'

the extraordinarily damaging sabotage carried out by intellectuals in Russia after the November [1917] revolution. We want to learn from the experiences of our Russian brothers. This is why we must understand that it is far from unimportant whether intellectuals are with us or against us, both at the moment of revolution and after it takes place.

*[Workers' Self-Defence and the United Front]*

Thus the struggle against fascism lays on us a rich array of new tasks. Every single section of the Communist International has the duty of taking up these tasks and carrying them out in a manner corresponding to the specific conditions in their country. And we must be aware that overcoming fascism ideologically and politically is not in itself sufficient to protect the struggling proletariat from the malice and violence of this enemy. At present the proletariat has urgent need for self-defence against fascism, and this self-protection against fascist terror must not be neglected for a single moment. At stake is the proletarians' personal safety and very existence; at stake is the survival of their organisations. Proletarian self-defence is the need of the hour. We must not combat fascism in the way of the reformists in Italy, who beseeched them to 'leave me alone, and then I'll leave you alone'. On the contrary! Meet violence with violence. But not violence in the form of individual terror – that will surely fail. But rather violence as the power of the revolutionary organised proletarian class struggle.

We have already made a start here in Germany toward the organised self-protection of the working class against fascism by forming the factory detachments.<sup>24</sup> These self-defence units need to be expanded and imitated in other countries as a basis for international success against fascism. But proletarian struggle and self-defence against fascism requires the proletarian united front. Fascism does not ask if the worker in the factory has a soul painted in the white and blue colours of Bavaria; or is inspired by the black, red, and gold colours of the bourgeois republic or by the red banner with a hammer and sickle. It does not ask whether the worker wants to restore the Wittelsbach dynasty [of Bavaria], is an enthusiastic fan of Ebert, or would prefer to see our friend Brandler

24 A reference to the *Proletarische Hundertschaften* (sometimes translated as 'proletarian hundreds'), which were workers' militias for self-defence against the threat of rightist paramilitary attacks and assassinations. They were first organised on the initiative of the factory-council movement in Central Germany in February 1923. The KPD sought to build these into a national united-front movement that could also be utilised in the fight for revolutionary power. By May 1923, tens of thousands of workers were enrolled in their ranks.

as president of the German Soviet republic. All that matters to fascism is that they encounter a class-conscious proletarian, and then they club him to the ground. That is why workers must come together for struggle without distinctions of party or trade-union affiliation.

Proletarian self-defence against fascism is one of the strongest forces driving to establish and strengthen the proletarian united front. Without the united front it is impossible for the proletariat to carry out self-defence successfully. It is therefore necessary to expand our agitation in the factories and deepen it. Our efforts must overcome above all the indifference and the lack of class consciousness and solidarity in the soul of the workers who say, 'Let the others struggle and take action; it's not my business.' We must pound into every proletarian the conviction that it *is* their business. 'Don't leave me out. I must be there. Victory is in sight.'

Every single proletarian must feel like more than a mere wage slave, a plaything of the winds and storms of capitalism and of the powers that be. Proletarians must feel and understand themselves to be part of the revolutionary class, which will reforge the old state of the propertied into the new state of the soviet system. Only when we arouse revolutionary class consciousness in every worker and light the flame of class determination can we succeed in preparing and carrying out militarily the necessary overthrow of fascism. However brutal the offensive of world capital against the world proletariat may be for a time, however strongly it may rage, the proletariat will fight its way through to victory in the end. Despite fascism, we see the capitalist economy, the bourgeois state, and class rule at the end of their tether. Symptoms of fascist decay and disintegration in bourgeois society speak to us loudly and piercingly of coming victory, provided that the proletariat struggles with knowledge and will in a united front. That's what must be!

Above the chaos of present conditions, the giant form of the proletariat will rear up with the cry: 'I have the will! I have the power! I am the struggle and the victory! The future belongs to me!'

*(Enthusiastic and prolonged applause. The assembly rises and sings 'The Internationale'.)*

*(Adjournment: 5:15 p.m.)*

## Fascism; Comintern Programme

*Discussion and summary on fascism. Report on the programme of the Communist International. Resolution on the Communist International's programme.*

*Speakers: Krajewski, Böttcher, Frey, Serra, Šmeral, Gyptner, Radek, Zetkin, Bukharin.*

*(Amter opened the session after 12:00 noon.)*

**Anton Krajewski** (Poland): Fascism in Poland does not appear to be as aggressive as it is in Italy. The Polish bourgeoisie considers it wiser to inject the numerous fascist associations into struggle only from time to time. For now, there is no strictly centralised fascist movement on the Italian pattern. Financial breakdown, horrific inflation, the despair of the land-hungry peasants resulted in a shift among broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry, who more and more turned away from Pilsudski. The bourgeoisie and its current government incite these masses from time to time to anti-Semitic excesses and demonstrations against Soviet Russia. Yet they fear the elemental mass character of a fascist movement that could unite all these masses.

The slogans of Polish fascism are, on the face of it, less hostile to workers and more national chauvinist. Their spokesperson is the present Glombinski-Witos government, which prefers to act with guile against all layers of workers – other than the Communists, of course – only so long as it is firmly in the saddle. As in other countries, fascism proposes to fully overhaul the parliamentary system, cancelling the right to vote of all ‘enemies’ of the Polish fatherland and of foreign nationalities. The notorious bomb attacks in Krakow also show clearly that Polish fascism, despite its apparently less aggressive form, does indeed use terrorist methods of struggle from time to time.<sup>1</sup> In Poland we have the following fascist organisations, both large and small: The Anti-Bolshevik League (Warsaw), the Federation for Social Self-Defence (an organisation of strikebreakers), the ‘Development’ association, the military bands of the Dowborists and Hallerists, the Peasant Education Association, and other small groups. The struggle against Polish fascism rests entirely on the Communist Party. The Polish Socialist Party (PPS), which only recently decided again –

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<sup>1</sup> On 16 May 1923 newspapers reported that a bomb had been thrown at the Zionist newspaper *Nowy Dziennik* by right-wing nationalists in Krakow.

on paper – to struggle against fascism, is preparing the road to fascism now as before. The PPS rejected our proposals to establish a united front between the Social-Democratic organisations like the PPS and the Bund and revolutionary organisations such as the Communist Party and the Workers' Association for City and Countryside.

**Böttcher** (Germany): Fascist organisations in Germany have developed into strong national associations like the German People's Freedom Party and the National Socialist Workers' [Nazi] Party. Within German fascism there are several different currents. In Bavaria, one current represents south-German separatism, which wants to found a Danubian confederation. Another current is the Greater Germany movement, which wants to Bavarianise all of Germany. The struggle among these individual currents is quite fierce. Viewed as a whole, fascism in Germany takes the form of the *völkisch* movement.<sup>2</sup> This movement has two main characteristics: (1) anti-Semitism, and (2) a marked demagogic anti-capitalist tone. In internal politics, this *völkisch* movement concerns itself with the so-called issue of blame [for the war].<sup>3</sup>

The struggle against the Versailles Treaty is one of the fascists' main themes. The fascists' internal policies are indicated by Hitler's slogan: 'Down with the criminals of November!' which signifies the struggle against the workers' movement.<sup>4</sup> In Bavaria, the fascists go so far as to apply this slogan against the Social Democrats. The Social Democrats helped give birth to fascism,<sup>5</sup> and now they get hit with a rabbit punch. The KPD proposed the slogans: 'Oppose fascist violence with that of the working class,' 'Oppose fascist contingents with those of the working class.' The party quickly realised that the fascist movement was more than a small affair of military combat groups, but that it was beginning

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2 The *völkisch* movement – literally meaning 'ethnic or national' – acquired strong overtones of rightist racism and anti-Semitism in Weimar Germany.

3 The German government had been forced to admit responsibility for World War I when it signed the Versailles Treaty. Rightists and nationalists attacked this acceptance of blame as a betrayal.

4 A reference to the German Revolution of November 1918, which toppled the Hohenzollern monarchy.

5 A reference to the Social-Democrats' responsibility for the Freikorps, a counterrevolutionary army organised to suppress the revolutionary wave that swept Germany in 1918–19. Initiated by Social-Democratic defence minister Gustav Noske and composed largely of war veterans, the Freikorps became notorious for summary executions of revolutionary workers. The Freikorps were formally absorbed into the army in 1920, but many of its members, leaders, and structures continued to function independently in right-wing militias and later in the Nazi SA and SS.

to encompass broad masses. As the party realised this, it began immediately to extend the struggle against fascism onto the political and ideological terrain. The latest phase of fascism is the struggle for the factories. The party is responding to this through the formation of united factory defence contingents, the form taken by the united front in struggle against fascism in the factories, and pursuing the anti-fascist struggle on an ideological basis. The Communists are showing the way forward out of this chaos and poverty. They are uniting the masses around them in this struggle. Only when the united front is built successfully in this fashion on a broad foundation will it be possible to undermine fascism politically and overcome it militarily.

**Josef Frey (Austria):** Austria is an object lesson showing that fascism's roots lie first in the dissolution and ruin of the bourgeois state, and second in the crimes of the Social Democracy. We had no soviet dictatorship in Austria. Fascism was nurtured by the politics of Social Democracy alone. Currently it is quite strong in Austria and becomes bolder and more impudent with every day.

In the first years after the collapse of the Austrian monarchy, the so-called Home Defence was founded in rural areas, and we pointed to this danger.<sup>6</sup> At that time it would have been a simple matter to disarm them. The Social Democracy continually sabotages that and blocks not only the arming of the proletariat, which we have demanded, but the formation of workers' defence guards. Later the Defence of Public Order contingents were organised in such a way as to be a reliable Social-Democratic guard, which was to be used against Communists as well. The Social-Democratic Party attempted to exclude us from leadership and membership in these defence contingents, with less and less success among the members. In my view we have to work in the defence contingents, for they are still an expression of the united front, if an inadequate one. They need to be expanded and revolutionised.<sup>7</sup>

In Austria we have two clearly different types of fascism. First there are the so-called swastika people with their Greater Germany agitation,<sup>8</sup> and then the

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6 The Heimwehr, or Home Defence Force, was a right-wing organisation formed immediately after World War I.

7 The Austrian Social-Democratic Party founded a defence force, the Republikanischer Schutzbund (Republican Defence League), in 1923–4. The Schutzbund was a descendant of the People's Guard created in 1918, which had been used against revolutionary workers during the Austrian postwar revolutionary upsurge. Banned by a dictatorial regime in 1933, the Schutzbund unsuccessfully challenged rightist rule in the Austrian civil war of 1934.

8 That is, for union of Austria with Germany. Such a union had been explicitly banned under the Treaty of Versailles.

Front-Line Fighters, who are content to achieve a fascist Austria under the Hapsburg dynasty as a starting point for reestablishment of the old monarchy. Experience has shown that both currents are completely united in their ruthlessness toward the working class.

Previously we rejected the annexation slogan, in order not to arouse the illusion among the workers that only annexation to Germany could help them. Since the situation is in rapid flux, as a result of increasing working-class activity, it may be necessary to take up the annexation demand in the framework of the revolutionary struggle. That would give us an ideological weapon against the Greater Germany fascist movement.

At present, there is massive unemployment in Austria, which fascism seeks to utilise for its own purposes. If Germany reaches an understanding with France and we enter into a period of austerity similar to what we see in Austria, joblessness will grow enormously there as well, which can be utilised by fascism for its own purposes. The struggle against fascism must be waged ideologically, militarily, and politically. The Austrian party will commit all its forces to this struggle.

**Serra** [Angelo Tasca] (Italy): Clara Zetkin has rightly identified the difference between terrorism and fascism. The fascists have always boasted to the bourgeoisie that they prevented revolution in Italy. In historical terms the opposite is true: fascism arose out of the failure of revolution. When the factories were occupied, the Socialist Party had to make a choice: either participation in the bourgeois government or immediate revolution. The Left blocked joining the government, which was in any case not what the masses wanted; immediate seizure of power was not possible, nor was the party able to make active preparations for it and show the masses the path leading to that goal. That is when the disillusioned masses began to give a hearing to fascism.

The two ideological faces of fascism mentioned by Clara Zetkin, republican and monarchist, are almost identical. Mussolini was first a republican, in order to flatter previously revolutionary and radical forces and cause confusion in military circles. After his success, he threw republicanism aside. Whatever the ideological foundations of fascism may have been, it developed on the axis of suppressing the workers' movement, and so in the last analysis it had to orient to the right.

The question now posed in Italy is chiefly that of the future relationship of forces. We must counterpose our ideology in practical terms to fascism, underlining the latter's ideological bankruptcy. Clara Zetkin was right to stress this, with all her immense authority. The fascist ideology is extremely simple: it consists of counterposing 'national' to 'internationalism'. Mussolini said recently

that he grabbed the bourgeoisie by the throat in order to force them to be true capitalists, and he did the same with the Socialists in order to force them to pay for the results of their conduct. Julian the Apostate persecuted the Christians in the same way in order to force them to be true Christians. We must not permit the fascists to exclude us from the life of the nation. We must make our internationalism comprehensible to all workers and even for those in the lower classes who sympathise with us as the only answer to the practical problems of Italian life.

The question of the united front must therefore be examined in Italy from an organisational and ideological point of view. We must not forget that even the most perfected underground organisation cannot achieve great results if conditions are not favourable. Our underground action must link up with all developments in Italian life.

It is necessary to combat fascism from its very beginning. Once it has achieved power, the struggle against it is very difficult. It is impossible to carry out a boycott against Italy, since this would require too much preparation and could be effective only at a decisive moment that today is still far removed. The Italian Communists have no illusions on this point. Despite the collapse of the fascists' ideology, their political and military collapse is still far off. We are still only at the beginning of a long period of struggle in which Communists abroad cannot grant us direct support. They will, however, provide us with great assistance by carrying out their duty in their own country, that is, by applying all the lessons that follow from our experiences and our defeat.

**Bohumir Šmeral** (Czechoslovakia): Until quite recently we did not have any serious fascist organisations in Czechoslovakia. It was feared that the Czech Legion forces returning from Siberia could become a fascist army,<sup>9</sup> but it was soon evident that this was unlikely because of their proletarian composition. The big bourgeoisie tried to do this with the gymnastic clubs – the Sokols – which were led by bourgeois figures. But here too the majority of the members were from proletarian and semi-proletarian origins, and they resisted the bourgeois efforts to convert the gymnastic clubs to fascism. About six months ago, two political currents appeared in Czechoslovakia that openly called themselves fascist. One was led by the former Social Democrat Budez, and the other was close to the National Democratic Party led by Dr. Kramář. Neither of these two currents won significant support.

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9 For the Czechoslovak Legion, see p. 271, n. 6.

Only in the last few weeks did symptoms appear that a serious attempt to organise fascism in Czechoslovakia was under way. This can be described through two facts. On 10 June Dr. Kramář, leader of the National Democratic Party that is still part of the government coalition, spoke at a public meeting of the possibility that the present bourgeois-socialist coalition government could be replaced by another. He was thinking of a government of workers and peasants that the German workers and peasants would also belong to. He said, 'Anyone who opposes the coalition today takes on a terrible responsibility. We do not want to sacrifice our state, and if it cannot function through parliament, then it will function without parliament.' A similar concept is expressed in an article in the youth publication of Kramář's party.

It is the Czech Social Democrats who are above all responsible for this self-assured move by the bourgeoisie. They also contributed to the shift in British policy against Soviet Russia and the events in Bulgaria. It is significant that the fascist movement, in its first phase of development, did not aim its fire against the Communists as a mass party. On the contrary, in many localities the fascists flirted with Communist demands. By contrast, they are very harsh in their attacks on the policies of Beneš and Masaryk.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia now faces crucial tasks. It is possible that bourgeois forces hostile to fascism together with the Social Democracy will challenge us to act together with them against fascism. We must state clearly that the opportunists' methods are not sufficient. It is not possible to halt the fascist offensive by parliamentary means alone. That can be countered only by deeds. It is necessary to build a fighting alliance among the working masses themselves and to arm them so that they represent a real force that is capable of successfully halting the armed assault of bourgeois reaction.

In Czechoslovakia, the social causes of the rise of fascism are more important than the national ones. As a result, the national expression of fascism varies, so that a Czech fascism has developed beside a German one and a Hungarian one, and to some extent they paralyse each other. In Slovakia, a fascist organisation exists on the example of the [Association of] Awakening Hungarians. In the German regions [of Czechoslovakia], fascism takes the form of the German National Socialist Party.<sup>10</sup> This party, which until recently expressed close to the same viewpoint as the German Majority Socialists, has recently shifted its sympathies to the Bavarian National Socialists led by Hitler and has even established a kind of an organisational link with them. An interesting aspect of the Czechoslovak situation is the collaboration of the fascists who have a Hus-

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10 Founded November 1919, as successor of the German Workers' Party.

site Protestant tradition with the [Catholic] Clerical People's Party. We cannot yet say whether this is accidental. Perhaps an attempt is being made to align the Catholic states of Europe, like Bavaria, Austria, Horthy's Hungary, and Poland, around common political positions, and they are trying to bring Czechoslovakia into this bloc.

**Richard Gyptner** (Germany): I would like to take up three main aspects of the struggle against fascism: (1) the proletarian defence contingents; (2) our activity in the countryside; and (3) the struggle against fascism on an international level. The Communist Youth believe that young workers seventeen years of age and older should be included in the proletarian defence contingents. Otherwise there is a danger that these youth will either form their own groups, which does not serve the needs of the workers' movement, or go where they find activity, that is, to the fascist organisations. Let me take the occasion to say that it will not be possible to influence the factory defence groups ideologically, because the party does not have factory cells.

Our activity in the countryside has been inadequate. We must develop our propaganda much more energetically in order to avoid reliving in Germany a repetition of the Italian pattern, where the fascist expeditions were organised in the countryside to attack the cities.

As for the international struggle against fascism, our actions have been too weak. We witness fascism conducting its struggle internationally, but the proletariat in one country, in resisting fascism, has not been able to count on simultaneous and parallel activity by the proletariat in other countries. I hope that just as the Comintern's activity against the war danger has grown stronger, this will happen also with regard to the struggle against fascism.

*(The chair reads a statement of Comrade Koritschoner of Austria, defending the Austrian party against Frey's criticism regarding the struggle against fascism. Frey, he stated, was not speaking as a representative of the Austrian Communist Party.)*

**Radek:** We have heard the comprehensive and deeply impressive report of Comrade Zetkin on international fascism. This movement is a hammer meant to crush the head of the proletariat, but it will strike above all against the very petty-bourgeois layers that wield it in the interests of large capital. I can neither supplement nor expand on this speech by our venerable leader. In fact, I had difficulty following it, because there hovered before my eyes the corpse of a German fascist, our class opponent, who was condemned to death and shot by the thugs of French imperialism – a powerful organisation of another section of our class enemy. Throughout the speech of Comrade Zetkin on the contradic-

tions within fascism, the name of Schlageter and his tragic fate was buzzing in my head.<sup>11</sup> We ought to remember him here, as we define our political approach to fascism. The fate of this martyr of German nationalism should not be hushed up or passed over with a casual phrase. There is much that we and the German people can learn from it.

We are not sentimental romanticists who forget enmity when meeting over a corpse. We are not diplomats who say that we speak of the dead only in praise. Schlageter, the courageous soldier of the counterrevolution, deserves to be sincerely honoured by us, the soldiers of the revolution.

His co-thinker [Friedrich] Freksa wrote a novel in 1920 portraying the life of an officer who fell in the battle against Spartacus.<sup>12</sup> Freksa entitled the novel, *Der Wanderer ins Nichts* [The Wanderer into the Void]. If those German fascists who honestly want to serve the German people do not understand the meaning of Schlageter's fate, then Schlageter died in vain, and then they should write on his gravestone, 'The wanderer into the void.'

Germany lay crushed. Only fools believed that the victorious capitalist Entente would treat the German people differently from the way that victorious German capitalists treated the Russian and Romanian peoples. Only fools or cowards who feared to face the truth could believe in the promises of Wilson and the declarations that the Kaiser and not the German people would have to pay the price of defeat.

In the East a people was at war. Starving, freezing, it fought against the Entente on fourteen fronts. That was Soviet Russia. One of these fronts consisted of German officers and German soldiers. Schlageter fought in Medem's Freikorps, which stormed Riga.<sup>13</sup> We do not know whether the young officer understood the significance of his acts. But the then-responsible German minister, the Social Democrat Winnig, and General Von der Goltz, commander of the Baltic troops, knew what they were doing. They sought to gain the friendship of the Entente by performing the work of hirelings against the Russian people. So that the German bourgeoisie should not pay the victors the indem-

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11 Albert Leo Schlageter was a member of the right-wing Freikorps troops involved in carrying out sabotage actions against French occupation forces in the Ruhr. Captured by French troops and charged with blowing up the railway near Düsseldorf, he was executed on 26 May 1923. The Nazis and other right-forces treated him as a martyr.

12 Spartacus was the revolutionary current led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht that became part of the Communist Party of Germany. During late 1918 and early 1919, the Freikorps led the battle against them and other revolutionary workers.

13 A reference to the Freikorps intervention in the Baltics in 1919, when they were sent to combat the revolutionary movement in Estonia and Latvia.

nities of war, they hired young German blood, which had been spared the bullets of the World War, to fight against the Russian people. We do not know what Schlageter thought at this period. His leader, Medem, later admitted that he marched through the Baltics into the void. Did that register with all the German nationalists?

At the funeral of Schlageter in Munich, General Ludendorff spoke, the same Ludendorff who even today is offering himself to Britain and France as the leader of a crusade against Russia. Schlageter was mourned by the Stinnes press. Stinnes was then in the Alpina Montana<sup>14</sup> with his colleague Schneider-Creusot, the French armaments manufacturer, the assassin of Schlageter. Against whom did the German people wish to fight: against the Entente capitalists or against the Russian people? With whom did they wish to ally themselves: with the Russian workers and peasants in order to throw off the yoke of Entente capital, or with Entente capital for the enslavement of the German and Russian peoples?

Schlageter is dead. He cannot supply the answer. His comrades-in-arms swore at his graveside to carry on his fight. Against whom and on whose side? They must give an answer.

Schlageter went from the Baltics to the Ruhr, not just in 1923 but in 1920. Do you know what that meant? He took part in the attack of German capital on the Ruhr workers; he fought in the ranks of the troops whose task it was to bring the miners of the Ruhr under the heel of the iron and coal kings. The troops of Watter, in whose ranks he fought, fired the same lead bullets with which General Degoutte quelled the Ruhr workers. We have no reason to believe that it was from selfish motives that Schlageter helped to subdue the starving miners.<sup>15</sup>

The way in which he risked his life speaks on his behalf, and proves that he was convinced he was serving the German people. But Schlageter thought he was best serving the people by helping to restore the mastery of the social classes that had previously led the German people and had brought such terrible misfortune upon them. Schlageter regarded the working class as a mob that must be governed. And in this he surely shared the view of Count

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14 Alpina Montana was a coal and iron company owned primarily by the Commercial Bank and Fiat, in which Stinnes had obtained a large stake.

15 In the course of the mass working-class mobilisation that defeated the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, armed proletarian militias were organised that involved tens of thousands of workers. German government military units led by General Oskar von Watter were sent in to the coalfields of the Ruhr to crush the workers' units there. See Broué 2015, pp. 372–8.

Reventlow, who calmly declared that no war against the Entente was possible until the internal enemy had been overcome. For Schlageter, the internal enemy was the revolutionary working class.

Schlageter could see with his own eyes the results of this policy when he returned to the Ruhr in 1923 during the occupation. He could see that even if the workers were united against French imperialism, it was not a united people that fought in the Ruhr, nor can it be. He could see the profound mistrust of the workers towards the German government and the German bourgeoisie. He could see how greatly the cleavage in the nation hampered its defensive power. He could see more. Those who share his views complain of the passivity of the German people. How can a defeated working class be active? How can a working class be active if it is disarmed and told to submit to the exploitation of profiteers and speculators? Or was it that the activity of the German working masses was to be replaced by that of the German bourgeoisie?

Schlageter read in the newspapers how the very people who pretend to be the patrons of the German nationalist movement sent securities abroad so that they might be enriched and the country impoverished. Schlageter certainly could have no hope in these parasites. He was spared reading in the press how the representative of the German bourgeoisie, Dr. Lutterbeck, turned to Schlageter's executioners with the request that they permit the iron and steel kings to shoot down with machine guns the sons of Germany, the men who were carrying out the resistance in the Ruhr.<sup>16</sup>

Now that the German resistance, through the rascally trick of Dr. Lutterbeck – and still more through the economic policy of the possessing classes – has turned into a farce, we ask the honest, patriotic masses who are anxious to fight against the French imperialist invasion: How will you fight? On whose support will you rely? The struggle against Entente imperialism is a war, even though the guns are silent. There can be no war at the front when there is tumult in the rear. A minority can be kept down, but not a majority. The majority of the German people are the workers, who must fight against the poverty and want that the German bourgeoisie imposes on them. The patriotic circles of Germany must resolve to make the cause of the nation's majority their own, and thus create a front against both the Entente and German capital. If that is not done, then the path of Schlageter was the path into the void. Germany, faced by foreign invasion and the perpetual menace of the victors, will be transformed into a battlefield of bloody internal conflict, and it will be easy for the enemy to defeat and destroy her.

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16 For Lutterbeck's request to the French occupation authorities, see pp. 490–1, n. 31.

After the battle of Jena [in 1806], Gneisenau and Scharnhorst wondered how the German people were to be raised up from their defeat. They concluded that this was possible only by freeing the peasants from their former submission and slavery. Only a free German peasantry could lay the foundations for the emancipation of Germany. What the German peasantry meant for the fate of the German nation at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the German working class means at the beginning of the twentieth century. Only with the working class can Germany be freed from the fetters of slavery – not against it.

At Schlageter's gravesite, his comrades talked of battle. They swore to continue the battle. Such a battle must be conducted against an enemy that is armed to the teeth, while Germany is unarmed and beaten. In order for the talk of battle to be more than an empty phrase; in order for it to consist of more than bombing squads that blow up bridges but not the enemy; in order for it to not just derail trains but halt the conquering trains of Entente capital – then a number of conditions must be met. The German people must break with those who led it into defeat and who, moreover, are perpetuating the defeat and the defencelessness of the German people by regarding the majority of the German people as the enemy. This demands a break with the peoples and parties whose faces act upon other peoples like a Medusa head, mobilising them against the German people.

Only when the German cause becomes the cause of the German people, becomes the fight for the rights of the German people, will the German people win active friends. Even the most powerful nation cannot endure without friends – all the more in the case of a nation that is defeated and surrounded by enemies. If Germany wants to be in a position to fight, it must create a united front of working people. The intellectual workers must unite with the manual workers into a solid phalanx. The condition of intellectual workers cries out for this unity. Only old prejudices stand in the way. United into a victorious working people, Germany will be able to draw upon great sources of energy and resistance that will remove all obstacles. If the cause of the people is made the cause of the nation, then the cause of the nation will become the cause of the people. United into a fighting nation of labour, it will gain the assistance of other peoples who are also fighting for their existence. Whoever is not prepared to fight in this way is capable of deeds of desperation, but not of a serious struggle.

That is what the German Communist Party and the Communist International have to say at Schlageter's graveside. It has nothing to conceal, for only the complete truth can pave the way to the suffering masses of Germany, torn by internal strife. The German Communist Party declares openly to the nationalist petty-bourgeois masses that those working in the service of the profiteers,

the speculators, and the iron and coal magnates to enslave the German people and to drive them into adventures will meet the resistance of the German Communist workers, who will oppose violence with violence. We will fight with all the means at our disposal against those who, from lack of comprehension, ally themselves with the mercenaries of capital.

But we believe that the great majority of the nationalist-minded masses belong not in the camp of the capitalists but in that of the workers. We want to find the road to these masses, and we will do so. We will do everything in our power to make men like Schlageter, who are prepared to go to their deaths for a common cause, not wanderers into a void, but voyagers into a better future for the whole of humanity. That they should not spill their eager, unselfish blood for the profit of the coal and iron barons, but in the cause of the great toiling German people, which is a member of the family of peoples fighting for their emancipation.

The Communist Party will declare this truth to the great masses of the German people. It is not a party fighting for a crust of bread solely for the industrial workers. It is a party of the struggling proletariat fighting for its emancipation, an emancipation that is identical with that of the whole people, of all who toil and suffer in Germany. Schlageter himself cannot now hear this truth, but we are convinced that there are hundreds of Schlageters who will hear it and understand it.

### Summary of Discussion on Fascism

**Zetkin:** We can look back on this debate with satisfaction. It stands far above the level of debates at the Hamburg Congress. There the discussion did not take up issues of theory, and in practice it amounted to a call for struggle against the Communists. The mountain laboured and brought forth a mouse: an office that is to gather information. Actually, the only speakers in the debate were the Hungarian Kunfi and Wels, one of the first murderers of proletarians. Their wisdom amounted to saying that if there were no Communists there would be no fascism.

The discussion here confirmed my conclusion that fascism will be overcome not through military means alone but also politically and ideologically. The different speakers expanded on my remarks. Šmeral in particular gave a good analysis. The noble and profound words of Radek touched my spirit as an old fighter. They sum up the situation and our task. Serra [Tasca] said that there is no contradiction between fascism's earlier conduct and what it is doing now; both flow from its lust for success. There is truth in this statement. Yet in terms

of the way the masses view it, there is an enormous contradiction between the deceptions thrown their way and the actual record of what fascism has done, and we must focus on that.

Serra said that a boycott of fascism, as demanded by the Frankfurt Conference, is not appropriate.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, despite the obstacles, we must hold firm on this. Italian industry is totally dependent on coal and iron imported from abroad. Italy imports a large quantity of grain from the United States. The boycott would thus not be without significance. In addition, it would help to rouse workers in the boycotting countries.

We must also note that this demand was advanced by a conference made up of representatives from the factories belonging to all the parties. The conference was the first achievement of our united-front policy. It follows that we should not drop a demand raised there without good reason. The boycott against Horthy's Hungary also did not have the results we hoped for, but still it helped to rouse people to action.<sup>18</sup>

Except for Germany, it seems that little has been done against fascism. But even the most admirable ideology is useless unless it is accompanied by practical deeds. Standing armies are the breeding grounds for fascism, and our agitation must be taken into them. We must particularly go to those who participate in fascism in good faith. We who are marching not into the void but toward a bright future must portray this future to these trusting fascists. We must conduct a struggle to win over every individual soul. If we do this, then we can confidently proclaim, 'Even if the world is full of devils, we will vanquish them!'<sup>19</sup> (*Loud applause*)

### The Programme of the Communist International

**Bukharin** (reporter): My task is to report to you on the present stage of work regarding the Comintern programme. The Fourth Congress took up this ques-

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17 In its 'Resolution on the Struggle against Fascism' the Frankfurt Conference (see p. 386, n. 9) resolved that 'The international committee of action is commissioned to consider all the possibilities of a moral, political, and material boycott of the Italian government.' In *Inprecorr*, 29 March 1923.

18 In the summer of 1920, the International Federation of Transport Workers had called for a boycott on loading, discharging, and transporting goods to Hungary, to begin on 20 June. Only partially observed, the boycott was called off after seven weeks.

19 Zetkin is paraphrasing words from a German Protestant hymn, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott', which was written by Martin Luther.

tion but not in a particularly thorough manner.<sup>20</sup> It merely asked that partial demands be explained in the first part of the programme. It did not define the general guidelines that would shape the discussion. The Enlarged Executive Committee should give all parties some positive direction in order to aid the discussion.

In my opinion, the Executive Committee needs to establish how the programme should be structured and whether it should include a portion that is obligatory for all parties. I believe it would be more expedient if all our parties shared such a common section. That concept was also generally shared by the Fourth Congress. Such a common section would be a symbol of the fact that we are on the road to creating a world party. This has already happened to some degree, since the Comintern has already adopted countless resolutions and theses that are common to all our parties. This general section of the programme should consist of an analysis of communism as a whole, of its imperialist epoch in particular, and of the epoch of capitalist decline flowing from imperialist development. It should present our maximum programme and the transitional demands of all Communist parties – that is, generally speaking, the programme of proletarian dictatorship; the general guidelines of our strategy; and, in line with the Fourth Congress decision, a motivation of our partial demands.

So far we have three draft programmes to consider, one by me, one by the German party, and one by Comrade Varga. There are theoretical differences among these three drafts, and they are quite important.

The German draft is based on the views of Comrade Luxemburg on the accumulation of capital.<sup>21</sup> They consider that capitalist collapse can be explained scientifically only by using this theory. I do not share that point of view. Whether or not we share this outlook will determine the framework for the introductory general section of our programme. There is a lively discussion of this theory right now in the Russian party. I cannot go into the matter here, mainly because Comrade Thalheimer, who advances the Luxemburg theory of accumulation, is not present. I only wish to comment that it will be necessary to discuss this question very thoroughly. We in our Russian party have made special arrangements for such a discussion. Supporters of Luxemburg's theory are also to be found among our young comrades, especially among the young

20 The Fourth Congress discussion on programme in Sessions 14 and 15 can be found in Rid-dell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 479–527. Its resolution on this question can be found on pp. 631–2.

21 A reference to the theory elaborated by Rosa Luxemburg in her 1913 book, *The Accumulation of Capital*. In 1925 Bukharin published a critical work on Luxemburg's theory, titled *Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital*, translated in Tarbuck (ed.) 1972.

red professors – whom we are educating to replace the old ones. A large volume will soon appear with articles for and against this viewpoint.

Since the Fourth Congress there have been some developments in the life of the Comintern and its sections that make it necessary to add some special points. Chief among them is the national question, whose importance has grown over time. Another issue on which we have said hardly anything is that of worldview [*Weltanschauung*]. I believe it is necessary to include in our general section a carefully formulated presentation of our Marxist-materialist point of view and also of our attitude to religion.

I now come to three issues that are linked together and are rather delicate. These are the so-called red imperialism, the possibility of alliances between proletarian and bourgeois states, and worker capitalism or worker imperialism. These issues need to be dealt with in the general part of the programme, given that the national question will be thoroughly examined there as well. A programme needs to provide guidelines not only for the present but for a more extended time period. Conditions in Germany are a symptom of worldwide trends, indicating what the future will bring. There may well be struggles between bourgeois states, and this may result in national liberation struggles by the defeated bourgeoisies or by colonial peoples, or, ultimately, struggles of the proletarians and peasants against their oppressors. As for support of the revolutionary proletariat of other states by already existing proletarian states, in the next immediate period that is only a theoretical question, but in the more distant future it will not be merely theoretical. We have seen such a case already in Georgia.<sup>22</sup>

The problem of alliances between proletarian and bourgeois states must also be considered. For example, Soviet Russia supported Turkey in Lausanne,<sup>23</sup> and no Communist Party took exception to that. Or consider the case of Sun Yat-sen's government, struggling to be born. We support Sun Yat-sen, although what he will form is not in any sense a proletarian government but rather a bourgeois-revolutionary government.<sup>24</sup> All these examples indicate that many

22 For the Red Army's intervention in support of a local pro-soviet rebellion in Georgia, see p. 252, n. 33.

23 For the Lausanne Conference, see p. 501, n. 43.

24 On 26 January 1923 an alliance between China and Soviet Russia was formalised in a joint statement by Adolf Joffe, representing the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and Sun Yat-sen, president of China. Related to this, an ECCI resolution on relations between the Chinese CP and Sun Yat-sen's Guomindang party was adopted on 12 January 1923; it can be found in Degras 1971, 2, pp. 5–6.

combinations are possible, all of which must be considered from the general point of view of strategy for the proletarian state.

We are compelled to broaden our point of view. We have seen this already in the present gathering with regard to the relationship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Initially we had to build parties of an elite. We then transformed them into mass parties. Now we want to win supporters of the Social Democracy to our side. Over time further questions will come up. When a proletarian state arises, it immediately encounters the question of whether or not it should be a gathering point for all the oppressed, including non-proletarian layers. The more that capitalism decays, the more we will see existing proletarian states becoming gathering points for all the oppressed.

I must now turn to an issue on which Comrade Treint has written a number of articles. He says he is for worker imperialism.<sup>25</sup> What do we mean by imperialism? Surely not just expansion. Imperialism has a precise goal, namely to create relations such that the entire world falls under the rule of a clique of financial capitalists. Worker imperialism would mean that the working class viewed this expansion of finance-capitalist relationships as its task. That would be quite absurd. Such terminology can create great confusion in the minds of the working class. The expansion of socialism is something entirely different.

I believe that we should include the concept of existing proletarian states becoming gathering points for all the oppressed under the heading of strategy for the proletarian states.

It is said of us: 'You were against the iron discipline of the tsarist army, but now you yourselves have built an army. You were against secret diplomacy, but to some extent you engage in it. The tsarist government had special bodies like the Okhrana to combat its opponents, and now you have the GPU, which does the same thing.' That is how this perspective is argued. Such a position, such a starting point, such a way of viewing things has nothing in common with the Marxist method, which calls on us not to focus on formulas or forms but on the class content of every institution, policy, and social development in a class society. Posing the question in that way makes it very clear, of course, that when we expand some kind of form, it is not the expansion that concerns us but extending that form. When we consider the general question of the army, the main issue for us is which class the army expresses. In principle we can affirm that the expansion of socialist production relations is quite appropriate. No one with revolutionary views can dispute that. But we should take a strong stand against using terms like 'worker imperialism' to designate such facts.

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25 For Treint's view of 'worker imperialism', see p. 396, n. 22.

The portion of the programme on explaining partial demands should also be brought into relationship with the workers' and peasants' government. We must include in the programme the fact that an enduringly independent peasant government is quite impossible. It will necessarily be marked by proletarian predominance. The struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat ultimately becomes a struggle for leadership of the peasantry.

Now I would like to make some practical proposals. The Executive Committee should decide that all Comintern parties make available the following materials:

- 1) An analysis of their country's position in the present epoch, in terms not just of the moment but for a longer time period.
- 2) All parties should compile their partial demands, which will of course vary from one country to another.
- 3) Under the heading of general working-class strategy, parties should submit materials on their relationship to other workers' parties. Our campaign for the united front has to be explained in the general draft programme on the basis of already existing facts.
- 4) The Comintern's national sections should send us their national draft programmes.
- 5) Parties should also express criticism of already existing drafts for the general section and of additions that may be drafted in the future.

I propose that we choose a small commission, consisting of three to four comrades, to receive and work on all the materials received from all the parties. This commission should make contact with the parties by having each section choose a comrade who is particularly responsible for this work.

Let me also note that there are also British and Japanese draft programmes. The British draft programme needs special attention, but this session cannot yet decide on the Japanese draft, whose adoption would predetermine the general section of our programme. I therefore propose adoption of the following resolution.

### **Resolution**

The Enlarged Executive Committee considers it necessary that the programme of each party include a general section common to them all. Further, the Enlarged Executive Committee considers it advisable for the programme to take up the following issues: worldview (Marxist materialism and its relation-

ship to religion, etc.); the national question; strategy of the proletarian states; the workers' and peasants' government.

Each party should collect and forward to the Executive Committee the following material: (1) analysis of the country's position in the current epoch; (2) a compilation of partial demands; (3) materials on relations with other parties; (4) proposals on the general section and possible additions to it.

Each party will name a comrade who will be responsible for this work. The Enlarged Executive Committee is choosing a small commission with the following goals: (1) establishing ties with the parties; (2) promoting and leading discussion on the programme; (3) developing the general section of the draft programme prior to the Fifth Congress on the basis of all the collected materials and also in the framework of our national sections' programmes.

**Bukharin** (continuing): These are my proposals for action. I have not touched on the question of target dates. I believe that setting these dates – deadlines for submission of materials and a time period within which the small commission has to develop the final draft – should be left to the Executive Committee or the Presidium.<sup>26</sup> (*Applause*)

(*Adjournment: 5:00 p.m.*)

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26 Despite initial plans for the final programme to be discussed and approved by the Fifth Congress, that congress approved only a draft for discussion. A different draft was subsequently approved by the Sixth Congress in 1928, having been submitted by Bukharin and Stalin. For a detailed critique of the Sixth Congress programme, see Trotsky 1996.

## Denmark; Norway

*Report from Danish Commission. Resolution on the Danish question. Report from Commission on Centralism. Resolution on the Norwegian question.*

*Speakers: Ström, Ewert, Falk, Inkpin, Amter, Stirner, Ewert, Böttcher, Zinoviev, Furubotn.*

*(Böttcher opened the session at 4:00 p.m.)*

### Report from Danish Commission

**Ström** (Sweden): The Danish Commission is unanimously of the opinion that there are no principled disagreements between the two Communist parties; only some organisational and personal issues are at stake.<sup>1</sup> We believe that the commission's resolution will meet with approval by both parties and that they will unify once again. Despite the considerable obstacles in Denmark, the comrades will achieve much success with their united forces. The commission submits the following resolution:

### Resolution on the Danish Question

The Enlarged Executive Committee stresses again the decision of the Fourth World Congress, which among other things demanded that all Communists in Denmark unite in a single party.<sup>2</sup>

The Enlarged Executive Committee notes that there has been progress toward a rapprochement in recent months. Nonetheless, a rather large number of comrades still stand apart from the Danish section of the Communist International.

In agreement with representatives of the Danish and Swedish sections of the Communist International, taking into account the rapprochement that is already occurring, and in order to finally overcome the split, the Enlarged Exec-

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<sup>1</sup> For the Danish dispute, see p. 466, n. 14.

<sup>2</sup> The Fourth Congress resolution on the Danish Communist Party can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1023.

utive Committee demands that the Communist Party of Denmark (Section of the Communist International) approach the so-called old party with an appeal for unification with the Danish section.

In order to promote the reunification, the Enlarged Executive Committee states that when this occurs, the measures taken regarding former members Ernst Christiansen and Hellberg will be withdrawn.<sup>3</sup>

The Enlarged Executive Committee instructs the Danish section to immediately take in hand the work of reunification and calls on both currents to complete the fusion by 1 September 1923.

It will be left to the future fused organisation to resolve the organisational details, subject to the approval of the ECCI Presidium.

*(The resolution was put to a vote without discussion and carried unanimously.)*

### Report from Commission on Centralism

**Ewert** (Germany): The Commission on Centralism<sup>4</sup> adopted the following resolution on the Norwegian question with the support of all votes against that of the Swedish party's delegate.

### Resolution on the Norwegian Question

#### I

The Enlarged Executive Committee takes note of the statement made by Comrade Radek at the Norwegian party conference of 5–7 January:<sup>5</sup>

The goal of the ECCI was never to eliminate the independence of the Communist parties. It has always understood that the International can be strong only if the Communist parties are independent, carrying out a

3 For the situation of Christiansen and Hellberg, see p. 465, n. 13.

4 This commission was referred to at various points as the Norwegian Commission, the Scandinavian Commission, and the Commission on the Centralism Question. Minutes of its meetings can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/93.

5 Radek's statement was given at a Norwegian Labour Party regional leadership conference. Unanimous agreement was reached there that the NLP would remain as a section of the Comintern, that it recognised and would carry out the decisions of international congresses, and that the ECCI had the right to monitor the implementation of world congress resolutions. See Comintern 1923a, p. 43.

correct Communist policy based on their knowledge and determination. Unfortunately, however, the situation in the Communist International is such that deviations away from a correct path, to the left or right, take place in the Communist parties of different countries. It is then necessary for the world congresses or the ECCI to choose to intervene on the basis of the experiences of the international workers' movement and seek to correct these errors. The ECCI has never believed that this can happen simply through its decisions, but rather that its decisions will be carried out only if the mass of party members is convinced that the conduct of the ECCI is correct.

On this basis, I must state that any fear that decisions of the Fourth Congress signify the beginning of a progressive elimination of the national sections' independence is unfounded. The Norwegian party, like every other section of the Communist International, has the right to organise and conduct all its affairs independently. Only in circumstances where the ECCI believes that a decision of the Norwegian Labour Party is incorrect or contrary to communism has it the right and duty to intervene. In such occasions it will contact the Norwegian party, study the disagreements thoroughly, and make its decision on the basis of all available information. The Norwegian party must then submit to this decision, because when you belong to an International, its decisions must be carried out.

The Norwegian party can then appeal to a world congress, the highest body for all Communists and all Communist parties. If we are to have an International there can be no absolute international centralism and no absolute party independence. The independence of the sections on the basis and in the framework of the Communist International is a necessity in terms of the interests of both the Norwegian and the international workers' movement.

The Executive Committee confirms this statement. It also takes note of the following statement made by its delegate Comrade Bukharin at the congress of the Norwegian party on 23 February:<sup>6</sup>

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6 The Norwegian Labour Party congress in Kristiania (Oslo) was held 24–28 February 1923. According to the published proceedings of this congress, Bukharin actually read out the ECCI statement on 27 February. See Norwegian Labour Party 1923, pp. 90–1.

We confirm on behalf of the ECCI the statements made by Comrade Radek.

We consider it desirable that a responsible comrade of the Tranmael current be sent with consultative vote to the next session of the Enlarged Executive Committee, alongside the members elected by the Fourth World Congress.

Also, we will propose to the Enlarged Executive Committee session that in view of the severe crisis of the Norwegian party, an exception be made and that two Norwegian comrades (Scheflo and a responsible comrade of the Tranmael current) be considered as members of the ECCI, sharing one vote.

Given that the world congress decided that the Norwegian party should have two additional representatives at the Enlarged Executive Committee session, in addition to Comrade Scheflo, the ECCI's delegation insists that Comrade Tranmael be sent as a delegate to this meeting.

The Comintern delegation considers that the minority must be represented both in the central executive leadership and the editorial staff of the central newspaper, regardless of which faction obtains a majority at the national congress.

The ECCI confirmed the Presidium decisions taken on the basis of these statements. The Enlarged Executive Committee confirms the Presidium decisions regarding Comintern delegates [to member parties] and the desirability of prior discussions with parties regarding important issues, the functionaries of the organisational apparatus of the Comintern and the parties, and so on. All these decisions will contribute to avoiding disruptions and misunderstandings. The Enlarged Executive Committee approves the ECCI's policy toward the Norwegian party.

In expressing the Comintern's organisational policy, the ECCI has defended the need for a centralised leadership of the proletarian class struggle; the gradual transformation of the Norwegian party; the need to bear in mind its historical specificity. The Enlarged Executive Committee approves of these actions. The ECCI has made concessions to the Norwegian majority that must surely show to every Norwegian worker that the Communist International holds in high esteem the courageous Norwegian party, despite deviations in its ranks on organisational and political questions. In approving these considered policies, the Enlarged Executive Committee expresses its conviction that the Norwegian comrades, for their part, will do everything possible to overcome their party's organisational weaknesses and take into account the requirements of modern class struggle as these find expression in the Comintern's decisions.

## II

The Enlarged Executive Committee gives expression to these goals by recommending to the Norwegian party the following organisational measures:

1.) The party leadership must take protective measures so that the Mot Dag group does not evolve into a factional leadership clique. To the degree that Mot Dag concerns itself with Communist propaganda among students, it has a right to a separate organisational existence. However, many leading comrades have joined Mot Dag who are not students but rather see it above all as a discussion club regarding party matters. The Comintern welcomes every measure that strengthens the intellectual life of Communist parties. This should not be pursued by separating off the leadership from the party base in separate discussion clubs together with young party intellectuals, and all the less through separating off a group of leaders. Discussion in the party should take place, in general, in proletarian organisations, so that issues of party tactics and the Communist world outlook do not become the secret knowledge of a small group in the party. The transformation of the Mot Dag group into a factional club holds the danger that the other faction will also found a separate organisation, creating a danger that the party will be torn apart.

2.) As regards reorganising the party, it is time at last to carry out some practical work. The ECCI agrees completely with the Norwegian party in the view that organising Communists in the factories creates the party's basic units. As for the question of whether these units should be organised locally or in terms of trade unions, the ECCI believes that uniting the base cells locally is the only possible and definitive form for party organisation. This flows from the Communist Party's goal of leading the proletarian class struggle as a whole, rather than just leading trade-union struggles. But it is of course left to the party to choose the path and means for making the transition from its recent condition to the organisation that a Communist Party needs and requires.

3.) As for the party's relationship to trade-union issues, the process of separating the party from trade-union structures, now under way, must be carried out with greater attention, zeal, and care regarding relations with the trade unions.<sup>7</sup> Communists in the trade unions have the task of ensuring that the unions continue to develop in a Communist spirit. To this end, Communists in the trade unions must work under the leadership of the party Central Committee,

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7 The NLP combined individual party membership with membership through trade-union affiliation. A resolution of the Comintern's Fourth Congress stated that, 'the Congress instructs the [Norwegian Labour] 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'. In Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 1091.

which in turn must be guided in its decisions by close contact with the comrades working in the unions. Both the Central Committee of the Norwegian party and Communists in the trade unions have the responsibility of working for the affiliation of the Norwegian trade unions to the Red International of Labour Unions.

4.) As regards the youth organisation, it remains organisationally independent but is subordinate to the political leadership of the party Central Committee. It goes without saying that the Communist Youth has not only the right but the duty to take up eagerly all vital questions before the party, such as the Communist International, to discuss these issues and to adopt policies based on the outcome of these discussions. The ECCI asks the Norwegian party leadership to show understanding in its dealings with the youth organisation, the education of whose members demands a significant degree of intellectual freedom.

### III

1.) The ECCI welcomes the growth and consolidation of the Norwegian party. Its expansion, its influence in the working class, and its penetration among civil servants and the so-called free professions show that as the struggle in Norway grows more intense, the party will be able to expand its influence beyond the purely proletarian layers and carry out the proletarian task of leading all the oppressed and afflicted. Norway's social structure, the presence in the country of a large number of poor fishermen and poor peasants, gives the party the duty of multiplying its efforts ten times over to tear these masses away from the influence of the bourgeois parties that, making a pretence of favouring the peasants, carry out the policies of the rich peasants and the banks. The Enlarged Executive Committee believes that the party will link up with the poor peasantry partly through its own structures and partly through peasant organisations willing to join it in a united front of struggle. The Enlarged Executive Committee is convinced that this process will soon demonstrate that we do not seek a rule of the working class that ignores the interests of the poor peasants, but rather that we will join with them in representing the interests of the working and exploited popular masses of the city and countryside.

The ECCI takes note of the concern expressed by the majority of the Norwegian delegation regarding the dangers inherent in the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government in Norway. These dangers are also acknowledged in the ECCI's general resolution on this slogan. The dangers lie in the possibility that the struggle to penetrate the peasant masses and their organisations could be replaced by parliamentary alliances with reactionary peasant parties. But these

dangers can be readily avoided if the party directs its action and propaganda to the broad masses of the peasantry and takes appropriate measures in parliament and in the countryside to force the bourgeois peasant parties either to accept or reject the party's proposals in the interests of poor peasants, including that of the workers' and peasants' government. This can promote a differentiation between the peasant parties and a united front with the masses of poor peasants.

Given the doubts expressed by representatives of the majority of Norwegian comrades regarding the workers' and peasants' government demand, the ECCI states that although it holds these fears to be unfounded, it takes them into account in asking the party to organise a thorough discussion of these issues among the broadest masses. Only when this discussion is over should a party convention decide how the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government is to be implemented.

2.) Given the accusations raised repeatedly by the party majority that the parliamentary fraction is pursuing an opportunistic policy,<sup>8</sup> the ECCI proposed to the Norwegian delegation that part or all of the parliamentary fraction be recalled. The ECCI made this proposal in the belief that despite the value to the Communist movement of utilising the parliamentary arena, under some circumstances it may be necessary to do without parliamentary work for a certain time in order to safeguard the party's unity on a revolutionary foundation and thus to utilise parliament in a revolutionary fashion in the future. The majority of the Norwegian delegation opposed recalling the entire parliamentary fraction. In explaining this stand, the majority of the delegation expressed its understanding of the party's interest in maintaining a parliamentary fraction, while also adding that it believed the complaints against this fraction were exaggerated.

When the majority of the fraction proposed that the party executive recall individual fraction members, it merely acknowledged a right that the party executive possesses in any case. If individual members of the fraction have in fact been carrying out an opportunist policy, the ECCI expresses its regret that the party executive has not made any use of this right. The ECCI expresses its hope that the party executive will give the parliamentary fraction clear and revolutionary instructions that not only prevent any conflict between fraction and party but also ties the work of the fraction most closely with the struggle of the proletarian masses.

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8 The Norwegian Labour Party's parliamentary fraction was headed by Olav Schefflo of the party's minority opposition.

3.) The ECCI expresses its strong conviction that resolving the questions relating to the Norwegian party will permit it to hasten in autonomous fashion its evolution toward communism and its firm and secure integration into the international front of the Communist proletariat. It will thus finally feel itself to be a part of the Communist International without reservations. The Enlarged Executive Committee takes for granted that the Norwegian comrades will raise any remaining doubts at the Fifth Congress. However, there will now be an end to any toying with the idea of leaving the Communist International, as suggested by some comrades, and to any threats to split the party, from whatever quarter these might come. The party will develop into a Communist Party that is one with the Communist International for life or death.

**Ewert (Germany):** This resolution contains very broad concessions on organisational questions, without departing from the Comintern's fundamental principles. It also contains political concessions, giving the Norwegian party the possibility of adapting the Comintern's demands to the specific conditions of its country. We hope that the masses of the Norwegian party will agree with this resolution and will overcome resistance in their ranks. We hope they will work with us in building an effective International. (*Applause*)

### Statements

**Ström (Sweden):** The Swedish delegation made the following statement and amendments to the present text in the commission, and we wish to maintain these proposals:

1.) We approve the concessions and the so-called decisions made in the text on a number of organisational issues. However, the Swedish party reserves the right to support at the Fifth Congress certain amendments to the Comintern Statutes proposed by the Norwegian party.

2.) Regarding Mot Dag, we propose that this matter be considered to have been closed by the decision of the Norwegian party congress.

3.) As regards the youth federations' relations with the parties, we agree that the youth have the right to discuss party affairs, if such a discussion is under way in the party. However, we demand that the youth be subject to full discipline with regard to party decisions. The Youth International must be forbidden from carrying out or supporting propaganda against the parties or their leaderships, which would convert the youth movement into an organised faction within the party. In case of conflict

between the party and the ECCI, an attempt must be made to resolve this conflict without the involvement of the youth organisation. The youth may however express their views as party members within the party's structures.

4.) Regarding the Norwegian party's position on the RILU, the party should work now as before for the national trade-union body to affiliate, while maintaining trade-union unity. The party members should act together as disciplined Communists in their trade-union work. However, the necessary collaboration between the party leadership and the comrades active in the trade unions should be carried out in such a way that it does not have the appearance of the party giving orders or of a formal and mechanical subordination.

5.) As for the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, in our opinion it is still politically premature for Norway. The Communist Party must first carry out comprehensive agitational and educational work among the proletarian layers inside the Norwegian peasantry, so that these layers will be won for the party and for united action with the industrialised proletariat in order to wage a common struggle against bourgeois reaction and the capitalist exploiters. This is how the workers' and peasants' government slogan should be understood. We must firmly reject any use of this slogan for a parliamentary rapprochement with any bourgeois party by the Communist parliamentary fraction; we reject any concessions to opportunist currents within the party, or any weakening of the revolutionary class struggle. The essential task of the party, now as before, remains to rally the principal segments of the industrial working class and the entire proletariat and to organise them as a class with the goal of struggling for economic and political liberation.

These are the amendments that we presented to the commission and that were not adopted.

We recognise that the proposal now before us is quite conciliatory on some points, but on other issues – especially the youth question and *Mot Dag* – we cannot accept it. If the question is put forward of the resolution as a whole, we must therefore vote against it.

**Falk (Norway):** Together with two other Norwegian delegates, Hofmo and Tranmael, I wish to inform you that the Norwegian party reserves the right to propose changes in the Communist International's Statutes for submission to the Fifth Congress. We agree that concessions have been made, but we are in favour of incorporating them into the Statutes. The majority of the delegation opposes

the principles of these concessions and also several of the practical proposals. It will therefore vote against the text. The majority believes that the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government should not be proposed for all Communist parties. However, it has no objection to discussing this slogan in the Norwegian party and presenting it for decision to the party congress. In addition, the majority wishes to clarify that it made no special criticism of the opportunist tendencies of the parliamentary group. Such tendencies are present everywhere in the party.

The majority of the delegation cannot vote for this resolution.

Bukharin criticised the delegation because it did not take part in a thorough discussion of the measures proposed with respect to the Norwegian party. The reason is that we were invited to take part in a discussion regarding the limits of centralism, and we did not anticipate that specific proposals would be made.

We are aware that we will stand alone at the [world] congress, but we are sure that we are not isolated within the Communist movement. That is why we find it to have been so positive that an opportunity was provided here to discuss these issues.

Regardless of accusations of opportunism, our outlook is no less revolutionary than that of the majority.

Much has been said here regarding the danger of a split in the party. This danger will not arise from our faction. Whether or not a split takes place depends rather on the specific policies followed by the ECCI in the coming months and on the conduct of the opposition.

**Albert Inkpin** (Britain): The British delegation does not intend to extend this debate. It wishes only to refute the assertion of Comrade Falk that the positions advanced by him and his friends are shared by other sections of the International. No section of the International shares such views. The British delegation asked me to read out the following statement, which it adopted unanimously:

The British delegation, whose internal relations are now posed for study by the Comintern, approves of the Executive Committee's decision in the matter of the Scandinavian parties. We trust that the Scandinavian comrades, like the British with regard to British issues, will do everything in their power to implement these decisions. The only course that can strengthen the bonds of solidarity within the Communist International as a whole is for its sections to submit loyally to its decisions and work tirelessly in its campaigns.

**Amter** (United States): Comrade Falk was so bold as to claim his belief that he and his friends were not alone in their views within the Communist International. The reality of this assembly must not have convinced Comrade Falk that he stands absolutely alone.

Falk also said that the danger of a breach would depend on the measures taken by the ECCI. This is like the actions of a provocateur who has come here in order to accuse the Communist International of dishonest intentions. The Enlarged Executive Committee has made great concessions, more than Falk deserves. This decision will have the effect of uniting all the Norwegian comrades who wish to remain within the Communist International and bringing the workers of Norway under its banner and discipline.

*(Amter reads a statement of the United States and Canadian delegations approving of the decision made regarding the Norwegian question and the principles of democratic centralism.)*

**Stirner** [Edgar Woog] (South America): The Norwegian comrades, in acting as they have done, have not given any consideration of what the results may be. We in the South American parties have just concluded a debate on democratic centralism and have, after great efforts, defeated the anarchist and syndicalist currents. If the question of centralism is not resolved in the Comintern's favour, we in the new parties will have this discussion with the anarchists and syndicalists all over again. The South American parties will vote for the resolution of the Executive Committee.

**Ewert** (Germany): In the name of the German, Czechoslovak, Austrian, French, Italian, Dutch, Swiss, Finnish, Yugoslavian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Polish parties, and also the Communist Youth International, I wish to reject Comrade Falk's assertion that he does not stand alone within the Communist International. The undersigned groups regard Falk's concealed threat of a split as a provocation that should be resolutely rejected by the Norwegian working class. *(Strong applause)*

**Böttcher** (Chair): The debate has surely shown that Comrade Falk and his point of view stand alone and that no other section of the Comintern shares his view.

**Zinoviev**: Although Comrade Falk's last speech makes this motion more difficult, I nonetheless propose that the Executive Committee elect an additional Scandinavian comrade to the Presidium with the goal of strengthened collaboration. The two Scandinavian representatives would share one vote. I would propose that the Swedish and Norwegian parties alternate in sending a com-

rade whose task is to inform the Executive Committee regarding the true state of affairs in the Scandinavian parties. I hope that this motion will be adopted despite the challenging speech by Comrade Falk. The debate has shown that Comrade Falk and his point of view stand wholly alone in the Comintern. If his intention was to demonstrate this isolation, he has succeeded brilliantly. As regards the threat of split, I can only repeat what I already said in the commission. We know Comrade Tranmael as a comrade who has fought for many years in the workers' movement and who will remain true to it. We do not know Comrade Falk. However, we have often had the experience that such intellectual left radicals end up with the bourgeoisie. I do not know whether Comrade Falk was asked to threaten a split in the name of the Norwegian party. But we are not easily intimidated. Many who initiated splits of this kind ended up as political corpses. (*Loud applause*) If he should actually head down this road, we can only assure him that he may play a role with the Social Democrats but certainly not with us. The Norwegian workers will not give him an opportunity to play with the fate of the party. Long live the unity of the Norwegian party! (*Long, sustained applause. The delegates sing 'The Internationale'.*)

**Falk (Norway):** We made no threat of a split by the Norwegian party, nor can this be inferred by any words I said. The danger of a split would arise from the attitude of the opposition within the party and also from the attitude of the ECCI.

The Norwegian delegation is united with regard to this statement.

**Peder Furubotn (Norway):** As chair of the Norwegian youth organisation, I wish to state that we see our task as avoiding a split and that we will do everything in our power to prevent the party from leaving the Comintern. The Norwegian working class faces a heating up of the class struggle and will feel the fist of capitalism just as much as workers of other countries. In such a situation all sincere and revolutionary workers, including those outside the youth organisation, will see it as their task to prepare for coming struggles and the coming revolution in close unity with the Comintern. (*Applause*)

*(The chair puts the entire resolution on the Norwegian question to a vote. It is adopted by all votes against those of the Scandinavians, to loud applause by the delegates. So too is the motion by Comrade Zinoviev for the Scandinavian comrades to delegate an additional comrade to the Presidium.)*

*(Adjournment: 6:00 p.m.)*

## Bulgaria; Commission Reports; Resolutions

*Report of Credentials Commission. Report on the coup in Bulgaria and the Communist Party. Appeal to Bulgarian workers and peasants. Resolution on Executive Committee report. Resolution on the workers' and peasants' government. Resolution on the Hamburg Congress. Resolution on the Russia-British conflict. Resolution on Communists' attitude to religion. Resolution on programme. Resolution regarding the murder of Comrade Vorovsky. Resolution on the Japanese question. Resolution on fascism. Resolution on the trade-union question. Resolution on the cooperatives question. Report on the Italian question. Resolution on the Italian question. Resolution on the Swiss question. Resolution on the Austrian question. Report from the Women's Commission. Report on the Dutch question. Report on the British question. Conference of blacks. Resolution on the Fifth World Congress. Re-election of the Presidium. Greetings and thanks. Closing address.*

*Speakers: Hoernle, Radek, Katayama, Walcher, Hoernle, Lunacharsky, Neurath, Zetkin, Trachtenberg, Böttcher, Zinoviev.*

*(The session was opened at 2:00 p.m. Comrade Böttcher was in the chair.)*

### Report of Credentials Commission

**Hoernle** (Germany): The Credentials Commission checked all mandates and found them all to be in order. The Workers' Parties of the United States and Canada, which are affiliated to the Comintern as sympathising parties, have a consultative vote.<sup>1</sup> *(The report is approved.)*

### The Coup in Bulgaria and the Communist Party

**Radek** (reporter): The coup d'état in Bulgaria forms part of the victorious advance of world reaction.<sup>2</sup> The peasant government in Bulgaria was the only alien element in bourgeois rule across the Balkans. It was the only government

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<sup>1</sup> The minutes of the Credentials Commission can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/108.

<sup>2</sup> On 9 June 1923 the government of Aleksandar Stamboliyski, leader of the Bulgarian National

that, despite its efforts to carry out the Treaty of Neuilly,<sup>3</sup> was perceived by the bourgeois world as a peasant regime opposed to the urban bourgeoisie. The ouster of Stamboliyski is hailed by fascist papers from the *Morning Post* to Stinnes's press – which is enough to show that a major shift has taken place in the Balkans in favour of world reaction.

The new and supposedly bourgeois-democratic regime that has emerged from the coup is in close contact with the Russian counterrevolution. There is no doubt that Wrangel officers have played a role in it. The involvement in the coup of the counterrevolutionary Russian press, beginning with *Rul*, shows that these forces hoped to gain strength from this development.

From the vantage point of world politics, the coup is an event in the general struggle of the two powers now contending for hegemony in Europe, France and Britain.

Stamboliyski's fall and the victory of the new White government signify that the British government has acquired an outpost for its policy of Eastern containment against Soviet Russia. The Little Entente,<sup>4</sup> a tool of France, supported Stamboliyski because his government pursued a policy of carrying out the Neuilly Treaty.

Italy is preoccupied with the Adriatic and therefore locked in struggle with Yugoslavia. The coup may well have taken place without direct material aid from Britain and Italy; even so, there is not the slightest doubt that Britain and Italy are doing all they can on behalf of the victorious clique that led the coup. When the Yugoslav government wished to take diplomatic action against the coup regime in Bulgaria, the British ambassador Young in Belgrade blocked this step. True, we are not exactly defenders of the Neuilly Treaty, but in terms of the world situation it is Great Britain that is taking the initiative at this moment to encircle Soviet Russia. In this context, the coup is another move in a new game

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Agrarian Union (sometimes referred to as the Peasant Party) was ousted in a coup by right-wing forces within the military and police, with support from rightist parties and nationalist Macedonian exiles, who had been displaced during the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. The coup was quickly legitimised by Bulgaria's king, Tsar Boris III. A new government headed by Aleksandar Tsankov came to power. In many rural areas throughout the country over the next few days, there was widespread resistance to the right-wing coup. Thousands of poorly armed peasants and rural toilers, including some Communist Party members acting on their own, confronted regular units of the army, and the resistance was crushed. During the course of this entire conflict, however, the Bulgarian Communist Party took a position of neutrality, seeing it as an internecine struggle between the urban and rural bourgeoisie in which workers had no stake.

3 For the Treaty of Neuilly, see p. 230, n. 10.

4 For the Little Entente, see p. 76, n. 19.

of containment of Soviet Russia. This alone shows that what we see here is an event of major political importance, which we must deal with very attentively.

Clearly this victory of the Whites in Bulgaria will spur on the fascists in every country. A handful of officers overthrew in three hours a government that had the unquestioned support of a majority of peasants. That fact spurs on fascist adventurers everywhere, above all in Czechoslovakia, German Austria, and Germany.

This was the first time that a major Communist Party was in battle. It lost the battle and, what is even more unfortunate, judging from the Bulgarian papers between 9 June and 16 June, it does not yet recognise this fact. During the entire week of its defeat, the party did not understand the reasons for this defeat and defended its conduct as a correct Communist policy. We must admit that not a single Communist paper in Europe said on its own initiative that what we have here is a defeat for the Communist International, a defeat not because the enemy was too powerful but because of the absence of a will to struggle in the Communist Party.

There are even Communist papers that reprint and disseminate the theory of the Bulgarian comrades. It is necessary here – not because we wish to play the role of judge in the defeat of one of our parties, but for practical reasons – that we express our understanding of the situation clearly. I repeat: there is a danger of such errors in Czechoslovakia, where the situation is quite similar. Such errors could also be made in Germany.

The first question is whether the Bulgarian comrades were in a position to prevent this defeat. Given the social and political structure in Bulgaria, was it possible to block the coup of the Whites, either alone or in alliance with the peasantry? We believe it was. The country's social structure is such that 80 to 90 per cent of the population are peasants. Among the 700,000 independent peasant farms, 285,000 belong to peasants who have less than 30 *deka*.<sup>5</sup> Given the state of Bulgarian agriculture, these are semi-proletarianised peasants. Another 263,000 peasant farms have between 30 and 100 *deka*. And our Bulgarian comrades explain in their report that any peasant in Bulgaria who has less than 100 *deka* is a poor, small peasant. That means there were 500,000 of these poor peasants with whom we could have formed a social bond. The bourgeoisie in the cities is very weak, and there is no big bourgeoisie at all. The urban bourgeoisie consists of merchants, handicraft workers, speculators, intellectuals, and bureaucrats. Thus there is no [capitalist] class with strength arising from its role in production. The working class is very small, but it is bet-

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5 Presumably a reference to decares. One decare equals 0.1 hectares.

ter organised than in any other country. With 100,000 workers, the party has 40,000 members – a higher percentage than in any other country.

The final element is the military. Thanks to the Neuilly Treaty, the army is demobilised. That, in outline, is the relationship of forces.

*The political situation:* The bourgeoisie and the generals, defeated in the war after forty years of rule, were then swept aside by peasant resistance. That is indicated by the voting in elections. In 1920 the bourgeois parties together received 250,000 votes; in 1923, 219,000. The Communist Party, meanwhile, received 148,000 in 1920 and 230,000 in 1923. So the Communist Party alone receives more votes than all the bourgeois parties combined. The strongest party, which as the ruling party had the means to determine the elections, is the Peasant Party [National Agrarian Union], with 121,000 registered members. Of these, 115,000 were poor, small peasants. So this was a party that in terms of its social composition was a potential coalition partner for us.

Now as you know, this party was led by a small clique of intellectuals at the head of the peasants who were more closely linked with a small layer of peasant bourgeois than with the great masses who supported them. They saw that the Communist Party was the only strong force that could compete with them for peasant support, and their government therefore recently persecuted our party. This caused great bitterness in our ranks. But there is no doubt that the Communist Party did not do what was needed in order either to force the Stamboliyski party into a coalition or to split it apart.

Our party had not done enough work among the peasants. That is shown by the facts. When Stamboliyski refused to ally with them, the party did not expose him before the peasant masses in such a way as to split the Peasant Party.

What is more, I omitted an important political factor in the entire situation that shows we could have acted even against Stamboliyski. During the entire modern history of Bulgaria, the Macedonian question has played an important role. Macedonia is inhabited by peasants, and it is very hard to say whether they are Bulgarians or Serbs. So Macedonia has long been a point of contention between Serbia and Bulgaria. As a result of Bulgaria's defeat in the war, Stamboliyski and the Peasant Party conceded the loss of Macedonia. Moreover, this was not merely a formal gesture. Stamboliyski signed a treaty with Yugoslavia in Niš on the basis of which he brutally suppressed the old Macedonian organisations.<sup>6</sup>

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6 Ottoman Macedonia was divided up after the 1912–13 Balkan War between Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Albania. Due to anti-Macedonian campaigns in Serbia and Greece, thousands fled to Bulgaria, where a number of Macedonian nationalist organisations were formed.

These organisations are made up of small and poor peasants with a revolutionary history. They fought against the rule of the Turkish landowners; they fought against the Serbian bourgeoisie; they have longstanding revolutionary organisations. There have long been sympathies among them for the Russian Revolution. The Macedonian organisations were a social factor with which we could have allied – including against Stamboliyski. They are the decisive military force there and have a large, illegal armed organisation. Through ties with them we could have pressured the Stamboliyski regime so that, if they had to carry out the Neuilly Treaty, they would at least not persecute these organisations. The party did not do that; indeed – and this is characteristic – the Macedonian question played no role at all in their presentation of policy questions. Two months ago, Kabakchiev published an article on the situation in Bulgaria that appeared in *Inprekorr*, and I have just reread it. In the entire article, in all its tactical calculations, not a word is said on the Macedonian question.<sup>7</sup>

The party defended its policy by saying, 'We can take hold of power, but given the international situation, we will be crushed.' I would like to ask that special attention be paid to this argument by comrades – and I am thinking of the Czech comrades – who have made this very same case with respect to their own countries. The Bulgarian party presents the matter as if they can win only if victory falls from heaven, very easily, and they are surrounded by a sea of revolutions.

Bulgaria's isolation – surrounded by Serbia, Greece, and Romania – is a fact that naturally poses a serious danger for the Bulgarian revolution and weighs on the party. The situation has been eased in recent years, however, through the Greece-Turkey war and the Greek Revolution, which ignited the fire of revolution in the Balkans.<sup>8</sup> The Bulgarian party did not respond to the Greek Revolution; it waited for a favourable situation. The counterrevolution, however, was well aware that in politics it is necessary to take hold of the initiative. Looking at the situation from an international point of view, the counterrevolution – that is, the clique of veteran officers and bureaucrats that carried out the coup – faces problems. This government, based on support in Macedonia, poses a danger for Serbia and must fear Serbia. Nonetheless, the counterrevolutionaries dared to act. They understood what a veteran Communist Party did not

7 Kabakchiev's article, 'Bourgeois Reaction in Bulgaria', appeared in *Inprekorr*, 15 May 1923.

8 The Greek Revolution here refers to the 11 September 1922 military uprising of anti-royalist officers against the country's monarchy, forcing King Constantine I to abdicate.

For the Greek-Turkish war, see p. 92, n. 10.

understand: that it is necessary to dare at the decisive moment. Accomplished facts have a logic, and when you possess the initiative, this logic makes things difficult for the enemy as well.

Comrades, the cause of this defeat is that our Bulgarian party was Social-Democratic-Marxist. It accomplished wonders in the sphere of propaganda and organisation, but at a historic moment it was not able to carry out the transition from agitation and opposition to the deed, to action. This danger threatens several other parties. The Bulgarian comrades' relationship to the peasants and to the national question resulted from the fact that their party did not have the heroic courage without which one cannot carry out a revolutionary struggle. And because they did not dare to struggle, these comrades – who were in full agreement in discussion of the Macedonian question when it was explained to them – did not understand, in practice, how to bring Acheron into motion.<sup>9</sup>

The defeat is decisive. It is absurd to think that, given the pulverised condition of the masses in a peasant country, those holding power and the state apparatus will not be able to hang on for a long time, despite their social weakness. The moment to act was when the coup existed only in Sofia, given that we were the only centralised force throughout the entire country. The railway and telegraph workers are with us; we had the connections in our hands. It is beyond any doubt that, at the moment when the Peasant Party was struggling for its life, the historical conditions were present to form a coalition with it, despite everything that separates us from them. When Kornilov attempted a rebellion [in Russia], our relationship with Kerensky was no better – indeed rather worse – than the Bulgarian comrades to Stamboliyski.<sup>10</sup> Our party acted then with all its energy in the defence against Kornilov. And after the Kornilov affair, Lenin, in his article on compromises, made a direct offer of a coalition with the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries.<sup>11</sup>

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9 'Acheron' here refers to the Bulgarian working masses. In ancient Greek mythology, Acheron was one of the rivers of the underworld, flowing beneath the surface. The reference by Radek is to the article 'The Acheron in Motion' by Rosa Luxemburg, written in November 1918. Luxemburg was using this word as a metaphor for the situation of the working class in the German revolution.

10 For the attempted Kornilov coup against Kerensky in Russia, see p. 479–80, n. 13.

11 Lenin's offer was that the Bolsheviks would support a Menshevik-SR governmental bloc 'wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, the latter taking over all power locally as well.' The Bolsheviks would make no claim to participate in the government and would refrain from demanding an immediate transfer of power to the proletariat. A condition was that the Bolsheviks, who had been persecuted by the Provisional Government, would have complete freedom of propaganda, and that the Constituent Assembly would be convened without delay. See Lenin, 'On Compromises' in *LCW*, 25, pp. 309–14.

The Bulgarian party has tried to gloss over its defeat, rather than to understand it. We have here the appeals of the Bulgarian party. They are the saddest thing about the entire defeat. We have the appeals of 9 June and 15 June and quite a number of articles. In them the party advances the viewpoint that the struggle is between two bourgeois cliques and that we, the working class, are standing aside, hoping that freedom of the press and all those other good things will be provided to us. That is the appeal of 9 June.<sup>12</sup>

A section of the working class, without leadership from the party, joined in struggle with the peasants. The party repudiated them. In their appeal of 16 June – the most depressing appeal I have ever read – the party says no more and no less than the following:

Hundreds and thousands of workers and peasants are being arrested and handed over to the courts for violating the emergency law against banditry on the pretext that they have resisted the coup. We declare that in an unclear situation, a moment of civil war between the two bourgeois cliques, a section of the workers is defending life and family and has not taken part in a struggle for power.

In other words, the workers were neutral, and when shots were fired, this only happened because they have wives and little children. But they have not fought against the coup. It is a theory of neutrality between two camps within the bourgeoisie. A declaration that we are the only party defending the constitution – the very constitution utilised by King Boris in his conspiracy against Stamboliyski. These are things that point to more than an outward defeat, but rather also to an internal disintegration of the party's leadership. We would be only too happy if it turned out that the party was healthier than its leadership. At the very least, we want to lay our cards on the table with the comrades about this business.

In a struggle between large-scale capitalist layers, who have always defended capital's interests, and petty-bourgeois/peasant layers, we believe that Communist parties have the duty not to act as spectators, as neutral forces, but to seek – if it is not possible to take power directly – to form a coalition with the petty-bourgeois layers. It is un-Marxist to argue that we have here merely two bourgeois layers that are both hostile to us, when previously the peasantry has never ruled anywhere in the world. Then one pulls out the third volume of *Cap-*

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12 The Bulgarian CP's appeals of 9 June and 15 June can be found in *Inprecorr*, 5 July 1923.

*ital* and determines that the peasantry, too, is part of the bourgeoisie. That's a highfalutin argument that totally ignores revolutionary duty.

Now as to the Executive Committee's degree of responsibility for these things. Let me speak of a few facts that enable us to form an opinion on that matter. As early as the Second Congress two groups came from Bulgaria saying that in 1918, when the government of King Ferdinand collapsed, the party had not taken the power, had not been sufficiently active. In part, these were adventurist groups, like Khartakov,<sup>13</sup> who printed articles by Kautsky on terrorism and at the same time posed as 'left communists'. In part these were proletarian forces that were worthwhile but confused. We checked these complaints very carefully, because we knew from the experiences in Germany, from the Kapp Putsch, how important it is to pay heed to such warnings.

The specific charges were disproven in the commission's work. It was clear that the party could not have taken power in 1918. Nonetheless, I must say that we were suspicious that something was rotten in the state of Denmark, and for that reason we addressed the following appeal to the Bulgarian congress of 4 May 1921. I will read it; it is not long.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International sends fraternal greetings to the congress of the Communist Party of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Communist Party, successor of the brave and consistent Tesniaki party, is one of the best mass parties of the International. It was one of the first to fully embrace the principles of communism. The Communist Party of Bulgaria, as a member of the Communist International, succeeded in forging closer ties with the suffering worker and peasant masses, winning new positions of strength, and defying the government of the capitalists and village exploiters.

The ECCI hopes that at this congress the Bulgarian Communist Party will carefully review its organisation and political action to ensure that they correspond to the demands placed by history on the Communist Party. Participation in parliament and municipal councils aims not at achieving petty reforms but at arousing and revolutionising the masses. This revolutionary action requires the existence of illegal organisations, since the bourgeoisie may wreck the party's legal organisations at any moment.

Revolutionary actions do not fall from the sky, and conditions for them cannot be created through agitation and propaganda alone. They arise

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13 An apparent reference to Nikola Kharlakov.

when the party boldly and decisively seeks to heighten and generalise every social conflict. Only in this way can the struggle for partial demands broaden into one for political power.

This struggle for power is all the easier in the Balkans because the bourgeoisie is not as well organised as in Western Europe. The conquest of power by the working class and poor peasants in any Balkan state would give rise to a strong echo in every neighbouring state, for all the governments in the Balkans have to reckon with great difficulties. Revolution in the Balkans means not only the liberation of the Balkan working class from the yoke of capitalism and of the Balkan peasants from the claws of usury, but would hasten immensely the victory of revolution in Central and Western Europe. The revolution in the agrarian countries of Southeast Europe would ease the danger of Germany and Italy being cut off from grain supplies from the United States. It would bring the Asian peoples closer to the revolution, whose flames they now see only in Russia. In the hope that awareness of these duties will inspire the Communist Party of Bulgaria to new efforts, the Executive Committee wishes the congress energetic and fruitful deliberations.

Long live the Bulgarian Communist Party!

Long live the revolution in the Balkan countries!

Long live the Communist International!

Long live the world revolution!

As you see, we did not consider it possible to express criticism; we gave expression to our fears only in a positive manner. We then spoke with the Bulgarian comrades here in many sessions of the Executive Committee. I recall that during the Greek Revolution we struggled with Popov and Yordanov for more than five hours regarding the urgency of the Bulgarian party launching an offensive. We then sent an ECCI representative to Bulgaria who took part in sessions where all these questions were discussed. We can say that even then we understood the danger.

Our error lay in hesitating to intervene in the internal affairs of a great and experienced Communist Party. We did not venture to speak the truth to this party and possibly insert onto its Central Committee – whose members are very good and well-educated veteran comrades – workers who would possibly have carried out a better revolutionary policy. We reproach ourselves for having feared to intervene because of all the outcry about Moscow diktats. We are aware that this error is not small, and we hope that the Communist parties will draw the general lessons of policy regarding this situation in Bulgaria. The outcome there may well cost the lives of hundreds and thousands of proletarians

in Bulgaria and postpone for a long time the victory of the revolution in the Balkans. Beyond that, we have to draw the conclusion that we must set aside such reserve in the present crucial time. We are deeply convinced that in countries that are distant from an explosion, like Norway, we can be very reserved and allow things to ripen, but we cannot hold back in places where the fate of the revolution may be decided in the near future.

I am convinced that after this experience there will be no Communist who will fail to understand why we must set aside all organisational reservations on behalf of the Communist International in such a situation. Where the danger exists that our party may be defeated without a struggle and fascism may triumph, we must remind this party that every Communist Party that is a mass party has the duty to dare and to fight, even at the risk of defeat. For even if the party is defeated, which is hardly preordained in the present situation, it will show the working masses that they have a centre of struggle around which they can gather when the offensive ebbs and when the moment of fascist decomposition arrives.

I submit to you the following appeal:

### **Appeal to Bulgarian Workers and Peasants**

*Rise up in struggle against the government of the white coup d'état in Bulgaria!  
For a workers' and peasants' government!*

To the Bulgarian workers and peasants and the international working class:

Comrades! A small clique of bankrupt bureaucrats along with unemployed officers and speculators has seized state power in Bulgaria through a military coup. The same characters drove the Bulgarian people into the World War and have 200,000 dead on their conscience. Three times they have been driven from power in democratic elections. Yet this same clique has dared to seize power. It has established a government of raging terror against the great majority of the population, against the workers and peasants. The prisons of Bulgaria are filled with workers and peasants, the villages are subjected to the will of reactionary adventurers through punitive expeditions. They are executing the leaders of the peasantry, but do not have the courage to take responsibility for this. Soon they will begin assassinating the leaders of the working class.

The white coup by Bulgarian bureaucrats, generals, and speculators took place with the agreement and help of the Social-Democratic party, which belongs to the Second International. This party, which is complicit in the crimes of Bulgaria's wartime government, has so lost the support of workers that it has shrunk to almost nothing. And now it has sunk to providing a fig leaf for the

counterrevolutionary coup. It has thus shown itself to be worthy of Noske and Turati, who prepared the way for the white putsches in Germany and Italy.<sup>14</sup>

The putsch was carried out with the aid of the scum of Europe's counterrevolution – Wrangel officers, Horthy hangmen, and Romanian boyars. Capitalist Europe, which hypocritically sought to rouse the so-called civilised world against the red terror, is seeking to recognise these murderous adventurers. The British government, made up of British Junkers and manufacturers, is supporting them in the hope of building up Bulgaria into a bulwark against Soviet Russia. The Italian government is supporting them because it sees the warlike adventurers of Sofia as potential allies against Yugoslavia. The capitalist world has approved the white coup in Bulgaria. The fascist bands of all countries see it as proof that mere wishing is enough to plant a boot on the neck of working people. We, the Communist International, a union of all the struggling peoples of East and West, call on the Bulgarian workers and peasants and the international working class to struggle against the makers of the Bulgarian coup.

Peasants of Bulgaria! For you the victory of the White gangs provides a lesson that you must understand if you are to achieve your freedom from the yoke laid on you. The peasant regime of Stamboliyski was overthrown because it did not understand the need to ally with the workers of the city. The interests of the great majority of poor Bulgarian peasants go hand-in-hand with those of workers and handicraftsmen of the cities. Stamboliyski persecuted the working class. He thus lost the only support he could have had in the cities against the bureaucratic clique and the officers who have exploited and oppressed the Bulgarian people for forty years and intend to go on doing so. Stamboliyski paid for his policies with his life, but the Bulgarian peasants live on. To avoid being treated like cattle on into the future, you will have to struggle. We call on you to ally with the workers in the cities and take up the struggle to establish a government of working people of city and countryside.

Workers of Bulgaria! The Stamboliyski government persecuted the workers' movement and the interests of the working people in the cities, while sacrificing the interests of the poor peasants. But where the Stamboliyski government persecuted the workers, the Tsankov government, made up of bureaucrats and generals, aims to destroy them. Anyone who erroneously believes that the present struggle of the victorious White clique against Stamboliyski is merely a conflict between two bourgeois cliques, toward which the working class can remain neutral, will certainly be taught otherwise by the bloody persecution of

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14 In August 1923 the Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party would actually join the Tsankov government.

worker organisations. Those who made the coup are now the enemy. They must be defeated. Unite in struggle against the white putsch not only with the broad peasant masses but with the surviving leaders of the Peasant Party. Show them what the worker-peasant split has led to, and call them to a common struggle for a workers' and peasants' government.

Peasants of Macedonia! Revolutionary Macedonians! You allowed yourselves to be used by the Bulgarian counterrevolution in a coup, even though your interests and your past experiences show that your fate is closely tied to the interests of the working population and of revolution in the Balkans, and around the world. The Stamboliyski government delivered Macedonia into the hands of the Serbian bourgeoisie in order to secure their support. It violently persecuted you. But you must not think that the counterrevolutionary government is in a position to free the Macedonian people. It will struggle against the Bulgarian peasants and workers, against your brothers, and not for the liberation of Macedonia. In order to make their rule secure it will betray Macedonia a thousand times and oppress you, because it cannot tolerate a revolutionary peasant movement in Macedonia. Only a peasants' and workers' government in Bulgaria can awaken the sympathies of peasants and workers in Romania, Yugoslavia, and Greece. Only it will open the road to establishing a Balkan federation of workers' and peasants' governments, which alone can bring you freedom. Without such a government Macedonia will again become the scene of bloody struggles in which your houses will be turned into ashes, your fields churned up and trampled upon.

Macedonian peasants and Macedonian revolutionaries! None of you, however great may be your anger against the Bulgarian Peasant Party and its leaders, should give the slightest support to the government of white terror in Bulgaria. On the contrary, in the interests of your national liberation you must unite with the struggling workers and peasants of Bulgaria.

Workers and peasants of Yugoslavia, Romania, and Greece! Oppose energetically all those in the Balkans who support the Tsankov government. Assail the embassies of these governments with your hatred. Surround White Bulgaria with the wall of your resistance. Hurry to use every opportunity to help the brave working people of Bulgaria who are taking up the struggle against the White government. Workers of Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany! The victory of fascist gangs in Bulgaria will permit the fascist adventurers in your countries to raise their heads and take inspiration. Be alert, be vigilant, and do not let yourselves be intimidated or overrun. Oppose decisively any form of help to White Bulgaria and draw appropriate conclusions from the conduct of Bulgarian reaction and the errors of Bulgarian peasants and workers. Exert every effort to achieve an alliance of poor peasants with workers against the

advance of capitalist mercenaries and the military cliques. Learn how, in the hour of danger, to boldly take up a difficult struggle, so that your timidity will not be paid for with the lives of your best fighters.

Proletarians of every country! We call on you to follow very closely the development of events in Bulgaria. We call on you to inform the broad masses about all the misdeeds of the victorious Bulgarian fascist clique against the working people of Bulgaria, aided by the capitalist governments of other countries. Mobilise against the murderers in Sofia. The signal from Sofia speaks just as clearly to you as the signal from Rome. The working class of every country is in danger. Be aware and prepare to defend yourself!

Down with the fascist gangs and mercenaries of capitalism!

Down with the coup-makers, militarists, and usurers of Sofia!

Long live the Bulgarian workers' and peasants' government!

Long live the federation of workers' and peasants' governments!

Long live the solidarity of the international working class in struggle against the fascist danger!

The Enlarged Executive Committee  
of the Communist International

*(The appeal was adopted unanimously.)*

### **Commission Reports**

*The following resolutions were adopted unanimously and without debate.*

#### **Resolution on the Executive Committee Report**

The plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee has received reports on the activity of the ECCI and the Presidium in the period since the last world congress. It approves the ECCI's activity and all its decisions. The plenum declares in particular that it agrees with the conduct of the Executive Committee and the measures that it has taken with regard to resolving disputed questions that have come up in each of the sections.

### **Resolution on the Workers' and Peasants' Government**

Relations between the working class and the peasantry constitute one of the fundamental issues in the international proletarian revolution. For our struggle to succeed both before and after taking power, the interrelationships of these two main classes of working people must be evaluated correctly.

A thorough general appreciation of these interrelationships is presented in the resolution on the agrarian question adopted by the Second World Congress of the Comintern. It reads as follows:

1.) Only the urban and industrial proletariat, led by the Communist Party, can liberate the working masses of the countryside from the yoke of capital and landed proprietorship, from ruin and the imperialist wars that will inevitably break out again and again if the capitalist system endures. The working masses of the countryside cannot find salvation except in alliance with the Communist proletariat, and unless they give the latter devoted support in its revolutionary struggle to throw off the yoke of the landowners (the big landed proprietors) and the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, the industrial workers cannot accomplish their epoch-making mission of emancipating mankind from the yoke of capital and from wars if they confine themselves to their narrow craft or trade interests, and complacently restrict themselves to attaining an improvement in their own conditions, which may sometimes be tolerable in the petty-bourgeois sense. This is exactly what happens to the 'labour aristocracy' of many advanced countries, who constitute the core of the so-called socialist parties of the Second International. In reality they are the bitter enemies and betrayers of socialism; they are petty-bourgeois chauvinists and agents of the bourgeoisie within the working-class movement.

The proletariat can be a genuinely revolutionary class and act in a really socialist manner only if it comes out and serves as the vanguard of all the working and exploited people, as their leader in the struggle for the overthrow of the exploiters. However, this cannot be achieved unless the class struggle is carried into the countryside, unless the rural working masses are united around the Communist Party of the urban proletariat, and unless they are trained by the proletariat.

2.) The working and exploited people of the countryside, whom the urban proletariat must lead into the struggle or, at all events, win over, are represented in all capitalist countries by the following classes:

First, the agricultural proletariat, wage-labourers (by the year, season, or day), who obtain their livelihood by working for hire at capitalist agri-

cultural enterprises. The fundamental tasks of the Communist parties in all countries are to organise this class (politically, militarily, in trade unions, co-operatives, culturally and educationally, etc.) independently and separately from other groups of the rural population; to conduct intensive propaganda and agitation among this class; and to win its support for the soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Second, the semi-proletarians or peasants who till tiny plots of land, that is, those who obtain their livelihood partly as wage-labourers at agricultural and industrial capitalist enterprises and partly by working their own or rented plots of land, which provide their families with only part of their means of subsistence. This group of the rural working population is very numerous in all capitalist countries. However, its existence and special position are played down by the representatives of the bourgeoisie and by the yellow 'Socialists' belonging to the Second International, partly by deliberately deceiving the workers and partly by blindly submitting to the customary petty-bourgeois views and lumping together this group with the mass of the 'peasantry'.

This bourgeois method of duping the workers is to be seen mostly in Germany and in France, but also in America and other countries. If the work of the Communist Party is properly organised, this group will become its assured supporter, for the lot of these semi-proletarians is a very hard one and they stand to gain enormously and immediately from Soviet government and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In some countries there is no sharp division between the first and the second group. Under certain circumstances they can share a common organisation.

Third, the small peasantry, that is, the small-scale cultivators who, either as owners or as tenants, hold small plots of land that enable them to satisfy the needs of their families and their farms, and do not hire outside labour. This layer, as such, undoubtedly stands to gain by the victory of the proletariat. ...

3.) Taken together, the three groups enumerated above constitute the majority of the rural population in all capitalist countries. That is why the success of the proletarian revolution is fully assured, not only in the cities but in the countryside as well. ...<sup>15</sup>

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15 The full text of the 'Theses on the Agrarian Question' adopted by the Comintern's Second Congress can be found in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, pp. 660–70.

The Fourth World Congress of the Comintern further developed and expanded this resolution by providing an outline of a Comintern action programme (minimum programme) on the agrarian question.<sup>16</sup>

The Second Congress thus provided programmatic foundations regarding the mutual relations of the working class and peasantry. The Fourth Congress made these foundations more specific. The present plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee now has to provide a compact political formula that will permit us to carry out the decisions of the Second and Fourth Congresses with the greatest possible success.

This political formula is: *the workers' and peasants' government*.

After the first imperialist world war, the peasantry was different from what it had been before the war. In most of the countries that had taken part in the war, significant layers of the peasantry had already gained some political experience.

As a result, during recent years serious attempts have become evident to found peasant parties trying to play an independent political role. Note in particular the repeated attempts in recent years to found a 'Green Peasants International'.<sup>17</sup>

All things considered, the attempts of the peasantry to pursue an independent policy midway between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have been without success. In the 'advanced' bourgeois countries, the bourgeoisie and the large landowners continue as before to lead the peasantry around by the nose. Even where apparently independent peasant parties exist, they are mostly led by alien class forces (clergy, lawyers, large landowners). The working peasant masses serve as merely a tool and as political cannon fodder for the worst enemies of their class. That is one of the pillars of the bourgeois government. Recent history is full of examples where broad layers of the working peasantry were able to defend their political interests only in close alliance with the revolutionary proletariat, and provided that the peasantry supported the revolutionary proletarian party.

Meanwhile, the parties of the Second International are altering their stance toward the peasantry. Instead of ignoring the peasants, as they had traditionally done, they are now making attempts to involve the peasantry in their counterrevolutionary Social-Democratic politics. The most important Social-Democratic parties are more and more losing influential positions in the work-

16 For the Fourth Congress's Agrarian Action Programme, see Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 954–9.

17 For the 'Green International', see p. 417, n. 51.

ing class and are frantically searching for a new social basis. As this happens, they unavoidably turn to the countryside, directing their attention to the prosperous layers of the peasantry. The task of Communists today lies in immediately occupying the positions of strength that the Social Democrats are giving up, while simultaneously taking care to thwart the attempt of the Social Democrats to build a new base in the countryside. To this end, they must unite with the rural workers and agricultural semi-proletariat around our banner while winning the peasantry to an alliance with the revolutionary proletariat.

The mere fact that the Communist parties internationally are embracing the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government and beginning agitation for it will be the start of neutralising the middle layers of the peasantry and winning the small peasants.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International finds that the overwhelming majority of Comintern sections have been extremely sluggish with respect to work in rural areas and have caused enormous damage to our cause in this regard. This sluggish conduct reflects the regrettable tradition of the Second International, from which the largest Comintern parties emerged. It also reflects an incorrect theoretical position on the peasantry, which presents matters as if 'orthodox Marxism' means that a workers' party need not concern itself with the peasantry. Thirdly, it reflects a narrow-minded craft-guild approach to the proletarian class struggle.

The task of Communist parties in the present period is to break once and for all with this guild-like attitude. The Communist parties must not regard themselves as representing only an extreme proletarian opposition *within* the bourgeois social order, as was the case in the heyday of the Second International. Communist parties must embrace the psychology of parties aware that in the near or not-so-near future they will lead the working masses in a struggle against the bourgeois order in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and replace it in state administration. A limited guild-like psychology must be replaced by that of a party with a will to power, one that expresses the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution. A Communist Party must prepare itself to defeat the bourgeoisie tomorrow, and therefore it must today set goals that embrace the entire people. That is why it sets the task of drawing into support of the proletariat all layers of the population that, at the decisive moment, thanks to their social position, can lend aid to the proletarian revolution in one way or another.

The slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, like that of the workers' government before it, does not in any way replace agitation for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the foundation underlying all Communist policy. It does not in any way shove this agitation into the background. On the

contrary, it is the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government that establishes the basis for carrying out the united front, the only correct policy under present conditions that points toward *the dictatorship of the proletariat*. A correct interpretation of the workers' and peasants' government slogan will enable Communists not only to mobilise the proletarian masses in the cities but also to establish important centres of influence in the countryside, and in this way to prepare the ground for taking power.

The workers' and peasants' government slogan will also be helpful to the Communist parties after the proletariat has won power. Through this slogan the proletariat can always and repeatedly remember that its forward march must be in step with the mood among the country's peasantry, that a correct relationship must be established between the victorious proletariat and the peasantry, and that the proletariat's economic measures must be carried out with prudent moderation. This corresponds to the conduct of the victorious Russian proletariat in the present phase of the Russian Revolution, which is known as the New Economic Policy.

It is self-evident that agitation for a 'workers' and peasants' government' must be shaped by the specific relationships in each individual country. For example, in North America it is a question of the working farmers.

The starting point of all our agitation for a workers' and peasants' government is the protection of the peasantry's economic interests, as set out in the decisions of the Comintern Second and Fourth World Congresses. The Enlarged Executive Committee instructs each national party to immediately develop a specific action programme for its relationship with the peasantry and introduce a corresponding draft law through its parliamentary fraction. If this draft really expresses the current interests of the working peasants, it will have a major political impact. Signatures can be gathered in the countryside to support it.

The 'workers' and peasants' government' slogan is a propagandistic formula that enables us to express arithmetically what was previously expressed only algebraically. As such, it can be universally helpful. On the other hand, as a slogan for present political struggle, the 'workers' and peasants' government' slogan will be useful especially in countries like France, Germany, Italy, the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, etc. Moreover, without assistance from the peasantry, whatever form it takes, the victory of proletarian revolution and its consolidation is not possible anywhere. In this sense, the 'workers' and peasants' government' must be a general slogan of Communist parties.

While strongly supporting the 'workers' and peasants' government' slogan, the Comintern Executive Committee also recommends that all Communist parties keep in mind the dangers that could result from its incorrect imple-

mentation. Just like the united-front policy in general, the slogans of the 'workers' government' and the 'workers' and peasants' government' can undoubtedly lead to grave dangers if our parties do not implement them in a revolutionary Marxist spirit. The most evident dangers linked to the demand for a workers' and peasants' government are the following:

1.) In parties where Marxist education is still insufficient, there is a danger that the slogan could be interpreted in the fashion of the Russian Social Revolutionaries. That approach, in the spirit of petty-bourgeois 'socialism', views the entire peasantry as a compact mass and does not take into consideration that there are different layers within the peasantry. The Executive Committee of the Communist International calls to mind the corresponding passage in the programmatic resolution of the Second Congress, which reads:

The large peasants are capitalist entrepreneurs in agriculture, who as a rule employ several hired labourers and are connected with the 'peasantry' only in their low cultural level, habits of life, and the manual labour they themselves perform on their farms. These constitute the largest of the bourgeois strata who are open and determined enemies of the revolutionary proletariat. In all their work in the countryside, the Communist parties must concentrate their attention mainly on the struggle against this stratum, on liberating the toiling and exploited majority of the rural population from the ideological and political influence of these exploiters.<sup>18</sup>

2.) The second danger is that an attempt might be made by not entirely reliable Communists to carry out revolutionary mass work among broad layers of the working peasantry through unprincipled deals in parliament with so-called parliamentary representatives of the peasantry and leaders of so-called peasant parties, which often represent the most reactionary forces of the bourgeoisie.

Although the Communist parties must remain aware of these and similar dangers associated with the use of the 'workers' and peasants' government' slogan, they should not turn their back on the advantages for the proletarian vanguard in being flexible in policy and in the corresponding tactics. They must learn the art of combining penetration of broad layers of working people with a tough, relentless, and consistent defence of the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

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18 'Theses on the Agrarian Question', in Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, pp. 660–70.

Obviously, penetrating the peasant masses and adopting the slogan for a workers' and peasants' government does not convert our party in any way from a workers' party into a 'party of labour' or a 'workers' and peasants' party'. Our party must remain a party of the working class in its social composition and its goals, but this signifies a working class that carries forward with it every layer of the working people and leads them into struggle against capitalism.

One of the most important preconditions for applying the 'workers' and peasants' government' slogan successfully among the broad rural masses is that Communists work very energetically in the trade unions of agricultural workers. In the coming period Communists will have to commit all their energy in order to win a majority of the already existing agricultural workers' unions, or, if they do not exist, found such unions. Among the tasks of a farmworkers' union is the important political goal of taking the 'workers' and peasants' government' slogan into the broad peasant masses. In this sense the agricultural workers' unions provide a bridge between the Communist Party and the countryside.

But the Communist parties must not pass this new task onto the farmworkers' unions alone. The entire party must take up, as one of the most urgent tasks, the winning of the peasant masses to an alliance with the revolutionary proletariat.

### **Resolution on the Hamburg Congress**

1.) In August 1914 the Second International forfeited its existence through humiliating political and moral bankruptcy. By fusing with this organisation, the Two-and-a-Half International has now confirmed and formally codified its own betrayal.<sup>19</sup>

When it was founded, the Two-and-a-Half International wanted to have nothing to do with the parties that had gone along with the politics of war and civil peace. It solemnly undertook to make war on social patriotism and reformism. It wanted to become a gathering point for parties of revolutionary class struggle. It proudly identified with social revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and a council republic. It promised an energetic struggle to socialise key industries and oppose governmental coalitions of the exploited with the exploiters. But there was one thing it did not want: the principles and methods of the Comintern.

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19 For the Hamburg Congress uniting the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals see p. 385, n. 6.

The Two-and-a-Half International was a halfway house between the Second and Third Internationals. Its short lifespan demonstrated, however, that revolution and [proletarian] dictatorship cannot be prepared against the Comintern and without the methods of the Comintern. Socialisation without proletarian dictatorship is self-deception or a swindle.<sup>20</sup> And so the Two-and-a-Half International was condemned to swing like a pendulum back and forth between proletarian revolution and capitalist counterrevolution, between their fruitless socialisation and capitalist reconstruction, until it was ready to undertake this reconstruction without euphemistic phrases in a governmental coalition with the capitalists and in unification with the Second International.

The Two-and-a-Half International expressed the radical inclinations of sections of the working class that wanted revolutionary class struggle and a united front with Communist workers but were not yet ready to undertake proletarian revolution. However, it was increasingly clear that their path to the struggle, to the promised socialisation, and to progress was hopeless. Meanwhile, the workers organised in their ranks began to feel increasing sympathy for the Communist workers and to move closer to them. Their leaders had no alternative, if they wished to avoid losing their following, but to inspire these workers with new hopes and point to a new path. They pointed to the path of unification with the broad masses of workers who support the leaders of the Second International. And thus the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International, who had so often publicly declared that the only unity they favoured was one of all three Internationals and that they would never enter into unity with the Second International alone, submitted to the Second International with no conditions whatsoever.

2.) But the Second International, in renewing itself in Hamburg, did not even try to appear to be what it really wanted to be before the World War. It did not have the courage to renew the solemn oath of Stuttgart and Basel against war.<sup>21</sup>

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20 Leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International in particular were known for putting forward various socialisation schemes that avoided posing the question of overturning capitalist rule and confiscating the bourgeoisie's property. One such scheme put forward by Otto Bauer in 1919 called for establishing government compensation bureaus to set payment terms through government bonds, with capitalists living off the interest payments. In this way, it was anticipated that capitalist property would disappear gradually over several generations.

21 The Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, held 18–24 August 1907, was the scene of a sharp debate between revolutionary and reformist forces within the Second International. The resolution on the fight against war and militarism adopted by the congress included an amendment that had been proposed by Rosa Luxemburg, V.I. Lenin, and

Their leaders, grown wiser through their collapse in the World War, are unable to fool the workers, as they could before 1914, regarding the worth of paper resolutions against war. Moreover, they feared that even a threat of revolution, made only on paper, might be taken seriously by workers. They could not take a stand against imperialism as they still did at the international congresses before the World War, because they were themselves now ministers of capitalist governments – or were seeking to gain such posts. Moreover, during the war they had sunk to the role of conscious accomplices and lackeys of the bourgeoisie. They did not dare to propose to workers genuine means of struggle against the advancing capitalist offensive. They no longer dared speak of socialisation, because they desired capitalist reconstruction, which is only possible if workers bear the cost, and it cannot be achieved without a victorious capitalist offensive. They did not dare proclaim a real struggle against the oppressive weight of the Versailles Treaty, against reparations, against the rape of the Ruhr, against growing armaments for war, against the growing war danger, against national and colonial oppression, against reaction and fascism. For any genuine struggle leads to revolution, and they are opponents of proletarian revolution. They represent within the international workers' movement the counterposed interests of their capitalist states.

They fear any genuine struggle for proletarian interests; they wish to chain the workers to the bourgeoisie with democratic and socialist phrases, just as they themselves are chained. And for these reasons they had to reject in Hamburg a united front with the revolutionary vanguard of the struggling proletariat.

They do not want a struggle against capitalism and do not provide a clear answer on a single one of the vital issues before workers. The Hamburg workers' International therefore cannot serve to show workers the way forward, even to the limited degree that this was done by the prewar International, which, by comparison, seems like a revolutionary organisation.

The Second International was born as a living child of the previous period and died in the World War as a new era was born, one that posed new and enormous challenges that they were not prepared to face.

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Julius Martov. The resolution called for action by the working class to prevent the outbreak of war. It then stated: 'In case war should break out anyway, it is their duty to intervene for its speedy termination and to strive with all their power to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war to rouse the masses and thereby hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule.' The manifesto of the Second International's Basel Congress, held 24–25 November 1912, included this same call. See Riddell (ed.) 1984, pp. 35, 88.

The new Second International is a stillborn child. When the first international conflict breaks out, at the first intense clash of capital and labour, the Second International will be buried.

Such is the last rival of the Comintern in the workers' movement, a rival that guarantees the Comintern's success.

3.) The Hamburg International arose because of pressure from the broad working masses to find a way to escape from growing suffering and constantly escalating dangers through the unification of all proletarian forces. They saw this as the only way to erect a protective wall against a capitalism driven toward war. But this International is headed by people who have served the capitalist states as ministers, are playing that role now, or wish to do so in the future. Some of them even signed the Versailles Treaty. Workers who are still deceived by this International will soon recognise that it is a protective wall for the bourgeoisie. Or it will collapse when the first shot is fired, as in August 1914.

The task of the Comintern and its sections is to hasten this inescapable process of disillusionment. This can take place, however, only in the framework of a struggle for a united front of the proletariat both nationally and internationally. This struggle for the united front must be carried out in every country in an increasingly planned and decisive fashion around an appeal that is specific and oriented to the people. To the united front of the social patriots with the bourgeoisie we must counterpose the struggle for a united front of all the exploited against the bourgeoisie. To the coalition government of all workers' parties with the capitalists we must counterpose a common struggle of all workers' parties for a workers' and peasants' government against the capitalists. And if we succeed in conducting this struggle more fiercely and tenaciously, it will speed the day when a large majority of the working and exploited masses will recognise that only communism can free them from the horrors of capitalism and offer them a better future.

### **Resolution on the Russian-British Conflict**

The Enlarged Executive Committee regards the course of the Russian-British conflict and the way it was settled as evidence that British imperialism is ready to use every opportunity to once again oppose the first workers' and peasants' state with the threat of open battle and armed attack. In this way it aims to eliminate the most important achievements of the first wave of world revolution, just as it did within Britain, where the main conquests of the working class in 1919 were destroyed in the period that followed.

Soviet Russia's strength is growing and its economy is beginning to grow stronger. Russia is reappearing on the world market as an exporter of foodstuffs and raw materials. The Soviet government is strengthening its ties with all layers of the working population. The Communist Party is growing in power and its influence is increasing in sustained fashion. All these factors have dashed the hopes of British imperialism that Russia's economic distress could be utilised to undermine Soviet power, overpower its economy, and subject it to the rule of world capitalism.

Soviet Russia is gaining strength just as it spurs on the peoples of the East in their awakening. British imperialism therefore sought either to force the Soviet Russian government to its knees and convert it into a British vassal or, at the very least, to provoke it into battle. British imperialism harboured the hope that, given the generalised hatred of the capitalist governments against the Russian Revolution, this would lure other powers to take part in the battle against the Soviet government and so lead to a generalised intervention against Soviet Russia.

The Enlarged Executive Committee congratulates the Soviet government for having steered clear of the British provocation. Instead, it succeeded in preventing a breach desired by the ruling classes of Britain through a clear and definite policy, despite the need for certain concessions. The Enlarged Executive Committee expresses its sincere joy regarding the solid and confident determination of the working masses of Russia, who firmly defended the Soviet government from the moment the British ultimatum was made known.<sup>22</sup>

The Enlarged Executive Committee sees this as a guarantee that if the imperialist governments once again lust after a renewed battle with the Soviet government, they will break their teeth not only on the resistance that will be mounted by the international working class against such a criminal attack on the achievements of the Russian Revolution, but also on the rock-solid will of the heroic revolutionary people of Russia.

The Enlarged Executive Committee notes that the Second International has found it possible to express its solidarity with the forces setting the pace of counterrevolution in Russia, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. This was done at the very moment when they made a verbal protest in their Hamburg Congress against Lord Curzon's attack against the Russian Revolution and thus against peace among the peoples. The Enlarged Executive Committee

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22 For the Curzon ultimatum, see p. 482, n. 16.

heaps scorn on this act of support for world imperialism and calls on workers of all countries to act with increased energy for the defence of Soviet Russia.

The British government has rejected all the Soviet government's proposals for effective mediation of the disputed questions. The danger thus exists that a breach in Anglo-Russian relations and even the danger of renewed war could materialise at any moment. Our task is to keep the proletarian masses around the world permanently on the alert, so that at any moment they are ready to counter moves to attack the Russian Revolution. The Enlarged Executive Committee calls on the working masses of the East to gather round the banner of Soviet Russia in order to parry the blows aimed against the liberation struggle of the peoples of the East.

### **Resolution on Communists' Attitude to Religion**

Given false assertions that have appeared in the Swedish Communist press, which have caused confusion among Communists, the plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International declares the following:

Communists demand that religion be a private matter in relation to the bourgeois state. However, under no circumstances should Communists maintain that religion is a private matter in relation to the Communist Party.

Communists demand that the bourgeois state not maintain any relations with religion and that religious societies not be tied in any way to bourgeois state power. Communists demand that every citizen be free to adhere to any religion or no religion at all, that is, to be an atheist, which is usually the case with any conscious Communist. Communists insist that the state not make any distinction in the rights of citizens on the basis of their affiliation with this or that religious community. Communists demand that the mere mention of a citizen's religious affiliation be completely eliminated from all official documents. Communists strive to deprive the bourgeois state of any possibility of providing any support, material or otherwise, to the church or religious societies. These demands, taken together, establish that religion in relation to the state should be a private matter.

Nonetheless, the Communist Party cannot be indifferent to the fact that some of its members, even as 'private individuals', engage in religious propaganda. The Communist Party is an association of conscious and progressive fighters for the liberation of the working class, who come together of their own free will. The Communist vanguard of the working class cannot be indifferent toward a lack of enlightenment and education or toward religious obscurantism. It is the duty of the Communist Party to educate its members not only

in terms of dedicated adherence to a specific political programme, economic demands, and the party's statutes, but also to imbue them with the clearly defined and unified world outlook of Marxism, which includes atheism as a significant component.

Obviously, anti-religious propaganda must be carried out with caution and in a careful fashion, with consideration for the layers in which it is conducted. The anti-religious propaganda of communism must be based, especially among the youth, on a carefully thought-out programme that takes into account any special circumstances.

In a Communist mass party there are from time to time members who have not completely shed religious opinions and prejudices. The party as a whole, however, and especially its leading layers, must combat religious prejudices and promote atheism in an appropriate manner.

It is absolutely excluded for leading comrades, and especially the intellectuals in their ranks, to carry out active propaganda for religion, however modern the style in which this is presented.

Communists are in favour of recruiting all workers into trade unions with a class character without regard to their religious opinions. Given that there are still millions of workers in various countries who are religious in this or that respect, Communists must draw them into general economic and political struggle and under no circumstances push them away because of their religious prejudices. In particular, Communists must stress, in calling for a workers' government or a workers' and peasants' government, that they are proposing a fraternal alliance with all workers, regardless of whether they have religious beliefs or are atheists.

### **Resolution on Programme**

(*See pp. 623–4.*)

### **Regarding the Murder of Comrade Vorovsky**

The Enlarged Executive Committee treasures the memory of the fallen representative of the Soviet government, Comrade Vorovsky, struck down by the bullets of a fascist bandit.<sup>23</sup> It honours the great contribution that he made,

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23 For the assassination of V. Vorovsky, see p. 456, n. 12.

in underground workers' organisations of Russia, in prison, and in exile, in the ECCI, and at his post as a Soviet government representative, during thirty years of struggle for the liberation of the Russian and international working class and in struggle for the liberation of oppressed and subjugated peoples of the East.

The Enlarged Executive Committee calls on the working class in every country to increase their vigilance against fascist bands. It calls on the working class in every country to do everything possible to protect the leaders of the revolutionary proletariat and thus frustrate the plan of international capitalism to behead the working class.

The Enlarged Executive Committee declares to the possessing classes that their every act of violence against the struggling proletariat will be recorded by the revolutionary working class. When the hour of the final struggle arrives, the international bourgeoisie will pay dearly for every drop of proletarian blood that has been shed. The Communist International reminds the international bourgeoisie that the working class, together with other toilers, makes up the immense majority of the population. If the bourgeoisie feels the sword of the red terror, they will have only themselves to blame.

### Resolution on the Japanese Question

*(The following resolution has been submitted:)*

The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International expresses profound sympathy to Communists who have been imprisoned by the autocratic government of Japan and assures them of its full support.<sup>24</sup> Their only offence has been to courageously take the lead in a movement to counter the efforts of the bureaucracy and military clique to militarise the schools and universities across the country.

The Enlarged Executive Committee is aware that the government is brandishing this barbaric and inquisitorial repression against Communists in order to suppress the entire proletarian movement, annihilate the radicals in Japan, and implement the Anti-Communist Law, which failed last year in parliament, in the form of an imperial decree.<sup>25</sup>

The Enlarged Executive Committee warns the workers of Japan against the phony and deceptive grounds cited by the Japanese government in suppressing the Communist movement and against their efforts to divide workers from the

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<sup>24</sup> A roundup of Communists and Socialists had taken place on 5 June 1923.

<sup>25</sup> For the 'Anti-Radical-Social Movement Bill', see p. 467, n. 16.

Communists, lure them away, and lead them astray. The ECCI calls on Japanese workers to carry on the work of the jailed Communists, who have made a sacrifice in the interests of the working class, and to build a powerful movement against the insidious conspiracy of the militaristic and bureaucratic government.

The Enlarged Executive Committee calls on worker, peasant, and student youth in particular to join the anti-militarist movement, for they will suffer the most from the bloody consequences of militarising the schools. The youth must view the jailed comrades, victimised by oppression by the militarist clique, as champions of their own cause.

**Sen Katayama** (*greeted with loud applause*): I call on all delegates to do everything possible after they return to their own countries to assist the persecuted comrades of Japan. More than a hundred were recently arrested, including some of the best comrades who have worked in the movement for more than twenty years. They have been treated barbarically in jail. Nothing may be said about their arrest or jailing in the Japanese press; not even an appeal to support them can be circulated. The Japanese comrades themselves are powerless. Only pressure from outside can help secure better treatment for the jailed Communists. Let me mention in particular Sakai, who recently suffered from a prolonged disease and, shortly before his arrest, suffered five wounds in an attempted assassination, and also Yamakawa, an invalid, who has already been jailed many times.

*(The resolution is adopted unanimously. So too is the resolution that follows:)*

### **Resolution on Fascism<sup>26</sup>**

Fascism is a characteristic symptom of decay in this period, an expression of the ongoing dissolution of the capitalist economy and the decomposition of the bourgeois state.

Fascism is rooted above all in the impact of the imperialist war and the heightened and accelerated dislocation of the capitalist economy that it caused among broad layers of the small and middle bourgeoisie, the small peasantry, and the 'intelligentsia'. This process dashed the hopes of these layers by demolishing their previous conditions of life and the degree of security they had previously enjoyed. Many in these social layers are also disillusioned regard-

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<sup>26</sup> Drafted by Zetkin.

ing their vague expectations of a profound improvement in society through reformist socialism.

The reformist parties and trade-union leaders betrayed the revolution, capitulated to capitalism, and formed a coalition with the bourgeoisie in order to restore class rule and class exploitation as of old. All this they did under the banner of 'democracy'. As a result, this type of 'sympathiser' with the proletariat has been led to doubt socialism itself and its capacity to bring liberation and renew society. The immense majority of the proletariat outside Soviet Russia tolerated this betrayal with a weak-willed fear of struggle and submitted to their own exploitation and enslavement. Among the layers in ferment among the small and middle bourgeoisie and intellectuals, this shattered any belief in the working class as a powerful agent of radical social change. They have been joined by many proletarian forces who seek and demand action and are dissatisfied with the conduct of all the political parties. In addition fascism attracted a social layer, the former officers, who lost their careers when the war ended. Now without income, they were disillusioned, uprooted, and torn from their class roots. This is especially true in the vanquished Central Powers, in which fascism takes on a strong anti-republican flavour.

Lacking historical understanding and political education, the socially variegated and hastily assembled violent bands of fascism expect everything to be put right by a state that is their own creation and tool. Supposedly standing above class and party, this state is to carry out their confused and contradictory programme in accordance with or in violation of bourgeois legality, utilising either 'democracy' or a dictator.

In the period of revolutionary ferment and upsurge by the proletariat, fascism flirted to some degree with proletarian-revolutionary demands.

The masses following fascism vacillated between the two armies expressing the overriding world-historical class antagonisms and class struggles. However, after capitalist rule was reasserted and the bourgeoisie began a general offensive, fascism came down firmly on the side of the bourgeoisie, a commitment held by their leaders from the very start.

The bourgeoisie was quick to recruit fascism to service and employment in its struggle to beat down and permanently enslave the proletariat. As the dislocation of the capitalist economy extends over time and deepens, the burdens and suffering that this imposes on the proletariat become more intolerable. And so, too, the protection against the pressure of the working masses offered to the bourgeois order by reformist sermons on civil peace and democratic class collaboration grow ineffective. The bourgeoisie needs to use aggressive force to defend itself against the working class. The old and seemingly 'apolitical' repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state no longer provides it

with sufficient security. The bourgeoisie moves to create special bands of class struggle against the proletariat. Fascism provides such troops. Although fascism includes revolutionary currents related to its origin and the forces supporting it – currents that could turn against capitalism and its state – it nonetheless develops into a dangerous force for counterrevolution. That is clearly shown in the country where it triumphed: Italy.

Fascism clearly will display different features in each country, flowing from the given historical circumstances. But it consists everywhere of an amalgam of brutal and terrorist violence together with deceptive revolutionary phraseology, linking up demagogically with the needs and moods of broad masses of producers. It has reached its most mature expression so far in Italy. Here the passivity of the Socialist Party and the reformist trade-union leaders opened every door to it. And its revolutionary language won it the support of many proletarian forces, who made its victory possible.

The development of fascism in Italy expresses the inability of party and unions to utilise the workers' occupation of the factories in 1920 to heighten the proletarian class struggle.<sup>27</sup> The fascist victory violently obstructs every workers' movement, even for simple and non-political wage demands. The fascist victory in Italy goads the bourgeoisie of other countries to have the proletariat struck down in the same fashion. The working class of the entire world is threatened with the fate of its Italian brothers.

However, the development of fascism in Italy displays something else as well. Fascism has a contradictory character and carries within it strong elements of ideological and political dislocation and dissolution. Its goal is to recast the old bourgeois 'democratic' state into a fascist state based on violence. This unleashes conflicts between the old established bureaucracy and the new fascist one; between the standing army with its officer corps and the new militia with its leaders; between violent fascist policies in the economy and state and the ideology of the remaining liberal and democratic bourgeoisie; between monarchists and republicans; between the actual fascists (the black-shirts) and the nationalists recruited into the party and its militia; between the fascists' original programme, which deceived the masses and achieved victory, and present-day fascist politics, which serve the interests of industrial capitalists and above all of heavy industry, which has been propped up artificially.

Underlying these and other conflicts, however, are the insurmountable and irreconcilable economic and social conflicts among the different capitalist

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27 For the 1920 occupation of the factories in Italy, see p. 588, n. 12.

social layers: between the big bourgeoisie and the small and middle bourgeoisie such as the small peasantry and the intelligentsia. And towering over everything is the greatest of all economic and social conflicts: the class conflict between bourgeoisie and proletariat.

The indicated conflicts have already found expression in the ideological bankruptcy of fascism, through the contradiction between the fascist programme and the way it is being carried out. Resolving these conflicts may be hindered for a time by organised armed bands and unscrupulous terror. Ultimately, however, these conflicts will find expression in armed force and will tear fascism apart.

The revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat cannot look on passively as fascism disintegrates. Its historical duty, instead, lies in hastening and promoting this process consciously and actively. Fascism encompasses confused and unwittingly revolutionary forces that must be led to join the proletarian class struggle against the class rule and violent exploitation of the bourgeoisie. The military defeat of fascism must be prepared by surmounting it ideologically and politically.

The conscious revolutionary vanguard of the working class has the task of taking up the struggle against victorious fascism in Italy and the fascism now taking shape around the world. It must disarm and overcome fascism politically and must organise the workers into strong and successful self-defence against its violent actions. To this end, the following tasks are posed:

# I

A special structure to lead the struggle against fascism, made up of workers' parties and organisations of every viewpoint, must be formed in every country. The tasks of this structure are:

- 1.) Collecting facts on the fascist movement in every country.
- 2.) Methodical education of the working class regarding the hostile class character of the fascist movement through newspaper articles, pamphlets, posters, assemblies, and so on.
- 3.) Methodical education of the masses who have just become proletarians or are threatened by certain proletarianisation regarding their condition and the function of fascism in assisting large-scale capitalism.
- 4.) Organisation of defensive struggles by the working class by forming and arming contingents of self-defence. Given that the fascists concentrate on propaganda among the youth and that worker youth must be drawn into the united front, youth who are more than seventeen years old must be recruited into the common factory-based fighting contingents. Workers' control commissions must be organised to prevent transport of fascist bands and their weapons.

Fascist attempts to terrorise the workers and block expressions of their class activity must be mercilessly struck down.

5.) Workers of all viewpoints must be drawn into this struggle. All workers' parties, trade unions, and all proletarian mass organisations must be called on to join the common defence against fascism.

6.) A struggle against fascism is needed in parliament and in all public institutions. Strong emphasis must be laid on the imperialist and arch-chauvinist nature of fascism, which heightens the danger of new international wars.

## II

Fascist forces are organising internationally, and the workers' struggle against fascism must also organise on a world scale. To this end, an international workers' committee needs to be created. The task of this committee is to exchange experiences and organise international actions, above all against Italian fascism and its representatives abroad. This struggle includes the following measures:

1.) A campaign of international education through newspapers, pamphlets, posters, and mass meetings regarding the Italian fascist leadership's total hostility to workers and its methodical destruction of all workers' organisations and institutions.

2.) Organisation of international mass meetings and demonstrations against fascism and against Italian fascism's representatives abroad.

3.) Struggle in parliament. Demand that parliament, the workers' fractions within it, and international workers' organisations send commissions to Italy to investigate the condition of the working class there.

4.) Struggle for immediate liberation of arrested or imprisoned Communist, Socialist, or non-party workers.

5.) Organisation of an international boycott by all workers against Italy. Refuse to ship coal to Italy. All transport workers must refuse to load and ship goods to and from Italy, and so on. To this end, create an international committee of miners, seamen, railway workers, and transport workers in every field.

6.) Material and moral support to the persecuted working class of Italy through collections of funds, accommodation of refugees, support of their work abroad, and so on. Expand International Red Aid in order to carry out this work.<sup>28</sup> Involve workers' cooperatives in this assistance work.

It must be brought home to workers' attention that the fate of the Italian working class will be theirs as well, unless they block the influx of less class-

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<sup>28</sup> For International Red Aid, see p. 247, n. 25.

conscious forces to fascism through energetic revolutionary struggle against the ruling class. Workers' organisations therefore must display great energy, in their offensive against capitalism, in protecting the broad masses of producers against exploitation, oppression, and usury. In this way they will counterpose earnest organised mass struggle to the fake revolutionary and demagogic slogans of fascism. In addition, they must strike down the first attempts to organise fascism in their own country, keeping in mind that fascism in Italy and internationally can be most successfully resisted through an energetic struggle against it in their own country.

### Resolution on the Trade-Union Question

**Walcher:** Only minor changes have been made to the trade-union resolution. Thus paragraphs 4 and 5 were combined and a new paragraph 8 was added.

*(The resolution was adopted unanimously. It reads as follows:)*

1.) A major shift has taken place in recent months within the reformist wing of the workers' movement. This shift is expressed in the emergence of a left wing in the Amsterdam International, which is seeking to establish a united front together with Russian unions and, through them, with the Red International of Labour Unions and its affiliated organisations. This current found its clearest expression in the International Conference of Transport Workers, where a bloc was formed between organisations affiliated to the Amsterdam International and the RILU to combat the dangers of war and fascist reaction. This shift also found expression through agreements between the International Metalworkers' Federation and the Russian Metalworkers' Union and in a number of similar efforts in other international organisations of unions in a given industry.<sup>29</sup>

2.) This shift has two causes:

a.) The collapse of the Amsterdam International's class-collaborationist policies.

b.) The ongoing process of winning the working masses to revolution through our policy of winning the trade unions and the united front.

The collapse of reformist policy is expressed in the fact that the trade unions were not able to effectively resist the capitalist offensive anywhere and halt the

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29 For the agreements reached between the Amsterdam International's transport workers' and metalworkers' federations and Russian trade unions, see p. 394, n. 18, and p. 571, n. 12.

progressive worsening of the proletariat's economic situation. This was particularly evident when the Ruhr conflict broke out and the reformist unions were no more able than in 1914 to counter capitalist piracy and imperialist wars by unleashing an all-out class struggle.

Under such conditions, Communists' struggle for trade-union unity and for common action by workers of every viewpoint could only demonstrate to the broad masses that the Communist Party alone among all workers' parties carries out an effective struggle against the subjugation of working people.

3.) The new situation poses to all Communist parties the question of how the policies adopted by Communist International congresses should now be pursued. Mere propaganda for the united front is now no longer sufficient to explain to workers why the united front is necessary, how it is formed, and how the working class can struggle in a unified manner. It must be clearly explained to every worker what we mean by a united front, how we think it will be formed, and especially what workers must do collectively and individually to form this united front. The united front must have an organisational foundation through creation of unified committees corresponding to the varying conditions of time and place.

The most important task in the coming period is to develop specific action programmes for each industry and region.

4.) Our struggle to restore the unity of the trade-union movement must be based mainly on the factory, for it is here that workers feel most strongly the need for a united front. Experience has shown that factory councils are the most suitable structures for a united front.<sup>30</sup> In countries where factory councils do not yet exist, Communists must therefore struggle to establish them. Where they do exist, Communists must make every effort to revolutionise them and broaden their powers.

Shifting the focus of work to the factories and struggling to create factory councils does not signify, however, that the factory councils should replace the trade unions organisationally. Such a concept would lead to weakening the workers' movement and must be decisively rejected. It would obstruct our struggle to win over the trade unions and restructure them into industrial unions, and would effectively deliver over the unions into the hands of their present reformist leaders.

5.) In countries with workers of differing nationalities and races, the Communists must struggle to unify all these workers into one and the same union. However, while working in this way to eliminate national prejudices among

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30 For factory councils, see p. 565, n. 6.

the workers, the Communist Party – which includes workers of the dominant nationalities – must resist forces in the workers' movement that brandish international banners in an attempt to restrict in any way the development of oppressed nations.

In regions where the working masses suffer from the legacy of prolonged national hatred, Communists need to be particularly engaged and alert to conflicts between workers of different nationalities, however slight they may be. Otherwise the smallest organisational frictions can be the starting point for a flaring up of national conflicts among the workers, that is, to revolutionary forces becoming alienated from each other.

6.) The reformist trade unions are carrying out an ongoing policy of splits. This must be firmly resisted through propaganda, agitation, and organisational measures. In cases of expulsion of groups of workers or even of entire unions, the expelled workers must be held together while every effort is made to secure their readmission. We must prevent oppositional forces that support the expelled being pulled out of the union.

In countries where two parallel trade-union movements exist, one reformist and one revolutionary (France, Czechoslovakia, Spain, etc.), the unions expelled from the reformist trade unions should join the revolutionary union confederation. On the other hand, even here the expelled members and workers should work for their readmission into the reformist unions so long as this seems to be useful for the revolutionary workers' movement.

7.) The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International calls on all party publications to follow the life and struggles of the trade unions more attentively, highlighting the activity of revolutionary unions and oppositional minorities and fractions and methodically weighing all the organisational and political lessons. Special attention is needed to publication of agitational and propagandistic trade-union literature. All Communist parties must submit regular reports on the activities of their fractions in the trade unions, so that experiences in one country become the common property of the entire movement.

8.) Every member of the Communist International is obliged to join the trade union in his field and work actively in the Communist fraction or in the revolutionary opposition movement. Communists' activity in the unions must correspond to the fundamentals and decisions of the Red International of Labour Unions. Sections of the Communist International must make every effort to unify the entire unionised working class of the world under the banner of the Red International of Labour Unions.

9.) The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International is happy to learn of the agreements between the transport workers and metal-

workers. It calls on all Communist parties to make every effort to establish a united front in the trade-union movement and, in countries where the trade-union movement is split, to work with vigour to support reunification. They must strongly oppose attempts to blow up and sabotage agreements already concluded among trade unions with different points of view. The Communist parties must support the initiative of the transport and metalworkers and do everything possible to secure similar agreements in other branches of industry, thus preparing the ground to establish the organisational unity of the international trade-union movement.

### **Report from Cooperatives Commission**

**Hoernle** (Germany): The commission was of the opinion that there are three major questions regarding cooperatives:

- 1.) Participation by cooperatives in the anti-fascist struggle.
- 2.) Collaboration between cooperatives and trade unions.
- 3.) Organising Communist cells in the cooperatives and creating a broad revolutionary opposition in the reformist federations.

Fascism threatens not only the other workers' organisations but, above all, the cooperatives. They can defend their existence only by linking up against fascism with the other proletarian organisations of struggle.

In order to advance collaboration with the cooperatives, we must call for a world conference of trade unions and cooperatives. It can take up the most important questions, such as the struggle against the danger of war and fascism, the threat against the eight-hour day, opposition to profiteering and inflation, [workers'] control of production and markets, arming the workers, and the workers' and peasants' government. We must demand that the Red International of Labour Unions be admitted to the bloc that has been formed between the Amsterdam trade-union International and the cooperatives.

*(The resolution is adopted unanimously. It reads:)*

### **Resolution on the Cooperatives Question**

#### **I      *The Cooperatives and Fascism***

- 1.) Fascism's immediate goal is to methodically destroy all the workers' organisations, to deprive the workers' movement of every point of support, and to block off its sources of financial sustenance. Wherever fascism is developing and especially wherever it achieves power, it aims its hardest blows against the cooperatives.

2.) Fascism must therefore be viewed as an immediate peril for the cooperatives, threatening not only their development but their very existence. Communist cooperative members must therefore undertake an energetic campaign to force the cooperatives to take a clear stand in the struggle against fascism.

3.) The development of the capitalist offensive in the form of fascism shows with particular clarity how illusory it is to conceive of the liberation of the working class through peaceful development of cooperative organisations within bourgeois society without the working masses taking power – the conception of the ‘cooperatives only’ people. As soon as cooperatives begin to cause difficulties for the bourgeois classes, these classes strike out pitilessly against the apparatus in which the pacifist cooperative advocates placed all their hopes. Civil war is knocking on the door of the cooperatives, forcing them to go to one side of the barricades or the other. It is a dangerous illusion to think that the cooperatives can be spared the effects of class struggle. Every defeat of the proletariat has immediate impact on the cooperatives. A fascist regime, representing the armed dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, reduces the working class to conditions of impoverishment and subjugation that make unfavourable ground from which to draw resources for the cooperatives and on which to construct their movement.

4.) Soviet Russia is the only country where cooperative activists are able to develop an organisational plan of work and where they can be sure of their existence and the role they are called upon to play in building a socialist society. This fact must be underlined as a striking proof of the contrast between the status of cooperatives in countries where the bourgeois dictatorship has been retained and the one country where a dictatorship of the proletariat has been achieved.

5.) The experience of struggle against fascism has shown that only cooperatives based on the broad proletarian masses can mount significant resistance. The small isolated organisations were not only economically powerless but also incapable of resisting politically the bourgeois attack.

6.) The slogans of the united front and the workers’ and peasants’ government correspond exactly to the needs of the cooperative movement. The united front is suitable because the cooperatives have the same interests and are subject to the same dangers as the working class as a whole. The workers’ and peasants’ government is suitable because only by taking power can working people save the cooperatives from destruction and provide them the possibility of full development.

7.) The working masses must bear in mind that the struggle against fascism must be taken up as soon as fascism makes its appearance. They must prevent

it from achieving significant influence or, what is worse, taking state power. The cooperatives thus need to mount energetic propaganda against fascism and provide resources to sustain proletarian self-defence contingents in their job of defending proletarian institutions and suppressing counterrevolutionary assaults.

Propaganda is needed for collection of funds from cooperative activists for aid to victims of fascism. This effort requires close ties with the organisations aiding victims of the struggle against counterrevolution.

8.) Experiences with fascism up to this point show that rejection of struggle, as the reformist leaders recommend, does not save the cooperatives. After the fascists take power, their organised persecution of the cooperatives only increases in intensity. The struggle of the cooperatives must therefore be pursued energetically, utilising all remaining possibilities to maintain their existence. The Communists must continue their activity in the cooperatives where fascists have seized control. A strong effort is needed to ensure that workers do not abandon organisations that the fascists have taken over, or whose activity has been reduced as a result of fascist acts of violence.

## II *Collaboration of the Cooperatives with the Trade Unions*

The international capitalist offensive, on the one hand, and the revolutionising of the working masses on the other, force even the reformist leaders of the Amsterdam trade-union federation and the International Cooperative Alliance to take up the concept of a proletarian united front. They attempt, however, to turn it into a counterfeit by converting it from a unified front of struggle by the working masses into an agreement of leaders who fear struggle. That is the character of the bloc established this February in Brussels between the International Trade-Union Federation (Amsterdam) and the International Cooperative Alliance.<sup>31</sup>

It is worth noting, however, that in the process the cooperative federation has shown its previous principle of neutrality to be untenable. Against its will it has to recognise that the unification of all organised forces of the proletariat is today a matter of life and death for the cooperatives. The cooperatives must unite with the economic and political organisations of proletarian struggle. Otherwise they will be sucked into the general disorganisation of the capitalist

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31 A joint commission of the International Cooperative Alliance and the International Federation of Trade Unions was formed in December 1922. Meetings of this commission were held in Brussels on 15 February 1923, in Amsterdam on 20 April 1923, and in Paris on 2 June 1923.

economy; they will become defenceless victims of capitalism and new world wars; they will sink into dependency on commercial and financial capital.

The bloc created in Brussels between the Amsterdam and the cooperative federations is, to be sure, not an instrument of proletarian struggle against the capitalist offensive. That is shown most clearly by the fact that the reformist leaders refused to admit into this bloc the Red International of Labour Unions, which encompasses millions of revolutionary workers.

As a result, the bloc of the Amsterdammers with the International Cooperative Alliance is actually only a barrier to protect the bureaucracy from involvement in a serious and united defensive struggle by the working class. It does not establish a channel for mutual support by cooperative and trade-union organisations in individual countries.

It is therefore the task of Communist cooperative activists to point out the true character of this agreement to the broad masses of proletarians and peasants organised in cooperatives and to demand the fighting unity of all the working masses in cooperatives and trade unions. The revolutionary trade unions affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions must absolutely be drawn into this bloc. A world conference of proletarian trade-union and cooperative activists must work up a specific action programme that can guide the struggle. Such a programme should include these points:

- Against fascism as an ideology and as an organisation.
- Against capitalist profiteering at the expense of the working masses.
- Against the lowering of real wages and the lengthening of the workday.
- Against growing armaments and war provocations by the capitalist states.
- Against taxation of the working masses and their cooperatives.
- Against the use of emergency laws and decrees directed at revolutionary workers' parties.
- For workers' control of production and the market.
- For cancellation of the Versailles Treaty.
- For release of imprisoned revolutionaries.
- For arming the proletariat.
- For a workers' and peasants' government.
- For cooperatives to establish contact between the industrial proletariat and the working population in the countryside.

The cooperatives should take part actively in all campaigns of the revolutionary proletariat.

Leaders of cooperatives and trade unions must be called on to work hand-in-hand with the Action Committee against the War Danger and Fascism estab-

lished by the international conference in Frankfurt.<sup>32</sup> If the cooperative leaders reject these demands, the masses of members should be called on to create a defensive proletarian alliance for protection of their vital interests without regard to the traitorous leadership.

In connection with the international congress of cooperatives that will take place in 1924,<sup>33</sup> a broad campaign of agitation is needed to expose the 'neutrality' of our opponents in the cooperatives, who openly conclude agreements with reaction, as well as for the demands listed above. The goal of this campaign is to secure the largest number possible of Communist cooperative activists at the congress.

### III *On the Organisational Question*

1.) Because of the need to unify the international forces of Communist cooperative activists, all national cooperative departments of the Communist parties need to renew efforts at once to bring revolutionary-minded masses in the cooperatives together around the Communist cooperative cells and organise them for a unified struggle in solidarity with the Communist Party and the red trade unions to protect the revolutionary interests of working people.

Close mutual relations and common actions of the cooperatives with the corresponding party structures and trade unions should be organised at every level of the cooperative movement of a given country.

2.) As decided by the First International Conference of Communist Cooperators,<sup>34</sup> the national cooperative departments will be required to create, under the party leadership's supervision, national structures for Communist cooperative work. These structures are subject to ratification by the cooperative department of the ECCI.

On a national level, the organisational structure is as follows:

#### 1.) *Party national leadership.*

The party Central Committee will have a cooperative department. This will consist of:

(a.) An advisory council on cooperatives, composed of responsible Communist leaders of the practical work (business manager, member of the supervisory board, etc.), representatives of the trade-union division, the women's

32 An International Action Committee had been set up by the Frankfurt Conference of March 1923. For that conference, see p. 386, n. 9.

33 The International Cooperative Alliance conference was held in Ghent, Belgium, 1–4 September 1924.

34 The First International Conference of Communist Cooperators took place in Moscow 1–6 November 1922.

division, the youth organisation, and Red Aid. This advisory council will meet periodically under the chairmanship of a Central Committee member assigned to report on cooperative matters. The advisory council has to discuss and take decisions on all cooperative issues.

(b.) The cooperative secretariat of the Central Committee. The duties of the cooperative division consist, above all, in registering Communist cells in the cooperatives; issuing a publication of Communist cooperative activists in countries where this is possible; providing reports and articles on the activity of Communists in the cooperatives for party publications; preparing with the trade-union organisations a joint economic and political campaign; establishing contact with the cooperative division of the ECCI, the Communist Party's parliamentary fraction, factory councils, and so on.

The decisions of the advisory council will be carried out by the secretariat, after ratification by the Central Committee. The secretariat will take care of all ongoing business, correspondence, editorial work, and the like.

II.) Communist work in cooperatives on a regional and local level will be organised according to the same principles. The local party committees will select an officer who will lead the activity of Communist cells in his cooperative. Meetings of officers for cells in all local cooperatives under the leadership of a member of the local party committee will provide a structure that leads the activity of Communist cooperative activists on a local level.

III.) In countries where Communists form a bloc with revolutionary forces in the cooperatives, as they do in the trade unions, it is also necessary to form purely Communist cells. The task of these cells is to gather around them broad layers of revolutionary-minded cooperative activists.

The cooperative department of the ECCI will have the task of closely studying and analysing the methods of collaboration between Communist cooperative activists and other revolutionary forces in the cooperative movement.

### **The Italian Question**

*(Lunacharsky, as reporter, reads a letter from the Italian Socialist Party.)*

Rome, 10 June 1923

Dear Comrades,

In order to enable the Enlarged Executive Committee to decide correctly on the Italian question at its coming plenum, I am sending you the decision adopted by the last congress in Milan along with the resolution drawn up by Comrade Lazzari and the committee on unification, which

was rejected by the congress. The two resolutions will indicate to you the point of view of the congress, with respect both to what it favoured and what it rejected.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, it will show you that:

1.) Those favouring fusion, in rejecting Lazzari's motion, were compelled to recognise fully that our delegates to the Fourth Congress exceeded the limits of their mandate and presented incorrectly the spirit of the Rome Congress.<sup>36</sup>

2.) The party has remained unanimously loyal to the programme with which the Third International was founded. Also, the Rome Congress did not add any new reservations with regard to adoption of the Twenty-One Conditions. However, its previous reservations were not resolved by the expulsion of the Right and have not been withdrawn. This was in accordance with the interpretations of Lazzari, who was the author of a resolution at the congress, subsequently withdrawn, for unconditional affiliation.

3.) With regard to these events, the party is concerned regarding its traditions, which exert a powerful attraction on the masses. The party is thus of the opinion that it cannot give up its name, its symbols, or its autonomy, which express its historical function that has not been relinquished with regard to either internal organisation or internal politics. This autonomy, applied with an intransigent revolutionary method, guarantees that necessary limits will be adequately observed.

The decisions of the Fourth Congress make democratic centralism, as defined by points 12 and 21 [of the Twenty-One Conditions], obligatory in a manner that makes the relationship of the Socialist Party to you more difficult.<sup>37</sup>

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35 The PSI's Twentieth Congress in Milan on 15–17 April 1923 rejected the perspective of fusion with the PCI, by a vote of 5,361 to 3,908.

36 For the PSI delegation's report to the Fourth Congress, see Serrati's presentation in Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 1055–7.

For the PSI's Rome Congress of October 1922, see p. 398, n. 25.

37 Point 12 of the Conditions for Admission reads: 'Parties belonging to the Communist International must be organised on the basis of the principle of democratic *centralism*. In the present epoch of intensified civil war, the Communist Party will be able to fulfil its duty only if it is organised in the most centralised way possible and governed by iron discipline, and if its central leadership, sustained by the confidence of the party membership, is strong, authoritative, and endowed with the fullest powers.' Point 21 states: 'Party members who reject on principle the conditions and theses laid down by the Communist International must be expelled from the party.' In Riddell (ed.) 1991, 2WC, 2, pp. 769, 771.

Without dwelling on this, however, we believe that the Third International should not continue to insist on absolute and equal conditions for all its various parties in various countries. This would enable the International to take into account the special character of our party and admit us without further discussion and with all reasonable reservations. Time and circumstances will perhaps create in the future the possibilities on which you lay such great weight, which are quite absent today. This prospect will only become more remote if the Socialist Party, rejected by you, is put in the unfortunate but unavoidable necessity of defending itself against those inside the party who, without understanding its true spirit, are working solely for fusion with the Communist Party, and those outside the party who pose as the sole interpreters of your thinking and systematically slander the programme and spokespersons of the Socialist Party. As everyone knows, that would inevitably end up by fatally frustrating the sincere efforts to establish a united front of the revolutionary parties.

The danger is real and serious. In consideration of these dangers and the interests of proletarian revolution – to which we are just as committed as you – it is our opinion that you should not hesitate to accept our point of view.

If that is not the case, it seems to us to be more useful to put an end to discussions that absorb the attention of the proletariat and divert it from the urgent tasks of the present moment.

In the hope that you will examine our conditions and our requests objectively and dispassionately, we send you our cordial socialist greetings.

*Nobili* (secretary)

**Lunacharsky** (continuing): The Italian Socialist Party is thus asking us to accept it without debate, with the conditions we are already aware of: maintenance of its autonomy and its old name, plus some other secondary conditions.

The commission took into account that conditions in Italy are quite unusual.<sup>38</sup> The urgency of proletarian defence is so pressing that greater efforts must be made to achieve a united front. Our resolution is imbued with understanding of this necessity.

With regard to the resolution of the Italian Commission, please note that the commission regarded it as necessary, in order to ensure its implementation,

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38 The stenographic proceedings of the Italian Commission can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/76.

to add two representatives of the party's minority to the five-member central leadership, chosen from its best fighters.<sup>39</sup> Comrades of the Italian Communist Party majority intend to submit a statement in which they maintain their position. I believe this statement is uncalled-for. Our Italian comrades will nonetheless vote for the commission resolution, which does all honour to their sense of discipline.

*(Negri read the statement of the Italian party majority, whose text follows:)*

The majority of the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) delegation declares that it will vote for the resolution proposed by the commission. However, since we raised objections in the commission to certain points, we consider it necessary to bring this to the attention of the plenum.

1.) We concede that the PCI's conduct before the Fourth Congress was disadvantageous to the development of the fusion process. However, we reiterate that after the Fourth Congress the PCI Central Committee did everything possible under the given circumstances in order to carry out the decisions of the congress and the fusion commission.

We must also note that representatives of the party's minority were of the same opinion. We must stress again that one of the Comintern representatives in Italy also shared this opinion. He did not take part in the work of the commission, although he had been named as a member of it by the ECCI plenum.<sup>40</sup>

We therefore consider that the point in the resolution asserting that the Central Committee bears responsibility because of its conduct following the Fourth World Congress is incorrect and politically flawed. The assertion is based on an entirely one-sided judgment.

2.) We agree with the proposals made in the resolution regarding relations to be established between the Comintern and the Socialist Party. However, in our opinion, these proposals aimed at fusing the two parties as rapidly as possible do not and cannot represent any alteration in the meaning of the Fourth World Congress decisions, specifically:

(a.) The PCI will hold the predominant position in the process of fusion of revolutionary forces in Italy.

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39 As an 'exceptional' measure (Zinoviev's words), the Italian Commission had voted to propose that the plenum install a temporary mixed central leadership composed of representatives of both factions in the PCI: Fortichiari, Scoccimaro, and Togliatti from the majority; and Tasca and Vota from the minority.

40 The reference here is to Dmitry Manuilsky.

(b.) The Twenty-One Conditions do not lose any of their scope and authority because of the fusion process in Italy.

3.) The plenum discussion has revealed a deep difference between the conduct of the Central Committee elected by the party majority, which is now being replaced, and the Comintern. Given that fact, the point in the resolution stating that the PCI's Central Committee should be composed in such a way as to guarantee that Comintern decisions will be carried out should be interpreted as follows: that the current that previously was absolutely predominant in the party should be excluded from the new Central Committee or, at best, should represent a minority in the Central Committee.

Having made this statement, which reflects the majority's point of view at the beginning of a new period in the party's life, we vote for the resolution.

*(The vote is now taken. The resolution is adopted unanimously, amid general applause.)*

### **Resolution on the Italian Question**

The Fourth World Congress decided that the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) was to unite with the majority of the Socialist Party which had taken a stand at its Rome Congress in favour of the Third International. This was considered necessary in order to bring about the maximum possible unity of revolutionary workers in face of the fascist threat. Events have shown that this decision was correct and remains so. While confirming this decision, the Enlarged Executive Committee notes with deep regret that it has not yet been carried out.

The following are the main reasons why the Fourth Congress decisions were not implemented:

1.) The fascist white terror has led to unprecedented persecution of the working class, unpunished murder of revolutionary workers, countless arrests, and unprecedented despotism. This has temporarily driven the workers' movement underground and created demoralisation among the workers. Since the heaviest blows were directed against the Communists, the most indecisive section of the Socialist workers understandably held back from an immediate unification with the Communists in order not to expose themselves to particularly severe reprisals.

2.) The right wing of the Socialist Party of Italy (PSI) took advantage of the demoralisation affecting part of the working class and the arrest of the most

able Socialist Party of Italy forces and those most committed to the Comintern. It quickly formed itself into a faction and developed a systematic campaign against unification with the Communists, seizing on the unfavourable conditions in which supporters of a fusion found themselves.

This failure was also due in part to the incorrect policy of the majority of the PCI Central Committee. This majority was hypnotised by the preceding struggle against the Serrati current and suffered in general from extreme dogmatism. The Central Committee majority did not take into account that the situation of the working class had changed fundamentally and that it had become an urgent question for the proletariat to have all revolutionary forces of the working class brought together into a unified Communist Party. Despite the Fourth Congress decisions, the Central Committee majority did not carry out a systematic campaign for unification with the Socialist Party. Instead, in reality, it obstructed the implementation of this decision.

The Enlarged Executive Committee decides:

**A**      *Regarding the Communist Party of Italy*

- 1.) The International demands that the PCI Central Committee implement these decisions not merely in a formal sense but in fact. The entire party and all its structures must begin an energetic agitation for unity of the proletarian forces on the basis approved by the Fourth Congress.
- 2.) Communists must support in every way possible the members of the SP who support unification with the Communists.
- 3.) The Communist Party must apply the united-front policy in a manner appropriate to Italian circumstances. That means making a proposal to the Socialist Party leadership in a form consistent with the Communist International's decisions.
- 4.) The Communist Party's executive body must be chosen in such a fashion as to guarantee that these measures will be implemented.

**B**      *Regarding the Socialist Party*

- 1.) The Enlarged Executive Committee finds that the present leadership of the Socialist Party is based on the opinions of an inadequate majority. The Milan Congress was convened at a time of white terror during which the number of members – 32,000 when the Rome Congress was held – had declined to 9,000. Nonetheless, more than 40 per cent of the comrades spoke out for unification with the Communists.
- 2.) The ECCI notes that the victorious group, although based on such an inadequate majority, did not permit the other group – almost as strong – to have a member on the Central Committee.

3.) The ECCI finds that right after the congress the victorious group, violating elementary principles of internal party democracy, expelled the youth federation solely because it had remained true to revolutionary socialism.<sup>41</sup>

4.) The ECCI finds that at a moment when a crisis developed in the Amsterdam International and a more class-conscious left wing of the working class moved closer to the Red International of Labour Unions, the Socialist Party Central Committee chose this moment to renew its adherence to the Amsterdam International.

5.) The ECCI can only conclude that the Socialist Party leadership has acted in a manner hostile to the Communist International.

6.) The ECCI views the Milan Congress and the present state of the Socialist Party as a transitory episode. It is convinced that the moment is no longer distant when the masses of the Socialist Party will raise their voice.

7.) Under the pressure of the proletarian majority, the Socialist Party leadership has already sent a letter, dated 10 June, expressing its desire for a rapprochement with the Comintern. The ECCI will do everything possible to speed the unification of all revolutionary forces in Italy. It believes it is complying with the wishes of the majority of workers in the Socialist Party by greeting this rapprochement, despite the hostile actions mentioned above.

8.) In order to give concrete form to this rapprochement, the Executive Committee addresses to the Socialist Party Central Committee an official proposal for formation of an action alliance with the Communist Party. While taking into account the difficulties that arose from previous political circumstances, the ECCI will do everything possible to promote the common work of the two parties.

9.) As an indication of its solidarity with the workers of the Socialist Party, who are now experiencing particularly difficult times, the ECCI requests that the Socialist Party of Italy send a delegation to Moscow as soon as possible to carry out affiliation to the Comintern.

The Enlarged Executive Committee calls on all revolutionary workers of Italy to work steadfastly for the unification of all revolutionary forces of the Italian working class under the banner of the Communist International.

**Neurath:** I will present the report of the commissions on the Balkans, Switzerland, and Austria. I ask that the Balkan question, and especially the Yugoslav question, be referred to the Presidium. The Swiss Commission adopted a resolution on Switzerland unanimously. The Austrian Commission also came to

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41 The expelled Socialist youth merged with the Communist youth federation in May 1924.

unanimous conclusions. It finds that there are no principled differences separating the two factions, majority and minority. The commission has written a decision telling the executive body of the Communist Party of Austria to involve representatives of the minority faction in all forms of collaboration, including political work. We anticipate that the Austrian executive committee will carry out this decision loyally. The Austrian party is not so large that it can afford the luxury of excluding portions of the party from political collaboration. We hope that on this basis the still-existing disagreements, which are personal in character, can be fully overcome.<sup>42</sup>

These motions are adopted unanimously. The resolutions read as follows:

### **Resolution on the Swiss Question**

The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International confirms the decision of the Presidium on 15 March 1923 regarding tactical methods within the Communist Party of Switzerland.<sup>43</sup> The Enlarged Executive Committee refers again to the important issues that have already been taken up by the Presidium.

#### ***The Trade-Union Question***

Only to the degree in which the [Swiss] party understands how to take up the so-called daily concerns of the working class and proves itself able to influence the conduct of trade-union struggles will it gradually be able to secure the trust of the workers united in unions. As regards the activity of our representatives in the trade-union field, the decisions of the Comintern Fourth Congress and above all the second Profintern congress are authoritative.<sup>44</sup> Our comrades' activity in the unions must be effectively supported and promoted by our entire party press. Flowing from that, the press must take up as thoroughly as possible challenges of the proletariat's economic struggle.

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42 The minutes of the Swiss Commission can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/83. The minutes of the Austrian Commission can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/71. The minutes of the Balkans Commission can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/161/79.

43 The ECCI letter to the Swiss CP leadership recounting these decisions can be found in Comintern archives, RGASPI 495/91/45. See Rauber 1997, p. 116.

44 The Second Congress of the RILU was held 19 November to 2 December 1922. For an English-language collection of its resolutions, see RILU 1922.

The trade-union leaders Wyss and Kopp have championed the principle that the party should have as little to do as possible with the affairs of the trade unions. This is obviously completely wrong. However, it is not right always and at every opportunity to stress that the Communist Party should directly influence the trade-union leadership. The main thing here is that the Communist Party or its representatives actually be in a position to influence trade-union struggles along the lines of our world congress decisions, that is, in the spirit of Communist principles. In this way we compel the present formal leadership of the unions to act in the interests of the broad masses of the working class, thus placing the trade unions in the service of the class struggle.

### *Agitational Activity*

The membership of the Communist Party of Switzerland is relatively small. Its 4,500–4,800 dues-paying members are confronted by 30,000 members of the Social Democracy. What is more, it must be considered that the Swiss trade unions have about 250,000 members. So it is not an exaggeration to say that the party's size is out of proportion with the strength of the general workers' movement, including of course that of the trade unions. It appears that the Central Committee has been attempting to foster a so-called 'pure Communist Party'.

In this regard, we note the following: The Communist Party of Russia that was victorious in the social revolution and now holds the instruments of power in the Russian state is under fierce attack by world reaction as a whole. Its situation is that of an army defending a besieged fortress. The party must take care that only tested Communists are found in its ranks. The sections of the Comintern that still have to organise and carry out the struggle against the ruling class of their state must win – if not the direct support of a majority – at least the sympathy of the broad masses of working people. The party therefore cannot permit itself the luxury of creating a so-called 'pure party' that represents only a vanishingly small minority of class-conscious proletarians. The party must develop an intensive recruitment campaign and thus attempt to bring new members into the Communist Party of Switzerland. For a Communist Party to carry out its revolutionary tasks it must have not only indirect influence on the working masses but direct influence on as large as possible a section of the proletariat.

### *Party Enterprises*

We repeat that the party executive is not only empowered but obliged to ensure that all the party's business enterprises are subject to its control. The party executive is responsible to the party and the Comintern not only for the party's overall politics but also for all economic and other structures that

belong to the party. The party executive can carry out this responsibility only if it also has the right to supervise or exert decisive influence on all party enterprises.

### **Resolution on the Austrian Question**

The present situation in Austria has the following main features:

(a.) Austria is a dependency of the Entente, whose representatives have almost unlimited powers in the country.

(b.) Application of the extreme reactionary policies of Seipel, directed solely against the Austrian working class.

(c.) The rise of fascism, whose fighting groups are already making their initial attempts to destroy the workers' organisations and bloodily suppress the workers.

(d.) The strengthening of a purely monarchist organisation dreaming of a restoration.

(e.) The extremely bad economic situation, with rising inflation and enormous unemployment.

(f.) Conditions of working-class life were worsened by attempts of the capitalists to lower already minimal wages, which have fallen far behind inflation, and by the growth of joblessness and increasingly adverse working conditions.

These economic and political conditions intensify the class struggle in Austria and often result in isolated armed clashes.

The policies of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party, once the bastion of the Two-and-a-Half International, are rooted in betrayal of the Austrian working class's interests. Its course displays powerlessness and helplessness in face of the capitalist offensive, and support for the bourgeoisie. The working masses are increasingly disillusioned by these policies, as are some individual Social-Democratic organisations. They express increasing opposition to their leaders, such as with regard to strikes conducted contrary to decisions of the Social-Democratic leading bodies and other working-class actions.

All these factors must prompt the Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ) to display great energy and clarity while holding firmly to its political line and focusing its attention on drawing the working masses into the struggle against the capitalist offensive and fascism. The party should address the following important tasks:

### 1 *The Workers' and Peasants' Government*

The Communist Party of Austria, like every other section of the Comintern, has the duty to offer accessible propaganda expressing the decisions of the Fourth Congress and the Enlarged Executive Committee on the workers' and peasants' government. Resistance to the Seipel government, the Social Democrats, and a possible coalition government cannot be conducted successfully unless the KPÖ is able to set a practical goal for this struggle. The workers' and peasants' government is thus posed not just as a propaganda slogan but as one for action. However, the KPÖ's agitation for a workers' and peasants' government will be ineffective and incomprehensible to the broad masses unless the party succeeds in forging close ties with the rural working population, both practically and organisationally. The KPÖ's work has been particularly inadequate in this respect.

### 2 *Electoral Issues*

The KPÖ must take part independently in the electoral struggle. A common electoral programme can be concluded only with the oppositional trade-union bloc. The party must make its Communist point of view explicit in its electoral platform. The KPÖ will enter the electoral arena under the banner of struggle against fascism, against the Christian Social Party government, against coalition governments, and for a workers' and peasants' government. It is all very well for the party to work in the terrain where it is at present located. However, it needs to carry out its responsibilities of trade-union activity and agitational and propaganda work not only among the proletarian layers, but also among the petty-bourgeois and semi-proletarianised masses and above all among the rural proletariat. If this is done, the Communist Party will receive the votes not only of conscious revolutionary class-struggle fighters, but also a portion of the votes of honest opponents of capitalism. The KPÖ must, of course, demonstrate the traitorous conduct of the Social-Democratic Party.

### 3 *The Trade Unions*

The KPÖ's trade-union policies correspond in general to the decisions of the Fourth Congress and the second Profintern congress. The party has also already achieved some success in this field of activity. Recently, however, responsible leadership bodies of the party have committed some serious errors in the field of trade-union work. It is evident in the reports of Koritschoner and Frey that leading trade-union functionaries of the KPÖ did not always conduct themselves in wage negotiations in a manner consistent with RILU principles.

In all wage movements, the positions taken by our leading representatives must be considered in good time, prepared thoroughly, and then advanced

everywhere in a unified manner. The party must confront the reformists not only with its criticisms but with positive proposals. In all wage committees, conferences of factory councils, and the like, our representatives must express the RILU's revolutionary concepts and guidelines. This applies also to situations in which there is a danger that our comrades will be expelled from these bodies by the reformists. Communist representatives must not under any circumstances win access to specific struggles or wage negotiations by giving up on advancing our fundamental principles. After the conclusion of wage struggles that are unsuccessful because of the reformists, our press must carry a full assessment, and this must be presented in detail in the factories.

#### 4 *Youth Organisation*

We will not go into the disagreements between the KPÖ and its youth organisation in detail. Let it only be said that the party must succeed in establishing harmonious relations with its youth group. The party must make efforts to maintain these relations. In terms of the political line and tactics set by the Communist Youth and the Youth International, the youth are subordinate to the party. This does not, however, diminish their organisational independence, which has been confirmed by international decisions. There must absolutely be an end to factional abuses in both the youth organisation and the party.

#### 5 *The Party Press*

We note that the editors of *Rote Fahne* have not always succeeded in being up-to-date on political issues. We will recall here only the murder of Vorovsky, the fusion conference of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, and, significantly, propaganda for a workers' government. The *Rote Fahne* editors have devoted far too little attention to these questions. The party press must not simply report mere facts, as in the past. Daily events must be presented more in their social context and in relationship to the Comintern's slogans.

#### 6 *Personal Issues*

Representatives of the two factions commit themselves to cease at once any personal or factional struggle and firmly oppose any reconstitution of factions.<sup>45</sup>

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45 The rival factions were led by Franz Koritschoner and Josef Frey.

### The Woman Question

**Clara Zetkin** (*presenting the commission report*):

I must say that there is not a single country where the decision of both the International Women's Conference and the Third World Congress on the woman question has been fully carried out.<sup>46</sup> We must therefore make it the duty of every party to implement it. The Women's Commission has not yet completed its work, which will continue after the Enlarged Executive Committee plenum, augmented by representatives of the individual parties. The parties need to utilise the experiences of the Russian Revolution with respect to organising and involving women in the struggle. Just as in Russia, we now see the participation of women in Germany, in struggles against inflation. Our task now is to broaden out this process and extend it to all countries. The commission will summarise the results of its work in a resolution, which will then be presented to the Presidium. (*Applause*)

### The Dutch Question

**Trachtenberg** (United States): Here is a report on the work of the Dutch Commission. An opposition movement has developed inside the Dutch party, in part in reaction to the expulsion of a certain number of members for breach of discipline. The opposition has organised and is attempting to recruit supporters among comrades opposed to the politics of the present leaders.

The Presidium asked the party to send delegates to the Enlarged Executive Committee and asked the opposition to do the same. However, the opposition representatives arrived too late to take part in the discussions. The commission has assembled quite a large quantity of documents and will look into this matter.

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46 Resolutions on the woman question approved by the Comintern's Third Congress and the simultaneously held Second International Conference of Communist Women can be found in Riddell (ed.) 2015, 3WC, pp. 1009–29. For the resolution of the Fourth Congress on the work of the International Communist Women's Secretariat, see Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, pp. 871–3.

### The British Question

**Böttcher** (Chair): The British Commission has not yet concluded its discussions, and the final decision in this matter is to be taken by the Presidium. Since I hear no objection to this proposal, the motion is adopted.

### Conference of Blacks

**Böttcher**: The following motion has been submitted: The Enlarged Executive Committee resolves that a conference of Blacks will take place simultaneously with the Fifth World Congress. Preparations for this event will be left to the Presidium.<sup>47</sup>

*(The proposal is adopted unanimously.)*

### Resolution on the Fifth World Congress

*(The commission has unanimously adopted the following resolution.)*

In March 1924 the Communist International will look back on five years of struggle and endeavour. The Enlarged Executive Committee therefore decides to hold the Fifth World Congress in March 1924.<sup>48</sup>

The ECCI Presidium is instructed to contact the individual sections regarding the convening of national party conventions. The Enlarged Executive Committee instructs the Comintern sections to celebrate the five-year existence of the Comintern in a massive demonstration of the world proletariat for communism. The Enlarged Executive Committee also empowers the Presidium to convene an ECCI plenum before then if this is required by special circumstances.

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47 The Fourth Comintern Congress 'Theses on the Black Question' had stated: 'The Communist International will take immediate steps to convene a general conference or congress of blacks in Moscow.' See Riddell (ed.) 2012, 4WC, p. 950. Such a meeting did not take place. For a discussion on the question of holding it, see Zumoff 2014, pp. 314–18.

48 The Fifth Congress of the Communist International was held 17 June to 8 July 1924.

### Re-election of the Presidium

**Böttcher:** On this point only the Italian comrades have proposed a change. They wish that Comrade Bordiga be elected to the Presidium in place of Comrade Gennari. Comrade Terracini is proposed as an alternate.

The Presidium thus will be composed as follows: Zinoviev, Zetkin, Terracini, Bukharin, Radek, Kolarov, Katayama, Kuusinen, Neurath, Souvarine, MacManus, and Shatskin. In addition, a place is reserved for the Scandinavian parties, and they are to work out how it should be filled.

*(This proposal is adopted unanimously.)*

### Greetings and Thanks

**Böttcher** reads some written greetings to the conference and, on behalf of the Presidium conveys heartfelt greetings to all those who have sent such messages.

*(At this point a delegation of Russian metalworkers from Tula presents the German delegation with a red flag and an accompanying message, both to be passed on to the Krupp workers in Essen. One of the Tula workers explained that they, who forge weapons for the Russian proletariat, present this flag to the workers of the Ruhr and above all those of the Krupp firm in the conviction that the moment is no longer distant when in Essen too, which has for so long forged the weapons for German imperialism, the workers will take hold of power in order, when the need is present, to once again make weapons – not for imperialism but rather for the defence of the working class. In the name of the German delegation, Comrade Clara Zetkin thanks the Russian comrades:)*

**Clara Zetkin:** Not only the workers of Krupp but the proletarians of all Germany will show themselves to be worthy of this gift. Constantly growing masses of the German proletariat will remember this banner, steeped in the blood of thousands and thousands of Russian proletarians, who opted to die rather than to continue to tolerate slavery. They will remember that this banner has waved in the front lines of bitter battles and that it has been victorious, thanks to the incomparable sacrifices of the broad proletarian masses.

In receiving this banner, we cannot find words to express our deep gratitude. But stronger than any thanks in words is the vow that is becoming reality: to take no rest or repose until the small band of those now fighting for their freedom in Essen against not only French imperialism but also German capitalism, which is no less oppressive, have grown into a giant army. We will not rest until the metalworkers of the Krupp firm are no longer workers in a cap-

italist factory but become workers of an armoury of freedom and revolution, forging sickles and scythes for the broad masses of working people. These will be the workers of a new soviet Germany, above whom will wave the banner of the hammer and sickle. You can be confident that the German working class will keep its word and, in the near future, Germany too will witness the victory of communism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Enthusiastic applause*)

**Böttcher:** I give the floor to Comrade Zinoviev for the closing address.

### Closing Address

**Zinoviev:** (*greeted by prolonged loud applause as he climbs to the platform*):

I believe that you all share with me the feeling that this plenum was one of the most fruitful ever held by the Comintern. Its importance was close to that of a congress. Our deliberations were divided into two parts. First, we took up the specific situation in different sections; and, second, we discussed questions that are of principled importance for the International as a whole. Among the questions affecting individual sections, the most important concerned Italy, Norway, and Bulgaria.

Regarding the Italian question, and since our Italian party came in for some rather sharp criticism, we must declare that our party, despite everything, is the only hope for the revolutionary proletariat of Italy. We take the occasion to thank our friend Bordiga, who is now languishing in prison,<sup>49</sup> and all the other Communist leaders who did what was needed and saved the honour of the Italian working class. We do not know what form our relations with the Socialist Party of Italy will take. However, we are ready to do everything possible to achieve a unification of the Italian proletariat in the struggle against reaction. But our stronghold is the Communist Party of Italy, and despite its many weaknesses and the many disagreements we have had with its leaders, we call out to them with all our hearts: 'Long live the Communist Party of Italy.' (*Enthusiastic applause*)

Now as to the Norwegian question. What we have in Norway is a type of labour party, but not like the British one, which is imbued with a reformist spirit. Rather the Norwegian Labour Party, built on the same organisational principle, is imbued by and large with the spirit of communism. The task of

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49 Amadeo Bordiga was arrested on 3 February 1923 by the fascist regime on trumped-up charges. He was released in October.

the Comintern lies in maintaining the party's broad basis while simultaneously eradicating every survival of federalism. I hope that the decisions made here will contribute to that goal.

As regards Bulgaria, we have a bitter lesson here that we must take to heart. We now face two tasks. The first is to ensure that the hard lesson of the Bulgarian party is not lost to other parties. The Czech and German parties in particular must learn from this example. Secondly, we must aid our Bulgarian party in this difficult situation to minimise its losses as it recovers from this defeat.

We had to adopt a resolution at this congress defining our relationship with religion. So far we have had to deal with such issues in almost every conference. This is because we still carry many characteristics of the Second International that must be eliminated. However, I hope that this plenum marks the last time we take positions on questions like this, and that we have now overcome all – or almost all – of the remnants from the Second International.

The most important result of this plenum is the political resolution on the workers' and peasants' government.

This slogan has been picked up by all the major sections. I just learned from *L'Humanité* that Comrade Renaud Jean, on his own initiative, used the same slogan in France.<sup>50</sup> Conditions have ripened for the formulation of this slogan, and I hope that it will be implemented more quickly and with more unanimity than was the case with the united front. With this slogan we will reach out to new masses and broaden our base of support. The Bulgarian example illustrates most clearly the importance of this slogan. The Stamboliyski government showed that the peasantry cannot play an independent role and must fight either on the side of the bourgeoisie or that of the proletariat. Our main task lies in educating the peasants and convincing them that to protect their interests they must unite with us.

There was also discussion of altering the psychology of our parties by awakening in them a will to power. The characteristic feature of the Mensheviks was that in the decisive moment they felt a distaste for power and kept repeating that only the bourgeoisie should exercise power. No such ideology should be found in the Communist parties. It is the historical fate of the working class to take in hand the fate of the world.

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50 The 18 June 1923 issue of *L'Humanité* printed a speech by Renaud Jean on its front page, under the title 'Renaud Jean dénonce le Bloc des gauches et lui oppose le Bloc ouvrier et paysan' [Renaud Jean Denounces the Left Bloc and Counterposes to It the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc].

In recent times we have seen the appearance of black clouds on the political horizon. The example of Italy was followed by Bulgaria. For now the balance of forces is such that reaction does not dare undertake a direct battle against Soviet Russia. But we must not be deceived. If these black clouds multiply, they will take the form of an immense threat against Soviet Russia. Fascism will then shift from its minimum to its maximum programme, namely, to attack Soviet Russia.

On the other hand, there is new motion within the working class. The negotiations with the transport and metalworkers' federations are symptomatic of these times. They show that we have accurately gauged the condition of the Amsterdam International. We hope that our Profintern conference, which meets in the next few days, will be able to take this new reality to heart.<sup>51</sup>

Many other indications point to the new motion in the working class. Our Czech comrades tell us that the main newspaper of the Czech Social Democracy, one of the most reactionary parties of the Second International, has printed a series of articles calling for a united front. It would be truly amazing if such tendencies did not appear within the Social Democracy. With every day that the pressure of fascism grows stronger, such developments will occur within the working class. We must learn to understand these impulses in the workers' souls and do everything possible to strengthen the concept of a unified struggle by the entire proletariat. That will lead the entire working class and large parts of the peasantry into our ranks and enable us in a very short time to begin the struggle for power.

For the first time we all have the feeling that the Comintern has become an organisation of struggle. We feel confident in saying that there is only one world organisation of the proletariat, namely, the Communist International. For the goals of this world organisation we will struggle and win!

*(Enthusiastic applause. The delegates rise and sing 'The Internationale'.)*

*(The plenum of the Executive Committee is adjourned.)*

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<sup>51</sup> The third session of the RILU Central Council was held in Moscow 25 June–2 July 1923.

# Chronology

## 1921

- 22 June–12 July* – Third Congress of Communist International issues watchword of ‘To the Masses’ and lays the basis for the Comintern’s united-front approach.
- 3–19 July* – First Congress of Red International of Labour Unions (RILU, Profintern) is held in Moscow.
- 20 October* – Ankara Agreement between France and Turkey is signed, ending the Franco-Turkish War.
- November* – 130 German political prisoners at Lichtenburg prison undertake a week-long hunger strike, with inmates at other prisons following suit. The action sparks demonstrations and mass meetings throughout Germany.
- 12 November–6 February 1922* – Washington Conference of four powers (Britain, US, Japan, and France), known officially as the International Conference on Naval Limitation.
- 18 December* – ECCI adopts theses on the united front, codifying new strategic perspective.
- 22–24 December* – Following expulsion of left-wing unions from French CGT, expelled unionists hold a Unity Congress that forms the Unitary CGT (CGTU).
- 23–26 December* – Workers Party of America is founded as legal Communist party.
- 25–30 December* – First Congress of French CP is held in Marseilles.

## 1922

- 15 January* – Vienna Bureau (Two-and-a-Half International) issues call for a world conference of the three Internationals. The Comintern leadership agrees to participate in order to promote a united proletarian front to oppose capitalist attacks.
- 21 January–2 February* – First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East is held in Moscow and Petrograd.
- 22–26 January* – Federation of Czechoslovak Trade Unions holds congress in Prague, which becomes the scene of a sharp struggle between the right-wing leadership and a growing left wing.
- 1 February* – Nationwide railway strike begins in Germany, lasting seven days and involving nearly 800,000 railroad workers and civil servants. The strike is banned by the Social-Democratic government, with union leaders arrested.
- 20 February* – Alleanza del Lavoro (Labour Alliance) is formed by Italy’s leading unions to resist the fascist rise.

- 21 February–4 March* – First Enlarged ECCI Plenum adopts the united-front perspective.
- 2–5 April* – Conference of the Three Internationals is held in Berlin, attended by leadership delegations from Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Third Internationals.
- 10 April–19 May* – Genoa Conference discusses economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe and measures to improve relations with Soviet Russia. Negotiations break down over French and British insistence that Russia pay tsarist debts and return nationalised foreign-owned property.
- 16 April* – Rapallo Treaty is signed, normalising relations between Soviet Russia and Germany.
- 23 May* – Meeting of the Committee of Nine is held in Berlin. The Comintern delegation presents an ultimatum demanding an end to delays in organising a world labour congress. It withdraws from the committee when the ultimatum is rejected.
- 7–11 June* – Second Enlarged ECCI Plenum.
- 8 June* – Trial begins of members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Soviet Russia on charges of maintaining ties with Anglo-French imperialism and being complicit in attacks on the Soviet state during the Civil War. Leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals act as defence counsel. Defendants are convicted of treason in August, and fourteen are given death sentences, which are commuted. Some defendants are pardoned.
- 16–18 June* – International syndicalist congress is held in Berlin.
- 25 June–1 July* – Saint-Étienne Congress is held – first formal convention of the French CGTU.
- 27–30 June* – British Labour Party's annual conference approves a constitutional amendment barring Communists.
- 1 August* – Alliance of Italian unions begin anti-fascist general strike. Coming after unanswered fascist attacks and amid growing working-class demoralisation, the poorly organised strike meets with a weak response, as well as fierce repression. The strike is called off 3 August, in a major defeat for the anti-fascist movement.
- 22 August* – US CP convention is raided in Bridgman, Michigan, by Justice Department and federal police, with 30 arrested.
- 9 September* – Turkey retakes control of Smyrna [İzmir] from Greek troops, driving Greek forces out of Anatolia.
- 11 September* – Military uprising against Greek monarchy by anti-royalist officers, leading King Constantine I to abdicate.
- 24 September* – German SPD and USPD hold fusion congress in Nuremberg.
- 1–3 October* – Italian SP holds Nineteenth Congress in Rome. Meeting expels reformist wing of the party and declares for unconditional admission to the Comintern and fusion with the CP.
- 15–20 October* – Second Congress of French CP is held in Paris.

- 22 October* – Japanese troops withdraw from Vladivostok, ending the last foreign military challenge to Soviet power in Russia.
- 26–29 October* – Expelled left-wing unionists in Czechoslovakia form International All-Trade Union Organisation.
- 31 October* – Mussolini assumes power as prime minister in Italy, marking the victory of Italian fascism.
- 1–6 November* – First International Conference of Communist Cooperators is held in Moscow.
- 5 November–5 December* – Fourth Congress of Communist International.
- 20 November* – Lausanne Conference begins, in an effort to craft a new treaty with Turkey, with Britain and France assuming the principal role. A Soviet delegation participates, solidarising with Turkey's struggle against the imperialist powers.
- 21 November–2 December* – Second Congress of Red International of Labour Unions is held in Moscow.
- 4–16 December* – Third Congress of Communist Youth International is held in Moscow.
- 6 December* – Proclamation of Irish Free State as dominion within the British Empire, while civil war rages between supporters and opponents of the deal with Britain.
- 10–15 December* – International Peace Congress is held in The Hague, organised by the Amsterdam, Second, and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.

## 1923

- 2–4 January* – Paris Conference of Allied government is held, in yet another attempt to cobble together a financial plan to avoid a default in Germany's reparations payments. No agreement is reached due to disagreements between Britain and France.
- 6 January* – Conference in Essen, Germany, of European Communist parties to oppose the imminent French occupation of the Ruhr.
- 11 January* – The Ruhr region in Germany is invaded by 60,000 French and Belgian troops, who occupy the area in an attempt to exact war reparations.
- 26 January* – An alliance is formalised between the Soviet Union and China in a joint statement signed by Soviet representative Adolf Joffe and Sun Yat-sen.
- 24–28 February* – Norwegian Labour Party congress is held in Kristiania (Oslo). During this meeting, a conference is held between ECCI representatives and leaders of the Swedish CP.
- 10 March* – Lenin suffers a major stroke, leaving him incapacitated and ending his political activity.
- 17–21 March* – International conference of CPs and other workers' organisations and tendencies in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany. The Frankfurt Conference plans a broad action campaign against war and fascism.

- 15–17 April* – Italian SP holds Twentieth Congress in Milan. It narrowly rejects perspective of fusion with the CP.
- 17–25 April* – Twelfth Congress of Russian Communist Party.
- 10 May* – V.V. Vorovsky, head of the Soviet delegation at the Lausanne Conference, is assassinated by a White émigré.
- 18 May* – Meeting in Friedrichschafen, Germany, between the Amsterdam Bureau's International Federation of Metalworkers and the All-Russian Federation of Metalworkers, providing for mutual assistance pledges and the provisional admission of the Russian unions to the federation.
- 21–25 May* – The Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals hold a fusion congress in Hamburg. The merged organisation is called the Labour and Socialist International.
- 23–24 May* – Representatives of the International Transport Workers' Federation – affiliated with the Amsterdam International – meet in Berlin with the Russian transport union to discuss organising a united front against fascism and reaction.
- 9 June* – A right-wing coup in Bulgaria overthrows Stamboliyski's Peasant Party government. Armed resistance to the coup is waged by pro-Stamboliyski forces. The Bulgarian CP adopts a neutral stance in the conflict, seeing it as an internecine struggle within the bourgeoisie that workers have no stake in.
- 12–23 June* – Third Enlarged ECCI Plenum.
- 25 June* – Seventy Japanese Communists are arrested on charges of 'conspiracy to form a Communist Party'.
- 26–29 June* – British Labour Party's annual conference shows significant increase in support for CP affiliation.
- 24 July* – Treaty of Lausanne is signed following the completion of the Lausanne Conference.
- 10 August* – With strikes and popular mobilisations growing throughout Germany in response to the deepening economic crisis, a massive general strike begins, forcing Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno to resign.
- 8 October* – Trotsky's letter to Russian CP Central Committee marks the opening of a political struggle by the Left Opposition to reverse the Russian Revolution's degeneration at the hands of the Stalin-led bureaucratic caste.

## 1924

- 21 January* – Lenin dies.
- 23–31 May* – Thirteenth Russian CP congress registers victory of the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus in the first stage of its struggle against the Left Opposition.
- 17 June–8 July* – Fifth Congress of Communist International registers the International's political retreat. The congress reverses a number of key policies and positions adop-

ted by previous Comintern congresses and attempts to line up the world Communist movement behind a campaign against 'Trotskyism'.

# Glossary

- Abdul Hamid II** [1842–1918] – sultan and autocrat of Ottoman Empire 1876–1909; forced from office after 1908 ‘Young Turk’ revolution.
- Abramovitch, Raphael** [1880–1963] – joined Bund and RSDLP 1901; supporter of Mensheviks from 1903; in exile 1911–17; returned to Russia after February 1917 revolution; opposed October Revolution, leaving Russia in 1920; delegate from Two-and-a-Half International to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; lived in US from 1940.
- ADGB** [General German Trade Union Federation] – founded 1919 to replace earlier social-democratic union federation; largest federation in Germany; aligned with SPD; 7.9 million members in 1922; dissolved by Nazis in 1933.
- Adler, Friedrich** [1879–1960] – leader of Austrian Social Democracy from early years of century; pacifist during WWI; jailed 1917–18 for assassination of Austrian prime minister; organiser and president of Two-and-a-Half International 1921–3; chaired Conference of Three Internationals 1922; secretary of Labour and Socialist International 1923–46; in exile during Nazi occupation; settled in Switzerland 1947.
- Alexander, Eduard E.** [Ludwig] [1881–1945] – founding member Spartacus League and KPD; ran Communist press service 1922; editor-in-chief of *Die Rote Fahne* 1924; removed from responsibilities as ‘conciliator’ 1929; worked in German-Soviet trade association until 1940; arrested by Nazis 1944; died in transport to concentration camp.
- Amadori Virgili, Giovanni** [b. 1883] – head of Italian trade mission in Moscow January to May 1923; ambassador to Latvia 1923–4.
- Ambrogi, Ersilio** [1883–1964] – joined Italian PSI 1901; mayor of Cecina; went with CP after 1921 PSI split and was elected deputy in parliament; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; expelled from CP 1929, suspected of sympathising with Trotskyist opposition; imprisoned in Italy during WWII; readmitted to Italian CP 1957.
- American Federation of Labor** [AFL] – US craft union organisation founded 1881; 2.9 million members in 1923; split 1935–6 with formation of Congress of Industrial Organizations; reunited 1955.
- Amiens Charter** – adopted by French CGT in 1906; a programmatic platform for revolutionary syndicalism.
- Amsterdam International.** See International Federation of Trade Unions.
- Amter, Israel** [1881–1954] – joined US SP 1901; lived in Germany 1903–14; joined US Communist movement 1919; member of leftist faction committed to underground organisation; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; member ECCI 1923–4; remained CP member until his death.
- 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; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; withdrew from CP leadership posts 1925; expelled 1932; readmitted 1938; chair of CP during 1940s.

**Angaretis, Zigmas** [1882–1940] – Bolshevik from 1906, active in Lithuanian SDP; jailed and exiled under tsarism 1909–17; member Petrograd Committee of RSDLP 1917; people's commissar of internal affairs in soviet Lithuania 1918–19; founder of Lithuanian CP; secretary of its foreign bureau from 1920; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums 1922–3; secretary of International Control Commission 1926–35; member of Comintern apparatus 1935–7; arrested during Stalin purges 1937; shot.

**Antonowicz.** See Brun, Julian.

**Aoki.** See Arahata Kanson.

**Aparicio, José Loredo** [1898–1948] – member of Spanish SP and Socialist Youth; founding member of Spanish CP (PCE) 1921; attended III ECCI Plenum 1923; expelled from CP for opposition to 'bolshevisation' 1926; leader of Trotskyist movement in Asturias; rejoined SP during Spanish Revolution; first secretary of Spanish Republican embassy in Mexico and then Cuba 1937–9.

**Appleton, William A.** [1859–1940] – secretary of British General Federation of Trade Unions 1907–38; elected president of Amsterdam International July–August 1920; resigned November 1920 due to opposition of British Trades Union Congress.

**Arahata Kanson** [Aoki] [1887–1981] – active in socialist movement from 1904; a founding leader of Japanese CP; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; imprisoned a number of times between 1919 and 1945; left CP 1946; member of central executive committee of Japan Socialist Party 1946–8; left SP 1948.

**Arbeiderbladet** [Workers' Newspaper] – daily newspaper of Norwegian Labour Party; changed name from *Social-Demokraten* in April 1923; in 1997 changed name to *Dag-savisen*.

**Arditi del Popolo** [People's Commandos] – united anti-fascist workers' defence organisation in Italy; founded June 1921.

**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 1945.

**Avanti!** [Forward] – central daily organ of Italian Socialist Party; began publication 1896.

**Avigdor.** See Kossoi, Yehiel.

**Axelrod, Pavel** [1850–1928] – active in Russian revolutionary movement from 1877; a founder of Emancipation of Labour group 1883; a founding leader of RSDLP; Menshevik from 1903; following October Revolution, sought to organise socialist opposition to Bolsheviks.

- Azimonti, Carlo** [1888–1958] – socialist from 1904; member CGL National Council 1912; secretary of Italian CGL and director of *Battaglie Sindicali* from 1921; CGL delegate to RILU founding congress 1921; member of reformist Unitary Socialist Party (PSU) after its founding in 1922; forced out of trade-union activity under fascist rule.
- Badina, Louis** [b. 1898] – participant in April 1919 Black Sea mutiny by French sailors sent to assist White armies in Russian Civil War; court-martialed and imprisoned; while in jail a CP candidate elected to Paris municipal council 1921; amnestied in August 1922; expelled from CP 1924 for indiscipline; subsequently member of anarchist groups.
- Baldesi, Gino** [1879–1934] – assistant secretary of Italian CGL union federation 1918; a leader of reformist wing of PSI and trade unions 1920–1; left PSI with reformist forces October 1922, becoming member of Unitary Socialist Party [PSU]; vainly sought accommodation between CGL unions and fascists; withdrew from political activity 1927.
- Baldwin, Stanley** [1867–1947] – British Conservative Party politician; chancellor of exchequer 1922–3; prime minister 1923–4, 1924–9, 1935–7.
- Balfour, Arthur James** [1848–1930] – Conservative Party prime minister of United Kingdom 1902–5; foreign secretary 1916–19; Lord President of the Council 1919–22, 1925–9.
- Balkan Communist Federation** – coordinating body for Communist parties of Balkans; formed 1915 as Balkan Revolutionary Social-Democratic Federation, an alliance of Socialist parties opposed to imperialist war; renamed Balkan Communist Federation 1920.
- Bartz, Wilhelm** [1881–1929] – joined SPD 1900; editor of *Norddeutschen Volksstimme* 1907; joined USPD 1919, becoming member of its fraction in Reichstag; joined VKPD in 1920 fusion; a member of Levi group, but remained in KPD; became editor of *Inprekorr* 1922, delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; head of *Die Rote Fahne* editorial board 1925.
- Bauer, Otto** [1881–1938] – leader and theoretician of Austrian Social Democracy; secretary of its parliamentary fraction 1907–14; prisoner of war in Russia 1914–17; Austrian minister of foreign affairs 1918–19; opponent of October Revolution and Comintern; leader of Two-and-a-Half International 1921–3; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; member of Bureau and Executive of Labour and Socialist International from 1923; forced into exile 1934.
- Beaconsfield, Lord.** See Disraeli, Benjamin.
- Beaverbrook, Lord** [William Maxwell Aitken] [1879–1964] – Canadian financier; moved to Britain and became Conservative Party politician; minister of information 1918; later British newspaper tycoon.
- Bebel, August** [1840–1913] – a founder of German socialist movement 1869; collaborator of Marx and Engels; SPD co-chairman from 1892 until his death; opposed revisionism in SPD and Second International but came to adopt centrist position.

- Bedacht, Max** [Marshall] [1883–1972] – born in Germany; joined Swiss SP 1905; moved to US and joined SP 1908; supported its left wing during WWI; joined CP 1919; a leader of ‘Liquidator’ wing of CP that favoured functioning openly; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; expelled for ‘leftism’ 1948; later reinstated.
- Belgian Workers’ Party** – formed 1885 when SP of Belgium merged with trade unions and cooperatives; chauvinist position during WWI; 632,000 members 1923, including affiliated unionists and cooperativists.
- Bell, Thomas** [1882–1944] – Scottish foundry worker; joined ILP 1900; a founder and leader of Socialist Labour Party from 1903; leading figure in wartime shop stewards’ movement; a founder of British CP 1920 and head of its propaganda department to 1925; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; remained leading member of CP until his death.
- Beneš, Edvard** [1884–1948] – member Czechoslovak National Socialist Party; Czechoslovakia’s foreign minister 1918–35; prime minister 1921–2; president 1935–8, 1945–8.
- Berger, Victor** [1860–1929] – emigrated to US from Austria-Hungary 1878; joined Socialist Labor Party in 1880s; founding leader of Social-Democratic Party 1898; editor of socialist newspapers; a founding leader of SP 1901; first Socialist elected to US Congress 1910; leader of party right wing.
- Bergmann, Carl** [1874–1935] – German banker; undersecretary of finance, in charge of reparations 1919–21.
- Berlin Conference.** See Conference of the Three Internationals.
- Bernstein, Eduard** [1850–1932] – German socialist; collaborator of Engels; theorist of revisionist current in SPD from 1898; member of USPD during WWI; opponent of Comintern; rejoined SPD 1919; Reichstag deputy 1902–7, 1912–18, 1920–8.
- Beruzzi.** See Manuilsky, Dmitry.
- Berzin, Ian Antonovich** [1881–1938] – joined Latvian SDP 1902; Bolshevik leader in St. Petersburg 1906–7; supported Zimmerwald Left during WWI; elected to Bolshevik Central Committee 1917; minister in short-lived Latvian soviet republic 1919; ECCI secretary 1919–20; in Soviet diplomatic service 1921–7; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.
- Besnard, Pierre** [1886–1947] – French revolutionary syndicalist; leader of French rail-workers’ union; became general secretary of Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees [CSR] May 1921; supported anarcho-syndicalist opposition within CGTU 1922; became general secretary of CGT–Revolutionary Syndicalist in 1929.
- Der Betriebsrat** [Factory Council] – Austrian trade-union journal published in Vienna 1921–2.
- Beuer, Gustav** [1893–1947] – member of left wing of German Social-Democratic Workers’ Party in Czechoslovakia, which became German section of Czechoslovak CP in 1921, whose leadership committee he served on; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923;

- member Czechoslovak National Assembly 1935–8; in exile during WWII; member of East German SED at time of his death.
- Bianchi, Giuseppe** [1888–1921] – joined Italian SP 1906; went to school in Germany, returning to Italy 1914; editor of *Battaglie sindacali* 1919; member of CGL executive; CGL secretary responsible for propaganda and education 1921; CGL delegate to RILU founding congress 1921.
- Bidegaray, Marcel** [1875–1944] – general secretary of French railway union from 1909 and member of CGT confederal executive; member of French SP; went with Dissidents in 1921 SP split; supported CGT majority; part of reformist split from SP 1933; died in internment camp during WWII.
- Bismarck, Otto von** [1815–98] – German politician and writer; prime minister of Prussia from 1862; first chancellor of German Empire 1871–90; sponsor of Anti-Socialist Laws 1878–90.
- Blanqui, Louis-August** [1805–81] – French socialist and revolutionary leader; his supporters believed that revolutions could be successfully organised and accomplished by small groups of dedicated revolutionaries.
- Blum, Léon** [1872–1950] – joined French SP 1904; led Dissident party after its break with Communists in December 1920; premier of Popular Front government 1936–7 and 1938; jailed by Vichy regime 1940–5.
- Bobst, Hermann** [1886–1961] – joined Swiss SDP 1903; leader of typographical union; member of party left wing in Zurich that helped found united CP in 1921; editor of *Basler Vorwärts* from 1921; member of CC 1922–30; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; expelled from CP 1932; rejoined SDP; member of Trotskyist organisations after WWII.
- Bokányi, Dezső** [1871–1943] – joined Hungarian SDP in 1890s; member of party leadership committee 1894–1919; people's commissar for labour and welfare in Hungarian soviet republic 1919; arrested and sentenced to death after its defeat; sent to Soviet Russia in prisoner exchange; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; later worked for International Red Aid; arrested during Stalin purges 1938; died in prison.
- Bolen, Václav** [1887–1963] – secretary general of Czechoslovak agricultural and forest workers' union 1921; member of CP 1921 and its Central Committee 1921–2; leader of its left-wing opposition 1922; expelled September 1922 but readmitted by Fourth World Congress; expelled as 'right opportunist' 1929; joined Czechoslovak National Socialists under Beneš 1930; People's Socialist deputy 1946–8.
- Bordiga, Amadeo** [1889–1970] – joined Italian SP 1910; led Communist-Abstentionist faction after WWI; central leader of CP from its formation in 1921 to 1926; attended Conference of Three Internationals 1922; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; imprisoned by fascist regime February–October 1923; member ECCI 1922–8; jailed 1926–30; defended Trotsky 1928; expelled from CP 1930; led small anti-Stalinist Communist current until his death.

- Borghi, Armando** [1882–1968] – active in Italian anarchist movement from 1898; jailed several times, beginning 1906; joined USI syndicalist federation 1912; attended Second Comintern Congress as USI representative 1920, but soon became hostile to Comintern; participant in anti-fascist struggle; active in anarchist movement until his death.
- Boris III** [1894–1943] – king of Bulgaria from 1918 until his death; supported June 1923 coup against Stamboliyski government.
- Borisov, P.** [1892–1939] – joined Bolsheviks 1913; conducted party work in St. Petersburg, Tula, and Samara; after 1917 carried out economic tasks in Petrograd and Moscow; chairman of board, then manager of All-Union Trust of Agricultural Machinery; member All-Russian Council of National Economy; participant in Workers' Opposition in 1921–2; signed Letter of the 22; head of Agricultural Machinery Board from 1933.
- Borodin, Mikhail** [1884–1951] – joined RSDLP 1903, became Bolshevik; emigrated to US 1906; member of American SP during WWI; returned to Russia July 1918, and worked in Commissariat of Foreign Affairs; became Comintern emissary 1919, travelling to US, Mexico, Spain, Germany, and Britain; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums 1922–3; adviser to Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek in China 1923–7; arrested 1949; died in Siberian labour camp.
- Böttcher, Paul** [1891–1975] – joined SPD 1908; leader of USPD after 1917; joined CP in 1920 fusion; added to Zentrale to represent radical Left 1921; lead editor of CP Berlin daily 1921; alternate member ECCI 1922; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; minister in Saxony SPD-CP coalition government 1923; removed from leadership posts as 'rightist' 1924; expelled with Brandler current 1929; fled to Switzerland 1933; worked with pro-Soviet and anti-Nazi resistance during WWII; returned to East Germany 1945; taken to USSR 1946 and jailed for nine years; subsequently rejoined German CP.
- Brand, Henryk** [1890–1937] – joined Swiss SDP as Polish student in Zurich during WWI; returned to Warsaw 1919 and joined Polish CP; elected to its Central Committee 1920; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; ECCI member 1923–7; denounced by Comintern as 'right-winger' 1927; worked for Gosplan in Moscow 1931–7; arrested 1937 and executed.
- Brandler, Heinrich** [1881–1967] – joined SPD 1902; central figure in Chemnitz labour movement from 1914; early member of Spartacus League; a founder of German CP; convicted and imprisoned for role during March Action; escaped and went to Moscow November 1921; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; worked for RILU; central leader of CP 1921–3; made scapegoat for defeat of German workers in 1923; expelled as 'rightist' 1929; led Communist Party (Opposition) [KPD (O)] 1929–33; in exile 1933–49; active in Arbeiterpolitik, successor group of KPD (O), from 1949.
- Branting, Karl Hjalmar** [1860–1925] – founding member of Swedish SDP 1889; party leader 1907; headed party's reformist majority; government minister 1917; opponent

- of October Revolution; chairman of 1919 congress of Second International; Sweden's prime minister three times during 1920–5.
- Briand, Aristide** [1862–1932] – French politician; member of SP until he accepted ministerial post 1906; premier of France eleven times, including 1921–2.
- British Labour Party** – formed 1906 by trade-union federation and Independent Labour Party; member of Second International; voted to oppose affiliation of CP 1920; 3.3 million members in 1922.
- Brown, Ernest** – CP organiser in north-east England in early 1920s; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; represented CP on ECCI in 1924; member of party Executive Committee 1927–9, with responsibilities as organisational secretary.
- Brun, Julian** [Antonowicz] [1886–1942] – Polish Communist; joined SDKPiL 1905; joined CP 1919; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; member party Central Committee 1923–5, 1930–8; arrested in 1924, went to USSR in prisoner exchange; TASS correspondent in Western Europe from 1929; interned under Vichy regime 1940–1; escaped and went to USSR.
- Bruno, Genrikh I.** [1889–1945] – joined Bolsheviks 1906; held leading positions in Civil War, Cheka, and as chairman of artillery industry; signed Letter of the 22 of Workers' Opposition.
- Bukharin, Nikolai** [1888–1938] – joined Russian Bolsheviks 1906; in exile 1911–17; member Bolshevik CC 1917–30; one of central leaders within Comintern from 1919; delegate to first six Comintern congresses; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; 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.
- Bull, Edvard** [1881–1932] – leading Norwegian historian influenced by Marxism; editor of Norwegian Labour Party magazine *Den tyvende arhundrede* 1918–20, 1927–8; opponent of Comintern Twenty-One Conditions; left Comintern with NLP 1923; deputy chairman of party 1923–32; Norway's minister of foreign affairs 1928.
- Bulletin communiste** – founded 1920; originally a weekly reflecting views of French CP left wing; edited by Boris Souvarine; after Souvarine's expulsion for Trotskyism in 1924, it became anti-Stalinist communist journal, published until 1933.
- Bund** – General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia; founded in tsarist Russian empire 1897; affiliated to RSDLP 1898–1903 and from 1906, siding with Mensheviks; opposed October Revolution; left-wing split 1919 and became Communist Bund, with most joining Russian CP 1920; social-democratic wing functioned as separate organisation outside Soviet Union.
- Burian, Edmund** [1878–1935] – joined Czechoslovak SDP 1897; editor of social-democratic journals; Third World Congress delegate; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; member of CP executive committee 1921–9; expelled from CP 1929 for 'right-wing opportunism' and rejoined SDP.

- Bywater, Hector C.** [1884–1940] – British journalist and military writer; maritime expert.
- Cachin, Marcel** [1869–1958] – joined Guesde's French Workers' Party 1892; member French SP 1905; social patriot during WWI; with Frossard, leader of Centre current in SP and, from 1920, in CP; director of *L'Humanité* 1918–58; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; prominent CP leader until his death.
- Cannon, James P.** [Cook] [1890–1974] – joined IWW 1911; drawn to Bolshevism by Russian Revolution; joined Communist Labor Party 1919; became a central leader of united CP 1920; national chairman of legal Workers Party at its founding 1921; delegate to II ECCI plenum and Fourth Comintern Congress 1922; founding leader International Labor Defense 1925; won to Trotsky's views at Sixth Comintern Congress 1928; founder of American Trotskyism and a leader of it until his death.
- Carr.** See Katterfeld, Ludwig.
- Cartier, Joseph** [1867–1945] – French SP member; a founder of Committee for the Resumption of International Relations during WWI; elected to SP national leadership committee February 1920; supported affiliation to Comintern; member party leadership committee 1920–3; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; expelled from party 1924; subsequently member of Socialist-Communist Union.
- Cavan, Earl of** [Rudolph Lambart] [1865–1946] – British general during WWI; chief of Imperial General Staff 1922–6.
- CGL** [General Confederation of Labour, Italy] – formed 1906; allied with Socialist Party until late 1922; 2 million members September 1920, 1.1 million 1921; 400,000 members end of 1922; virtually disappeared by end of 1923; expressed sympathy with RILU but remained affiliated to Amsterdam International; suppressed under fascism.
- CGT** [General Confederation of Labour, France] – founded 1895; initially syndicalist in orientation; leadership followed reformist course from 1914; left wing driven out in 1921; split became definitive December 1921 with expelled left forming CGTU; 600,000 members in spring 1921; membership declined to 250,000 following split.
- CGTU** [Unitary General Confederation of Labour, France] – founded in France December 1921 by revolutionary unionists driven out of CGT; 350,000 members June 1922; affiliated to RILU 1923.
- Chelyshev, Mikhail** [d. 1937 or 1938] – joined Bolsheviks 1910; member of party Central Control Commission in early 1920s; supporter of Workers' Opposition and signer of Letter of the 22; later a Soviet judge; died in prison hospital from consequences of interrogation during Stalin purges.
- Chicherin, Georgy V.** [1872–1936] – joined RSDLP 1904; lived in exile 1905–17; Menshevik before 1914; internationalist during WWI; joined Bolsheviks on return to Russia 1918; Soviet foreign affairs commissar 1918–30.
- Christiansen, Ernst** [1891–1974] – originally member of Danish SDP; chairperson of CP 1919–27; left CP 1927; rejoined SDP 1930, representing it in parliament from 1947; minister without portfolio 1955–7.

- Churchill, Winston** [1874–1965] – British politician, writer; prime minister 1940–5 and 1951–5; organiser of British intervention against Soviet government 1919–20; colonial secretary 1921–2.
- Cieplak, Jan** [1857–1926] – Roman Catholic priest and bishop in Soviet Russia; tried for counterrevolutionary activities 1923 and sentenced to death; sentence was commuted and he was sent to Poland in 1924 in prisoner exchange.
- Clynes, John Robert** [1868–1949] – active in British union movement from 1886; member of parliament 1906–31, 1935–45; social chauvinist and minister during WWI; led Labour Party in 1922 elections; opposed 1926 general strike; British home secretary 1929–31.
- CNT** [National Confederation of Labour, Spain] – anarcho-syndicalist federation founded 1911; grew rapidly at end of WWI, reaching 700,000 members by end of 1920; 28,000 members at end of 1922; affiliated to Comintern 1919 and to RILU 1921–2, formally withdrawing in 1923; joined Berlin-based syndicalist International 1923.
- Committee of Nine** – body formed by April 1922 Berlin Conference of the Three Internationals, with three representatives each from Second International, Two-and-a-Half International, and Third International. Committee broke apart at first and only meeting on 23 May 1922.
- Communist International / Kommunistische Internationale** – journal published by ECCI in English, French, German, and Russian; founded 1 May 1919.
- Communist Women's Movement** – established by ECCI April 1920, headed by International Communist Women's Secretariat with Clara Zetkin as secretary; published *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale* 1921–5 and coordinated work of women's committees and bureaus in each CP; secretariat dissolved 1926.
- Communist Youth International** – grew out of Socialist Youth International, reconstituted under left-wing leadership 1915; worked with Zimmerwald Left during WWI; CYI formed November 1919 with seat in Berlin; affiliated to Comintern; its centre moved to Moscow after its Second Congress in 1921.
- Comunismo** – bimonthly journal published in Milan by Italian Socialist Party 1919–22; edited by Serrati.
- Conference of the Three Internationals** – meeting held between leadership delegations of Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Third Internationals in Berlin, 2–5 April 1922.
- Connolly, James** [1868–1916] – active in socialist movement from around 1889; central leader of Irish socialism for many years; leader of Irish Transport and General Workers' Union; organiser of Irish Citizen Army and 1916 Easter Rebellion; executed by British.
- Cook.** See Cannon, James P.
- Cooperative Section of Communist International** – formed 1920 following Second Comintern Congress to organise Communist work in cooperative movement.
- CP** – Communist Party.

- Crémet, Jean** [Thibaut] [1892–1973] – joined French socialist movement before 1914; soldier in WWI; founding member of CP 1920; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; elected to CP Central Committee and Political Bureau 1924; member of ECCI Presidium 1925–6; Comintern envoy to China 1928–30; broke with Comintern 1930–1.
- Crispien, Arthur** [1875–1946] – German socialist journalist; joined SPD 1894; member Spartacus current 1915; leader of USPD 1917–22; attended Second World Congress 1920 but opposed affiliation to Comintern and remained in rump USPD after split; attended Berlin Conference of Three Internationals 1922 as representative of Two-and-a-Half International; returned to SPD in 1922 fusion; SPD co-chairman until 1933; in Swiss exile from 1933.
- Cuno, Wilhelm** [1876–1933] – German shipping magnate; chancellor of Germany 22 November 1922–12 August 1923; headed ‘economic government’, the first postwar regime without SPD participation; counselled ‘passive resistance’ to French occupation of Ruhr 1923.
- Curzon, George Nathaniel** [1859–1925] – British politician; viceroy of India 1898–1905; foreign secretary 1919–24; issued ultimatum to Soviet Russia in May 1923, accusing it of actions against British colonial interests and making demands and threats.
- Cvijić, Djuro** [Vladetić] [1896–1937 or 1938] – member Croatian national-revolutionary movement, sentenced to three years’ imprisonment 1912; founding member of Yugoslav CP, elected to its Central Committee 1919; editor of *Borba* from 1922; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; general secretary of CP 1927–8; sent to Moscow 1934; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- CYI.** See Communist Youth International.
- D’Abernon, Lord** [Edgar Vincent] [1857–1941] – British Conservative politician and author; part of Allied mission to Poland July 1920, during Polish-Soviet War; British ambassador to Germany 1920–5.
- Dalström, Kata** [1858–1923] – joined Swedish SDP 1893; elected to party executive 1900; joined left wing in 1917 split that led to formation of CP; delegate to Second World Congress 1920.
- D’Aragona, Ludovico** [1876–1961] – joined PSI 1892; a founder of Italian metalworkers’ union; general secretary of CGL union federation 1918–25; SP parliamentary deputy 1919–24; headed trade-union delegation to Soviet Russia and was consultative delegate to Second World Congress 1920; opposed founding CP 1921 and remained in SP; joined reformist Unitary Socialist Party [PSU] 1922; government minister 1946–51.
- Daszyński, Ignacy** [1866–1936] – a founding leader of Polish Socialist Party [PPS] in Galicia 1892; right-wing social democrat; briefly served as head of first Polish government 1918; joined Government of National Defence during war with Soviet Russia 1920.
- Degoutte, Jean** [1866–1938] – French general, serving in France’s colonies and WWI; commander of French Army of the Rhine 1919–25.

- Denikin, Anton Ivanovich** [1872–1947] – Russian tsarist general; a leader of White Army during Civil War; emigrated 1920.
- Disraeli, Benjamin** (Earl of Beaconsfield) [1804–81] – British Conservative Party prime minister 1868 and 1874–80.
- Dissidents** – A reference to French Socialist Party minority that opposed majority's decision in 1920 to join Communist International and change name to Communist Party; splitting from majority, it retained old party name.
- Dombal, Thomas** [Tomasz Dąbal] [1890–1938] – leader of Polish peasants' movement; led a local revolutionary government in Tarnobrzeg 1918; joined CP 1920; jailed 1921; sent to Soviet Russia in prisoner exchange 1923; a founder of Peasant International (Krestintern) 1923; arrested 1937 during Stalin purges; died in prison.
- Domes, Franz** [1863–1930] – Austrian trade-union leader; joined SDP 1879; became secretary of metalworkers' union 1898 and its president 1918; elected to parliament for SDP 1911; member of first Council of State following fall of monarchy 1918; member of parliament 1920–30.
- Doriot, Jacques** [1898–1945] – joined French SP youth during WWI; member of CP 1920; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; 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.
- Dowbor-Muśnicki, Józef** [1867–1937] – Polish general in imperial Russian army during WWI; collaborated with German army against Bolsheviks 1918; helped organise new Polish army.
- Duret, Jean** [1900–71] – born in Poland; joined French CP as student in Paris 1921; supporter of Renoult current; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; 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 his death.
- Eberlein, Hugo** [1887–1941] – joined SPD 1906; internationalist and a founder of Spartacus League during WWI; member German CP Central Committee 1918; delegate to First Comintern Congress 1919; prominent figure in 1921 March Action; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; 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; executed.
- Ebert, Friedrich** [1871–1925] – joined SPD 1889; member of party executive committee 1905–19; succeeded Bebel as party co-chairman 1913; supported German war effort in WWI; as leader of provisional government coming out of 1918 revolution, joined with monarchists to defeat workers' uprisings 1919–20; German president 1919–25.
- ECCI** – Executive Committee of the Communist International.
- Edward VII** [1841–1910] – king of United Kingdom and British Empire from 1901 until his death.

- 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; central political and theoretical leader of revolutionary workers' movement after death of Marx.
- Erzberger, Matthias** [1875–1921] – leader of Catholic Centre Party in Germany; signatory of armistice ending WWI; vice chancellor 1919; finance minister 1919–20; assassinated by right-wing nationalist 26 August 1921.
- Essen Conference** – conference of European Communist parties held 6 January 1923 to oppose imminent French occupation of Ruhr.
- Ewert, Arthur** [1890–1959] – joined SPD in Germany 1908; lived in Canada 1914–19; joined KPD upon return to Germany; elected to Zentrale January 1923; delegate to III ECCI plenum; became alternate member of ECCI 1928, but months later was criticised and removed from party leadership; Comintern emissary during 1930s; jailed and tortured in Brazil 1935–45, during which he lost his sanity; institutionalised in East Germany until his death.
- Fabian Society** – organised 1884 by supporters of reformist and gradualist socialism; played important role in British Labour Party.
- Fabre, Henri** [1876–1969] – French socialist journalist; launched anti-war daily *Le Journal du peuple* 1916; joined French CP, while openly criticising Comintern; expelled from Comintern by ECCI March 1922; expulsion not ratified by French CP until October 1922; continued left-wing journalistic and political activity until his death.
- Falk, Erling** [1887–1940] – Norwegian socialist and writer; partisan of labour movement while living in US 1906–18; joined Norwegian Labour Party after return to Norway; edited and published *Mot Dag* from 1921; attended III ECCI plenum 1923; remained in Labour Party following its split from Comintern 1923; part of NLP left wing; expelled 1925; joined CP 1926, but left it 1928.
- Faure, Paul** [1878–1960] – joined French socialist movement 1901; supporter of pacifist wing during WWI; opposed 1920 decision to join Comintern and became general secretary of Dissident SP; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922 from Two-and-a-Half International; expelled from SP 1944 for ties to Vichy regime.
- Ferdinand I** [1861–1948] – king (tsar) of Bulgaria 1908–18.
- Fimmen, Eduard 'Edo'** [1881–1942] – leader of Dutch trade-union federation from 1907; secretary of Amsterdam International 1919–23; forced to resign November 1923 due to his support of united front with Communists and left-wing unionists.
- First International** (International Workingmen's Association) – founded 1864, composed of working-class organisations from Europe and North America; Marx and Engels were central leaders; went into decline after defeat of Paris Commune; seat moved to New York 1872; dissolved 1876.
- Fischer, Karel** [Michalec] [1901–80] – joined Czechoslovak socialist movement 1918 and became leader of Socialist Youth; joined CP and Communist Youth 1921, rep-

- resenting it at III ECCI plenum 1923; a supporter of United Opposition 1927 led by Trotsky and Zinoviev.
- Fischer, Ruth** [1895–1961] – co-founder of Austrian CP 1918; moved to Berlin 1919; leader of leftist opposition in German CP; gained central party leadership 1924; alternate member ECCI 1924; ECCI intervention led to her 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 Leninbund 1928; collaborated with Trotsky 1933–6; in exile in France and US from 1933.
- Flieg, Leopold** [1893–1939] – joined German Social-Democratic youth movement 1908; drafted and wounded during WWI, joined Spartacus League 1918; founding member of KPD; delegate to 1919 founding congress of Communist Youth International; elected to CYI Executive 1922, representing it at III ECCI plenum 1923; elected to KPD Central Committee and Politburo 1927, 1929; left Germany 1933; recalled to Moscow 1937; arrested 1938 during Stalin purges; shot.
- Fortichiari, Bruno** [Martini] [1892–1981] – joined Italian socialist youth movement around 1907; secretary of Milan PSI 1912; founding member of CP and of its leadership 1921; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; expelled from CP 1929; readmitted during WWI; expelled again 1956; active with left-wing Communist currents until his death.
- Foster, William Z.** [1881–1961] – joined American SP 1901 and IWW 1909; broke with IWW and led Syndicalist League of North America 1912–14; worked as organiser for AFL unions, leading steel strike of 1919; formed Trade Union Educational League 1920; attended RILU founding congress 1921; joined CP 1921; a leader of CP until his death.
- Frankfurt Conference** – international conference of Communist parties and other workers' organisations and tendencies, held 17–21 March 1923; decided on broad action campaign against war and fascism.
- Freiheit** [Freedom] – daily organ of USPD published in Berlin; published from 15 November 1918 until September 1922.
- Freksa, Friedrich** [1882–1955] – German novelist, poet, playwright, and screenwriter.
- Frey, Josef** [1882–1957] – joined Austrian socialist students' association at University of Vienna; staff member of SDP daily newspaper; president of council of soldiers at Vienna garrison during November 1918 revolution; leader of SDP left wing; expelled in 1920; joined Austrian CP January 1921; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; supported Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition 1926; expelled from CP 1927; supporter of Trotskyist movement until 1932; emigrated to Switzerland 1938.
- Friesland.** See Reuter, Ernst.
- Friis, Jacob** [1883–1956] – member of Norwegian Labour Party and socialist journalist from 1909; internationalist and pacifist during WWI; joined Comintern 1919 together with party; delegate to Second and Third World Congresses; member ECCI 1920–1; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; supported NLP withdrawal from Comintern

1923; joined CP 1928 and remained a member until 1933; rejoined NLP and was active in its left wing.

**Frossard, Louis-Oscar** [1889–1946] – joined French SP 1905; pacifist during WWI; CP general secretary and leader of its Centre current 1920–2; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; Comintern delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; quit CP January 1923; led Socialist-Communist Union, then member SP 1927–35; several times minister; voted for dictatorial powers to Pétain 1940.

**Furubotn, Peder** [1890–1975] – joined left-wing trade-union opposition movement 1911; supporter of Comintern within Norwegian Labour Party from 1918; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; general secretary of CP in 1923; chairman 1925–30; in Moscow 1930–8; active in resistance to Nazi occupation during WWII; general secretary of CP 1945–7; expelled 1949 as ‘Titoite’ and ‘nationalist’.

**Gafurov** [Şarki] – presumably Azerbaijani Communist; sent to Turkey by Comintern to assist in organisational matters January–March 1923; represented Turkish CP at III ECCI plenum 1923.

**Gallacher, Willie** [1881–1965] – joined Independent Labour Party 1905; joined British SP 1906; a leader of Clyde shipbuilding struggle from 1915, and chair of Clyde Workers’ Committee; supported October Revolution; attended Second Comintern Congress 1920; a founder of British CP; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; member of CP central/executive committee 1922–63; chairman of CP until 1956; its president 1956–63.

**Garvin, James Louis** [1868–1947] – British journalist; editor of *The Observer* newspaper 1908–42.

**Gennari, Egidio** [1876–1942] – joined Italian SP 1897; a leader of its left wing; internationalist during WWI; PSI political secretary 1920; supported Communists in 1921 Livorno split; a vice chairman of Presidium of Third World Congress; elected to ECCI 1921; favoured fusion with SP 1922; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; wounded several times by fascists; forced into emigration 1926; carried out many Comintern assignments; died in USSR.

**Genoa Conference** – meeting held 10 April–19 May 1922 of representatives of 34 governments, including Soviet Russia, in unsuccessful effort to promote economic reconstruction in Eastern Europe and normalised relations with Soviet republic.

**Giacomo.** See Rákosi, Mátyás.

**Giolitti, Giovanni** [1842–1928] – Italian prime minister five times during 1892–1921; tolerated violent attacks by fascist bands 1921 and initially supported fascist regime 1922–4.

**Glombinski, Stanislaus** [Stanisław Głąbiński] [1862–c. 1943] – a leader of National Democratic Party of Poland; member Austrian Council of State from Galicia 1902–18; foreign minister in Polish government under Witos 1923; arrested by NKVD and killed in Soviet Union.

- Gneisenau, August Neidhardt von** [1760–1831] – Prussian field marshal during Napoleonic Wars.
- Gogol, Nikolai** [1809–52] – Russian dramatist, novelist, and short story writer.
- Goltz, Rüdiger von der** [1865–1946] – German general; led German forces fighting revolutionary forces and local nationalists in Finland and Baltic region 1918–19.
- Gompers, Samuel** [1850–1924] – president of American Federation of Labor 1886–1924 (except for 1895); advocated collaboration with employers, counterposing ‘pure-and-simple unionism’ to industrial unionism; supported US entry into WWI; member of labour commission at Versailles Conference.
- González, César.** See Rodríguez González, César.
- Gramsci, Antonio** [1891–1937] – joined Italian SP 1913; secretary of its Turin section 1917; co-founder of weekly *L'Ordine nuovo* 1919; advocate of workers’ councils 1920–1; founding member of Italian CP 1921; represented party in Moscow 1922–3; delegate to II and III ECCI plenums; as advocate of united front against fascism, headed CP 1924–6; objected to campaign against Trotsky 1926; jailed by fascists 1926; wrote *Prison Notebooks*; health ruined by prison conditions, he died shortly after release.
- Grassmann, Peter** [1873–1939] – joined SPD 1893; supported reformist 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] – joined Italian SP 1893; initially reformist, but radicalised during WWI, supporting Maximalist current; supported Communists at 1921 Livorno Congress while seeking compromise with Serrati current; delegate to Second and Fourth World Congresses; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; expelled for ‘revisionism’ 1928; readmitted to CP after fall of fascism.
- Grey, Sir Edward** [1862–1933] – British foreign secretary 1905–16; leader of Liberal Party in House of Lords 1923–4.
- Grimm, Robert** [1881–1958] – joined Swiss SDP 1899; editor-in-chief of *Berner Tagwacht* 1909–18; member of SDP Executive 1915–17, 1919–36; Swiss delegate to International Socialist Bureau from 1912; main organiser of Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences 1915–16; rejected entry into Comintern and helped organise Two-and-a-Half International; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922.
- Groener, Wilhelm** [1867–1939] – German general during WWI; helped suppress Spartacists during 1918–19 revolution; minister of transport (1920–3), defence (1928–32), and interior (1931–2).
- Grün.** This may refer to: **Anna Grün** [1889–1962] – pioneer in social work; a 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. Or **Josef Grün** [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 1945.
- Guesde, Jules** [1845–1922] – veteran of Paris Commune; among France's first Marxists; from 1882 leader of French Workers' Party, then SP; known as orthodox Marxist and opponent of reformism until 1914; social patriot and minister of state without portfolio during WWI; opposed Comintern.
- Guild Socialists** – a current in early twentieth century advocating worker self-government of industry through national worker-controlled guilds; based primarily in Britain.
- Gyptner, Richard** [1901–72] – member Left Radical Group 1916–18; joined German Communist Youth 1919; elected to Communist Youth International Executive December 1922, representing it at III ECCI plenum; secretary of CYI Western European Bureau 1923; worked as Comintern emissary in early 1930s; lived in USSR during WWII; SED functionary after 1945; worked in East German foreign affairs ministry 1955–65.
- Haase, Hugo** [1863–1919] – joined SPD 1887; elected to German Reichstag 1897; SPD co-chairman 1911–16; voted against war credits 1916; a founder and chairman of USPD 1917; member of Council of People's Representatives established by November 1918 revolution; assassinated by monarchist.
- Hague Peace Congress** – World Peace Congress organised by Amsterdam International 10–15 December 1922 in The Hague, to consider measures to avert imperialist war, with participation by Amsterdam International, Second International, Two-and-a-Half International, pacifist, and religious groups.
- Haller, Józef** [1873–1960] – commander in Polish Legions of Austrian army during WWI; fought Soviet forces after Brest-Litovsk Treaty as leader of Polish troops in Russia; army general during Polish-Soviet War 1920; deputy in Polish parliament 1920–7.
- Hamburg Congress** – unity congress between Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals held 21–25 May 1923.
- Hanusch, Ferdinand** [1866–1923] – active in Austrian labour movement from 1891; elected general secretary of Textile Workers' Union 1900; SDP member of parliament from 1907; chair of executive committee of Austrian Trade Union Commission from 1903; minister in Austrian republic 1918–19; vice chancellor 1920.
- Hardy, George** [1884–1966] – originally from Britain; emigrated to Canada 1906; joined IWW in US 1911; IWW general secretary and treasurer 1920–1; visited Russia and became Communist; joined British CP 1921; expelled from IWW 1922 for his Communist and pro-Soviet stance; organising secretary of National Minority Movement in Britain 1924; Comintern representative in Britain 1925, and then South Africa; member of RILU Executive Bureau 1928–30.
- Hauth, Wilhelm** [1895–1968] – member of KPD National Trade Union Commission; aligned with Friesland-led party opposition in late 1921 and early 1922, although he

- remained in KPD; member of Berlin city administration for SED in East Germany 1946–8.
- Heimo, Mauno** [1896–1937] – Finnish Communist working for Comintern apparatus; technical secretary at III ECCI plenum 1923; carried out various Comintern missions in Central and Western Europe in 1930s; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- 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-sindicalist current in Paris CP; expelled from CP 1923; signed surrealist manifesto for independent revolutionary art 1938.
- Heinrich**. Probable reference to **Heinrich Süsskind** [1895–1937] – born in Poland; while studying theology founded a Communist youth group in Tübingen 1919; joined KPD as student autumn 1919; became chief editor of *Die Rote Fahne* December 1921; worked for Comintern in Riga and Moscow 1922–3; resumed *Die Rote Fahne* editorship June 1923; worked for Comintern in Prague and then Soviet Union after 1933; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.
- Hellberg, Sigvald** [1890–1962] – joined Danish socialist youth after 1913; editor of youth journal *Fremad* 1917–19; went with left-wing split from SDP that became CP, becoming leader of party and editor of its magazine; a principal leader in party factional struggle 1922–3; CP president until 1926; rejoined social democrats 1930.
- Henderson, Arthur** [1863–1935] – British Labour Party chairman 1908–10 and 1914–17, party secretary 1911–34; elected president of Second International 1920; chief party whip in House of Commons 1914, 1921–3, 1925–7; secretary of state for foreign affairs 1929–31.
- Hervé, Gustave** [1871–1944] – joined French socialist movement 1899; led ultraleft tendency in SP before WWI, calling for insurrection and draft resistance to halt threat of war; became pro-war ultra-nationalist in 1914; expelled from SP 1916; sympathetic to fascism in 1920s; initial supporter of Vichy regime during WWII.
- Herzog, Jakob** [1892–1931] – joined Swiss socialist youth movement 1912; participated in 1915 Bern international socialist youth conference; editor of *Freien Jugend* 1916–17; supported Bolshevik revolution; expelled from SDP 1918; helped found leftist CP that he represented at Second Comintern Congress 1920; attended I ECCI plenum 1922 as member of united CP; Central Committee member 1927–30.
- Hilferding, Rudolf** [1877–1941] – joined socialist movement as student 1893; based in Germany from 1906; author of *Finance Capital* 1910; opposed SPD support of war credits after 1914; joined USPD 1918; opposed Comintern, remaining in rump USPD 1920; rejoined SPD in 1922 fusion; government minister of finance 1923, 1928–

- 9; forced into exile 1933; arrested by French Vichy regime 1941; tortured and killed by Gestapo.
- Hillquit, Morris** [1869–1933] – founder and central leader of US SP from 1901; supporter of centrist current within international social democracy; prominent figure in Two-and-a-Half International 1921–3.
- Hitler, Adolf** [1889–1945] – became leader of National Socialist Workers' [Nazi] Party 1921; became chancellor 1933; German dictator until his death.
- Hoernle, Edwin** [1883–1952] – joined SPD 1910; member Spartacus League during WWI then CP; member Central Committee 1921–4; member of ECCI 1922; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; dropped from party Central Committee as supporter of Brandler current 1924; specialist on agrarian issues; Reichstag deputy 1924–33; took refuge in USSR during Nazi rule; held posts in East Germany after 1945.
- Hoffmann, Max** [1869–1927] – German general; commanded troops on Eastern Front during WWI; participated in Brest-Litovsk negotiations.
- Hofmo, Rolf** [1898–1966] – secretary of Norwegian Labour Party in Christiania (Oslo); delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; member of Left Communist Youth League; imprisoned 1924 for participating in strike action; imprisoned by Nazis during WWII; later a Norwegian sports official.
- 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 WWI; supporter of October Revolution; helped found Left Social-Democratic Party 1917 and led it into Comintern; elected to ECCI 1922; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; criticised Moscow control and left Comintern 1924, forming independent socialist current; rejoined SDP 1926; mayor of Stockholm 1940–50.
- Hoover, Herbert** [1874–1964] – US secretary of commerce 1921–8; president of United States 1929–33.
- Horthy, Miklós** [1868–1957] – Austro-Hungarian naval commander during WWI; a leader of counterrevolutionary forces that crushed Hungarian soviet republic 1919 and carried out white terror; regent and dictator of Hungary 1920–44.
- Houser, Václav** [1871–1958] – a leader of Marxist Left in Czechoslovak SDP, participating in founding of CP 1921; a leader of leftist faction; member of CP fraction in Czechoslovak senate from 1925; expelled from CP 1929; became a leader of new group called CP of Czechoslovakia (Leninists).
- Hueber, Anton** [1861–1935] – joined Austrian SDP 1880; secretary of Austrian General Federation of Trade Unions and executive committee of SDP from 1894; member of Amsterdam International management committee 1919; member of International Labour Office governing body 1922.
- L'Humanité*** [Humanity] – daily Paris newspaper of French SP and then CP; began publication 1904; circulation of 170,000–230,000 in 1922.

- Humbert-Droz, Jules** [1891–1971] – joined Swiss SDP 1911; internationalist during WWI; founding member CP 1921; helped lead Comintern work in Latin countries of Europe and in Latin America; elected to ECCI 1921; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; 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; joined SDP and became its secretary 1947–58; leader of dissident SP from 1959; in final years, supporter of Algerian freedom struggle and anti-war activist.
- Hurd, Sir Archibald** [1869–1959] – author of numerous books and articles on British naval affairs.
- Huysmans, Camille** [1871–1968] – joined Belgian Workers' Party 1887; journalist; secretary of International Socialist Bureau of Second International from 1905; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; secretary of Labour and Socialist International 1939–44; chairman of Belgian House of Representatives 1936–9, 1954–8; Belgian premier 1946–7.
- Ilg, Konrad** [1877–1954] – active in Swiss trade-union movement from 1898; president of Swiss Metalworkers' and Clockworkers' Association 1917–54; secretary of International Federation of Metalworkers 1921–54; vice president of SDP 1928–36; vice president Swiss Federation of Trade Unions 1937–41.
- Independent Labour Party** [ILP] – British social-democratic party formed 1893; played leading role in formation of Labour Party, affiliating to it 1906–32; majority took pacifist position during WWI; affiliated to Two-and-a-Half International 1921; minority split to join CP; 32,000 members in 1922.
- Industrial Workers of the World** [IWW, United States] – founded 1905 as revolutionary syndicalist union; opposed US participation in WWI; suffered severe repression 1917–18; sent delegates to founding RILU congress 1921 but rejected affiliation to it; many militants joined CP; went into rapid decline in 1920s; 58,000 members reported at its 1923 convention.
- Inkpin, Albert** [1884–1944] – joined Social-Democratic Federation 1906; general secretary of British SP 1913–20, leading it to fusion that created CP; general secretary of CP 1920–2, 1923–9; jailed for Communist propaganda activities 1921; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; secretary-general of Friends of the Soviet Union 1930–44.
- Inprecorr** [*International Press Correspondence*] – Comintern's international newsletter published in English; produced several times a week from 1921 until 1938.
- Inprekorr** [*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*] – Comintern's German-language international newsletter, published several times a week.
- Die Internationale** – bimonthly theoretical journal of KPD; founded 1915 as underground organ of Spartacus current.
- L'Internationale** – daily French Communist newspaper; edited by Daniel Renoult; published 1921–9.
- International Federation of Metalworkers** – trade-union association founded 1893;

over 3 million members at end of 1922; signed May 1923 agreement with All-Russian Federation of Metalworkers.

**International Federation of Red Sports and Gymnastics.** See Red Sport International.

**International Federation of Trade Unions** [IFTU, Amsterdam International] – founded by reformist-led unions at July 1919 congress in Amsterdam; viewed as continuation of federation founded in 1901 (adopting IFTU name in 1913) and destroyed by WWI; 19 million members at end of 1922.

**International Federation of Transport Workers** – trade-union association founded 1896; over 2 million members in 25 countries in 1923; came to agreement with Russian transport unions in May 1923 to organise united front against fascism and reaction.

**Izgojev, Aleksandr S.** [1872–1935] – leader of Russian Cadet Party from 1906; deported from Soviet Russia 1922.

**Jackson, Thomas A.** [1879–1955] – joined British Social-Democratic Federation by 1900; a founder of SP 1904; joined Socialist Labour Party during WWI; founding member of CP; edited *The Communist*; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; member of CP executive committee until removed as ‘rightist’ in 1929; remained party member until his death.

**Jansen, I.** See Proost, Jan.

**Jaurès, Jean** [1859–1914] – central leader of French SP from its founding in 1905; advocated reformist positions; resisted imperialist war; assassinated at outbreak of WWI.

**Jean, Renaud** [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 his death.

**Jílek, Bohumil** [1892–1963] – a member of Czech SDP at start of WWI; initially took pro-Austro-Hungarian position, but later rallied to party left wing; general secretary of CP 1921–2; delegate to II ECCI plenum; expelled September 1922 for ‘leftist deviation’, a decision reversed by Fourth World Congress; general secretary of CP 1925–9; expelled as ‘rightist’ 1929; later leader of Agrarian Party; fled Czechoslovakia and went to US following CP takeover of power 1948.

**Joffe, Adolf A.** [1883–1927] – joined RSDLP 1903; collaborator of Trotsky from 1906; joined Mezhrayontsi 1917, which fused with Bolsheviks August 1917, became member of its Central Committee; member of Soviet delegation to Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations; Soviet diplomat from 1919; supporter of Left Opposition; committed suicide to protest Trotsky’s expulsion from CP.

**Jogiches, Leo** [1867–1919] – a central leader of Polish Social Democracy 1893–1914; close collaborator of Rosa Luxemburg; moved to Berlin 1900 and from then on was active in both German and Polish movements; central organiser of Spartacus League and leader of German CP; murdered by government troops March 1919.

**Johanssen, Karl** [1874–1931] – Norwegian lawyer and journalist; colonial judge in Congo 1907–9; 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 trial of Socialist-Revolutionaries, and other questions 1921–2; came under sharp criticism from NLP; expelled from Comintern by Fourth World Congress 1922; continued to write for Labour Party; early radio journalist.

**Johnson.** See Scott, Charles.

**Jones, David Ivon** [1883–1924] – born in Wales, moved to South Africa 1910; joined South African Labour Party 1911; founding member of International Socialist League 1915, becoming its first secretary-editor; attended Second and Third Comintern Congresses; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums 1922–3; one of first English-language translators of Lenin's works.

**Jouhaux, Léon** [1879–1954] – French unionist; general secretary of CGT from 1909; social patriot during WWI; elected first vice-president of Amsterdam International 1919; worked to expel left-wing unionists 1921–2; supporter of Popular Front 1936; in concentration camp during Nazi occupation; in 1948 broke with then-CP-led CGT and founded Force Ouvrière union federation.

***Journal du peuple*** – Paris weekly newspaper published 1916–29; founded and edited by Henri Fabre; affiliated to CP 1920–2.

***Jugend-Internationale*** [Youth International] – monthly German-language magazine of Communist Youth International; published 1919–28.

**Julian the Apostate** [331/332–63] – Roman Emperor from 361 to 363; his hostility to Christianity led the Church to label him the 'Apostate'.

**Kabakchiev, Khristo** [1878–1940] – joined Bulgarian SDP 1897; member of left-wing Tesniaki wing from 1905; editor-in-chief of its central organ 1908; member of CP and its Central Committee from 1919; ECCI emissary 1920–1; jailed for three years after September 1923 Bulgarian insurrection; lived in Moscow from 1926; lost leadership posts in Bulgarian CP and ECCI 1928; briefly jailed during Stalin purges 1937–8.

**KAG** [Communist Working Group, Germany] – formed by Paul Levi and other expelled members of KPD; held founding conference November 1921; most adherents fused into USPD in early 1922.

**Kamenev, Lev Borisovich** [1883–1936] – joined RSDLP 1901; became Bolshevik 1903; Bolshevik leader in St. Petersburg 1906–7; went to Geneva 1908; arrested and exiled to Siberia 1914–17; in Petrograd 1917; elected to CC 1917; elected president of Moscow Soviet 1918; member of RCP politburo; elected to ECCI at Third World Congress; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; allied with Stalin and Zinoviev against Trotsky 1923–5; member of joint opposition with Trotsky and Zinoviev 1926–7; expelled 1927; recanted and reinstated 1928; expelled again 1932; condemned to death and executed following first Moscow Trial.

- KAPD** [Communist Workers' Party of Germany] – formed April 1920 by ultraleft current expelled from CP with over 40,000 members; official sympathising organisation of Comintern 1920–1; only a few hundred members still active by late 1923.
- Kapp, Wolfgang** [1858–1922] – reactionary Prussian politician; led attempted coup March 1920 to overthrow German republic and establish right-wing dictatorship; defeated by general strike and armed workers' resistance.
- Kapsukas.** See Mickevičius-Kapsukas, Vincas.
- Karakhan, Lev M.** [1889–1937] – joined RSDLP 1904; member of Mezhrayontsi group 1913–17; joined Bolshevik Party 1917; member of Military Revolutionary Committee in Petrograd 1917; secretary of Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk peace talks 1918; deputy commissar of foreign affairs 1918–20, 1927–34; Soviet ambassador to Poland 1921; ambassador to China 1923–6; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- Karl I** [1887–1922] – last ruling member of Hapsburg dynasty in Austria-Hungary; emperor of Austria and king of Hungary 1916–18; overthrown by November 1918 revolution; made two attempts to reclaim throne of Hungary in 1921.
- Katayama, Sen** [1859–1933] – a founder of Japanese SDP 1901; moved to US 1914; active in left wing of US SP during WWI; founded Japanese Communist group in New York 1919; represented Comintern in Mexico 1921; moved to Moscow 1922; member ECCI from 1922; attended I and III ECCI plenums; Comintern delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; remained in Communist movement until his death.
- Katterfeld, Ludwig** [Carr] [1881–1974] – joined US SP 1905; a leader of its left-wing faction; a founding leader of Communist Labor Party 1919; executive secretary of unified CP of America 1921; member of ECCI from 1921; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; 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 *Die Neue Zeit* 1883–1917; prominent Marxist theorist and opponent of revisionism before 1914; centrist apologist for social chauvinism during WWI; joined USPD 1917; opponent of October Revolution and of USPD fusion with CP; supporter of Two-and-a-Half International 1921–3; member of USPD rump that fused with SPD 1922; moved to Vienna 1924; fled Nazis 1938 and died in exile.
- Keim, Louis** [Ker] [1886–1923] – member of executive commission of French SP Seine Federation in 1919–20, a leader of fight for affiliation to Comintern; elected to CP leadership committee following Tours Congress, in charge of education and propaganda; secretary for international relations; delegate to I ECCI plenum and Fourth Comintern Congress 1922; member of Centre faction in CP.
- Kemal Pasha, Mustafa** [Ataturk] [1881–1938] – Turkish general; led independence struggle 1918–23; founder of Turkish republic and its president, 1923–38.
- Ker.** See Keim, Louis.

- Kerensky, Alexander** [1881–1970] – Russian Socialist-Revolutionary; prime minister of Provisional Government July–November 1917; overthrown by October Revolution; emigrated 1918.
- Keynes, John Maynard** [1883–1946] – British economist; best known for economic theories advocating government fiscal and monetary policies to mitigate effects of capitalism; opposed terms on Germany imposed by Versailles Treaty.
- Kharlakov, Nikola** [1874–1927] – secretary of Bulgarian SDP at time of 1903 split; sided with Tesniaki [‘Narrow’] wing; expelled 1906 and formed Liberal Socialist Party, which fused with ‘Broad’ social-democratic wing; left Broad party 1917; later formed independent Communist splinter group.
- Khinchuk, Lev M.** [1868–1944] – socialist from 1890; Menshevik 1903; chair of Moscow Soviet March–September 1917; joined Bolsheviks 1920; Third World Congress delegate and chair of commission on cooperatives; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; held posts in Soviet administration of diplomacy, cooperatives, commerce; arrested 1938 during Stalin purges; died in prison.
- Kilbom, Karl** [1885–1961] – joined Swedish socialist movement 1903; secretary of Young Social-Democratic Union 1914–17; internationalist and pacifist during WWI; founding member of Left Social-Democratic Party 1917, which became CP in 1921; elected to ECCI at Third World Congress; expelled 1929 for ‘rightist deviation’; founded dissident Communist party that changed its name to Swedish Socialist Party in 1934; rejoined SDP 1938.
- Klassekampen** [The Class Struggle] – Norwegian newspaper published by youth movement of Norwegian Labour Party 1909–23, and by Norwegian Communist Youth 1923–40.
- Klöckner, Peter** [1863–1940] – leading German capitalist in steel, iron, mining, machine, and vehicle industries.
- Kobetsky, Mikhail** [1881–1937] – member RSDLP 1903; Bolshevik; often arrested; in exile 1908–17; worked in Comintern apparatus 1919–24; member of ECCI and its Small Bureau 1920; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums 1922–3; worked in commissariat of foreign affairs from 1924; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- Kohn, Rudolf** – chairman of Poale Zion in Czechoslovakia; helped organise Jewish Communists who merged with united CP in November 1921; Czechoslovak CP delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922.
- Kolarov, Vasil** [1877–1950] – joined Bulgarian SDP 1897 and its revolutionary Tesniaki wing 1903; member of Tesniaki Central Committee 1905; represented it at Zimmerwald Conference 1915; secretary of Bulgarian CP 1919–23; ECCI member from 1921; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums 1922–3; a leader of failed Bulgarian uprising September 1923; lived in USSR 1923–45; president of Peasant International 1928–39; returned to Bulgaria 1944; prime minister 1949–50.
- Kolchak, Aleksandr V.** [1874–1920] – tsarist admiral; head of White armies in Siberia

and the Whites' 'supreme ruler' of Russia 1918–20; defeated by Red Army; captured and executed.

**Kollontai, Alexandra M.** [1872–1952] – joined RSDLP 1899; cooperated with Mensheviks from 1906; specialised in work among proletarian women; lived in emigration 1908–17; joined Bolsheviks 1915; returned to Russia 1917 and became member of Bolshevik Central Committee and editor of its women's journal; commissar of social welfare after October Revolution; head of Women's Section of Central Committee 1920–2; leader of Workers' Opposition 1921–2, giving report on its behalf to Third World Congress; signed Letter of the 22; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; subsequently worked in Soviet diplomatic service until her death.

**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 Polish-Soviet War 1920; active in Comintern leadership 1922–35; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; died during evacuation of Moscow.

**Konopleva, Lidiia Vasil'evna** [1891–1940] – member of Socialist-Revolutionary action group carrying out anti-Soviet terrorist attacks; won to support of Soviet regime; joined CP early 1921; defendant in 1922 trial of 47 SRS, at which she exposed that party's activities; sentenced to death but pardoned; arrested during Stalin purges; died in prison.

**Kopp, Walter** – Swiss trade-union leader; member of secretariat of Workers' Union of Zurich (Arbeiterunion Zürich) 1921–44.

**Kopylov.** Probable reference to **N.V. Kopylov** [1889–1940] – joined Bolsheviks 1912; participant in 1905–7 revolution in Tula, later active in Petrograd and Ekaterinoslav; after 1917 chairman of Tula party committee; participated in Workers' Opposition 1921–2, signing Letter of the 22; member of editorial board of *Bednota* 1922–4; active in economic work from 1924.

**Koritschoner, Franz** [1892–1941] – joined Austrian SPD youth 1914, supporter of Zimmerwald Left during WWI; founding member of CP 1918; Central Committee member and editor-in-chief of CP daily newspaper; delegate to Third World Congress and elected to ECCI 1921; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; moved to Moscow 1929; arrested 1937 during Stalin purges; handed over to Gestapo after Hitler-Stalin pact; executed at Auschwitz.

**Kornilov, Lavr** [1870–1918] – Russian general; army commander-in-chief under Kerensky; led unsuccessful rightist attempt to overthrow Provisional Government August 1917; commander of White forces in Don region from late 1917; killed by Soviet forces April 1918.

**Kossoi, Yehiel** [Avigdor] [1892–1938] – emigrated to US from Ukraine around 1914; went to Palestine in 1918, then to Soviet Russia where he was put in charge of Comintern's Middle Eastern affairs; sent to Egypt, where he spent eighteen months; delegate to II

ECCI plenum 1922; jailed in Egypt 1924; returned to USSR late 1920s; a 'Red Professor,' arrested during Stalin purges 1936; died in labour camp.

**KPD.** Communist Party of Germany.

**KPÖ.** Communist Party of Austria.

**Krajewski, Anton** [Wladyslaw Stein] [1886–1937] – joined SDKPiL 1904; a founding leader of Polish CP 1918; member of its Central Committee 1920–1, 1927–9 and its national secretariat 1923–8; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; moved to USSR as Comintern functionary 1930; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.

**Kramář, Karel** [1860–1937] – prime minister of Czechoslovakia 1918–19; leader of National Democratic Party.

**Kreibich, Karl** [1883–1966] – Social Democrat from 1902; supporter of Lenin's stand against WWI; organiser of revolutionary left in Sudetenland SP; founded German section of Czechoslovak CP; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; 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 WWII; Czechoslovak ambassador to USSR 1950–2.

**Krupp** – German armaments manufacturing dynasty; from 1909 until 1943 it was headed by Gustav Krupp [1970–1950].

**Kun, Béla** [1886–1938 or 1939] – Hungarian journalist; joined SP 1903; won to Bolshevism 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 to Germany, helped instigate March Action 1921; delegate to I ECCI plenum; ECCI member 1921–2, 1926–36; supported Stalin against left and right oppositions; arrested, tortured, and executed during Stalin purges.

**Kunfi, Zsigmond** [1879–1929] – Hungarian social democrat; became editor of *Szocializmus* 1908; member of SDP national committee 1909–19; member of party left wing; commissar of education in Hungarian soviet republic; resigned June 1919 because of disagreements with Communist policy; moved to Vienna.

**Kurella, Alfred** [Ziegler] [1895–1975] – joined Free Socialist Youth in Munich 1918; joined KPD 1919; went to Moscow to help prepare founding of Communist Youth International; first secretary of CYI Executive Committee 1921; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; worked for Comintern from 1924; lived in USSR 1934–54; returning to East Germany, he became chairman of cultural commission of SED Politburo.

**Kuusinen, Otto** [1881–1964] – member Finnish SP 1904; its chairman 1911–17; people's commissar in soviet government of Finland 1918; based in Russia from 1918; a founder of Finnish CP 1918; attended all seven Comintern congresses; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums 1922–3; a leading figure in ECCI until its dissolution 1943; president of Finno-Karelian Republic 1940–56; member of Soviet Politburo at time of his death.

- Kuznetsov, Nikolai V.** [1898–1935] – Russian grocery worker; joined Bolsheviks during WWI; signed Letter of the 22; joined Workers' Group faction led by Miasnikov 1923.
- Lamont, Thomas** [1870–1948] – prominent US investment banker and leader in international finance; partner of J.P. Morgan & Company.
- Landler, Jenő** [1875–1928] – joined Hungarian SP 1904; became leader of railwaymen's union; member of Hungarian soviet government and commander of its army 1919; emigrated 1919; led CP faction opposed to Béla Kun; delegate to Third through Fifth Comintern congresses; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; carried out assignments for ECCI in 1920s, died in France.
- Laukki, Leo** [Pivio] [1880–1938] – joined workers' movement in Russian Finland 1905–6; moved to US 1907 and became part of Finnish Socialist Federation; became revolutionary syndicalist and joined IWW 1910; arrested 1918 and condemned to twenty years for espionage and conspiracy; out on bail, he fled to Soviet Russia; elected to Finnish CP Central Committee and ECCI 1921; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; subsequently university professor in Soviet Union; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.
- Laursen, Georg** [1889–1977] – joined Danish SDP 1908; living in Switzerland, became leader of revolutionary left in socialist movement 1912–19; member of Zimmerwald Left during WWI; founding member Danish CP 1919; attended Third World Congress 1921; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; worked for Comintern after 1925; lived in Soviet Union from late 1920s; Soviet intelligence agent in China 1930–9; arrested and sent to labour camp under Stalin 1949–53.
- Lausanne Conference** – held 20 November 1922–4 February 1923 and 23 April–24 July 1923, with objective of obtaining new treaty with Turkey; Britain and France assumed principal role; Soviet Russia attended and gave support to Turkey; Treaty of Lausanne signed at conclusion.
- Law, Bonar** [1858–1923] – British Conservative Party politician; prime minister October 1922–May 1923.
- Lazzari, Costantino** [1857–1927] – joined Italian workers' movement 1883; a founding leader of PSI 1892; its political secretary 1912–19; supporter of Maximalist wing; attended Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences; imprisoned for anti-war propaganda February–November 1918; opposed Communist split at 1921 Livorno Congress; attended Third World Congress as SP representative; remained in SP after Serrati joined CP in 1924.
- Ledebour, Georg** [1850–1947] – joined SPD 1891; Reichstag member 1900–18; in SPD's left wing before 1914; attended Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences; opposed social chauvinism; co-chair of USPD 1917–19; opposed affiliation to Comintern 1920 and remained in rump USPD; refused to rejoin SPD in 1922 fusion; led Socialist League during 1920s; member of Socialist Workers' Party [SAP] 1931; fled to Switzerland 1933; continued anti-Nazi and socialist activity until his death.

- Lefebure, Victor** [1891–1947] – British major with expertise in chemical warfare; British Chemical Warfare Liaison Officer with French during WWI.
- Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party** [Russia] – split from SR Party 1917; participated in October Revolution and Soviet government, but broke with it July 1918 and launched uprising; minority of party eventually joined Russian CP.
- Leiciague, Lucie** [1880–1962] – joined French SP before WWI; member of Paris region SP executive 1920; supported affiliation to Comintern; member CP executive 1920–4; supported Centre current; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; broke with CP 1928; rejoined SP; continued to write for Socialist press after WWII.
- Leipziger Volkszeitung** – daily newspaper of German SPD founded 1894; in 1917 it became organ of USPD; organ of SPD after 1922 reunification; banned by Nazis 1933; published 1946–91 by East German SED; published under private ownership from 1991 up to the present.
- Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich** [1870–1924] – became active in Russian social-democratic movement 1892–3; founded *Iskra* 1900; central leader of Bolsheviks from 1903; called for new International 1914; organised Zimmerwald Left to fight for this goal 1915–17; leader of October Revolution; chair of Soviet government 1917–24; founder and leader of Comintern, attending its first four congresses.
- Levi, Paul** [1883–1930] – joined SPD 1909; collaborator of Rosa Luxemburg; joined Spartacus group during World War I; a founder of German CP 1918; chair of CP 1919–21; led struggle against ultraleftism and for unification with revolutionary majority in USPD; expelled from CP as result of his public denunciation of March Action and ‘strategy of offensive’; founded Communist Working Group [KAG], which joined USPD and was part of SPD-USPD fusion 1922; a leader of SPD left wing until his death.
- Leviné, Eugen** [1883–1919] – born in Russia; participant in 1905 revolution; subsequently settled in Germany and joined SPD; member of Spartacus group and leader of KPD; central leader of Bavarian council republic in 1919; arrested, tried, and shot after its overthrow.
- Lévy, Georges** [1874–1961] – joined French SP 1910; supported affiliation to Comintern at Tours Congress; member of party executive 1920–2; member of Centre faction; as French delegate to ECCI attended III ECCI plenum 1923; a member of CP until his death.
- Lian, Ole** [1868–1925] – active in Norwegian trade-union movement from 1897; president of Federation of Norwegian Workers; 1907–25; member Norwegian Labour Party executive from 1906; NLP deputy chairman 1912–18; member of parliament 1916–21; went along with Comintern affiliation but sought to maintain links with Amsterdam International; expelled by Comintern 1922 for NLP-authorized participation in Norwegian government delegation to Genoa Conference, a move reversed by ECCI; remained with NLP after its break with Comintern 1923.

- Lieb knecht, Karl** [1871–1919] – joined German SPD 1900; first president of Socialist Youth International 1907–10; first member of German Reichstag to vote against war credits December 1914; a founder of Spartacus current; imprisoned for anti-war propaganda 1916; freed by 1918 revolution; a founding leader of German CP December 1918; murdered by rightist officers during Berlin workers' uprising January 1919.
- Lieb knecht, Theodor** [1870–1948] – member of German USPD; opposed fusion of party with Communists 1920; opposed fusion of rump USPD with SPD 1922; joined in creation of Socialist League and Socialist Workers' Party (SAP); emigrated 1933; brother of Karl Lieb knecht.
- Little Entente** – a mutual defence arrangement formed in 1920–1 involving Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania.
- Livorno Congress** – Italian Socialist Party congress of 15–21 January 1921; Unitary Communists [Centre] led by Serrati received 92,028 votes; Communist Faction [Left] led by Bordiga, 58,173; Socialist Concentration [Right] led by Turati, 14,695; Left walked out and formed Communist Party of Italy, which was recognised as section of Comintern.
- Lloyd George, David** [1863–1945] – British Liberal Party leader; prime minister 1916–22.
- Longuet, Jean** [1876–1938] – joined French socialist movement 1890s; leader of centrists in SP during and after WWI; opposed affiliation to Comintern; remained with Dissident SP after 1920 split; parliamentary deputy 1914–19; 1932–6; a leading figure in Two-and-a-Half International; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; Karl Marx's grandson.
- Louis, Paul** [1872–1955] – joined French socialist movement 1898; became member of SP national leadership prior to WWI; member CP following 1920 Tours Congress, elected to party leadership committee; criticised as bourgeois journalist, he was expelled from CP January 1923; joined Socialist-Communist Union led by Frossard, becoming its general secretary; in 1930 it fused into United Proletarian Party [PUP], and then SP in 1936; abandoned political activity during WWII.
- Lozovsky, Solomon A.** [1878–1952] – joined RSDLP 1901; lived in Geneva and Paris 1909–17; active in French labour movement during WWI; returned to Russia and joined Bolsheviks 1917; became secretary of All-Russian Union of Railway Workers 1918; general secretary of RILU 1921–37; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums 1922–3; deputy minister of foreign affairs 1939–45; arrested during Stalinist repression of Jewish writers 1949; shot in prison.
- Ludendorff, Erich** [1865–1937] – German general; shaped German military policy in latter years of WWI; subsequently a leader of reactionary and fascist political movements; Nazi member of Reichstag 1924–8.
- Ludwig, E.** See Alexander, Eduard E.
- Lunacharsky, Anatoly V.** [1875–1933] – joined Russian social-democratic movement in early 1890s; became Bolshevik after 1903; broke with Bolsheviks as part of *Vperyod*

- group after 1905 revolution; rejoined 1917; people's commissar of education 1917–29; then chairman of Academic Committee under Central Executive Committee of USSR; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums 1922–3.
- Lutterbeck, Johann Anton Bernhard** – deputy to German chief district official of Düsseldorf during French occupation of Rhineland in 1923; wrote letter to occupation authorities asking for their assistance in crushing working-class movement.
- Luxemburg, Rosa** [1871–1919] – born in Poland; a founder of SDKPiL 1893; later lived in Germany; led SPD left wing in opposition to revisionist right wing and, after 1910, against 'Marxist Centre' led by Kautsky; Marxist theorist and author of *The Accumulation of Capital* 1913; leader of Spartacus current during WWI; imprisoned 1916–18; founding leader of German CP December 1918; arrested and murdered during workers' uprising in Berlin January 1919.
- MacDonald, Ramsay** [1866–1937] – leader of British Labour Party 1911–14 and 1922–31; opposed British entry into WWI 1914; opposed October Revolution; member of Second International executive committee; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; British prime minister 1924 and 1929–35; split from Labour Party 1931.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò** [1469–1527] – Italian political philosopher and statesman; secretary of Florentine republic; author of *The Prince*.
- Maciejewski.** See Warszawski, Adolf.
- MacManus, Arthur** [1891–1927] – British metalworker; member of Socialist Labour Party from before WWI; leader of British shop stewards' movement during war; member Central Committee of British CP from its founding 1920; party chairman 1920–2; member Comintern ECCI 1922–6; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums 1922; imprisoned for sedition 1925; died during visit to USSR and buried in Red Square.
- Maffi, Fabrizio** [Saita/Saitta] [1868–1955] – joined Italian socialist movement around 1890; SP parliamentary deputy from 1913; close to Maximalist current; remained in SP following 1921 Livorno split; member of PSI delegation to Third and Fourth World Congresses; consultative delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; leader of SP's pro-Comintern current; joined CP 1924; close collaborator of Gramsci 1924–6; jailed 1926–8; active again in CP after fall of fascism.
- Malaka.** See Tan Malaka, Ibrahim Datoek.
- Malatesta, Errico** [1853–1932] – supporter of anarchist wing of First International from 1872; leading Italian anarchist until his death; expressed support for Russian Revolution in 1917 but opposed Leninism and Soviet policy; supported anti-fascist Arditi del Popolo 1921; under house arrest by fascist regime 1926–32.
- 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 of Finnish CP 1918–29; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; arrested as Trotskyist 1935; died in prison.
- Manuilsky, Dmitry Z.** [Beruzzi] [1883–1959] – member RSDLP 1903; emigrated 1907;

co-editor with Trotsky of *Nashe Slovo* in Paris during WWI; joined Bolsheviks with Mezhrayontsi 1917; participant in October Revolution; member of Ukrainian soviet government 1920–2; ECCI representative in Italy 1923; delegate to III ECCI plenum; member Presidium of ECCI from 1924 and its secretary from 1928–43; ideologist of Stalinism; continued to hold high posts in Ukraine through 1953.

**Marković, Sima** [1888–1939] – joined Serbian SDP 1907 and became member of anarcho-sindicalist current within it; co-secretary of Yugoslav CP 1919 and its general secretary 1920–8; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; jailed upon his return for two years; elected to ECCI 1924; expelled 1929; went to Soviet Union 1934 after being jailed in Yugoslavia; readmitted to CP 1935; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.

**Marshall.** See Bedacht, Max.

**Martini.** See Fortichiari, Bruno.

**Martov, Julius** [1873–1923] – joined Russian social-democratic movement early 1890s; leader of Mensheviks from 1903; pacifist during WWI; in left wing of Mensheviks during 1917; opponent of October Revolution; left Russia 1920; prominent member of Two-and-a-Half International; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922.

**Marseilles Congress** – First Congress of French Communist Party, held 25–30 December 1921.

**Marty, André** [1886–1956] – participant in April 1919 Black Sea mutiny by French sailors sent to assist White armies in Russian Civil War; court-martialed and imprisoned; while in jail, a CP candidate elected to Paris municipal council four times beginning in 1921; amnestied 1923; elected to Central Committee 1926; ECCI member 1932–43; political commissar of International Brigades during Spanish Civil War; deputy in National Assembly a number of times between 1924 and 55; expelled from CP 1952 following false charges of being police spy.

**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 1848–9 German revolution; central leader of International Workingmen's Association [First International] 1864–76; published first volume of *Capital* 1867.

**Masaryk, Tomáš** [1850–1937] – Czech nationalist writer; led struggle to found Czechoslovak state; country's president 1918–35.

**Maximalists** – current led by Serrati in 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.

**Medem, Walter von** [1887–1945] – German officer and Freikorps leader in Baltics against revolutionary movement; joined Nazi Party 1933; in charge of Nazi-occupied Latvia during WWII.

**Medvedev, Sergei P.** [1885–1937] – metalworker; joined RSDLP 1900; Bolshevik from 1903; chairman of Achinsk soviet 1917; Red Army political commissar during Civil

- War; elected to central committee of Metalworkers' Union 1920; supporter of Workers' Opposition; signed Letter of the 22; arrested 1935 during Stalin purges; executed.
- Melnichansky, Grigori N.** [1886–1937] – member RSDLP 1902; member of Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee in October 1917; member Soviet Council of Labour and Defence 1918–20; subsequently worked in trade unions and on economic issues; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; arrested during Stalin purges; died in prison.
- Mensheviks** – originally minority ('Menshevik') of RSDLP at its 1903 congress; opposed October Revolution; subsequently an opposition force to Soviet government; affiliated to Two-and-a-Half International 1921–3.
- Méric, Victor** [1876–1933] – initially anarchist; antimilitarist; joined French SP 1906; member of Committee for the 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.
- Merrheim, Alphonse** [1871–1925] – French syndicalist; leader of metalworkers' union; led internationalist current in CGT during WWI; supported anti-war Zimmerwald movement until 1917; then allied with reformist forces in CGT; forced by illness to withdraw from union activity 1923.
- Meshcheriakov, Nikolai L.** [1865–1942] – joined People's Will 1885; became Marxist 1894 after emigrating to Belgium; active in Russian social-democratic movement from 1901; Bolshevik leader in Moscow; exiled to Siberia 1906–17; from 1918 to 1924 a member of *Pravda* editorial board and of board of Tsentsosoiuz [Central Union of Consumers' Cooperatives]; reported on cooperative movement to Third World Congress; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; organisational secretary of Peasant International [Krestintern] 1924–7; subsequently chairman of state publishing house [Gosizdat].
- Métayer, Roger** [1898–1949] – French metalworker; member of CP extreme left wing; leader of CGTU metalworkers' union; expelled from CP 1927.
- Meyer, Ernst** [1887–1930] – joined German SPD 1908; leader of Spartacus League during WWI; founding member of CP 1918; member of its Central Committee 1918–23 and 1926–9; party chair 1921–2; elected by II ECCI plenum to Fourth Congress Programme Commission; led centre tendency of 'conciliators' within CP 1924–9; removed from central leadership by leftist 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 NLP majority 1922; prominent spokesperson for socialism between wars; favoured cooperation with Nazi occupiers 1940–5; jailed for collaboration 1946–9; emigrated to Sweden.
- Miasnikov, Gavril I.** [1889–1945] – Russian metalworker; joined Bolsheviks 1906; spent 7 years in Siberian exile; Left Communist in 1918; signed Letter of the 22, although he

belonged to Workers' Group faction, not Workers' Opposition; expelled from CP 1922; supported KAPD current during 1920s; arrested 1923; banished to Armenia 1927; fled USSR 1928, living in Iran and then France; returned to USSR by Soviet secret police; executed.

**Michalec.** See Fischer, Karel.

**Mickevičius-Kapsukas, Vincas** [1880–1935] – joined Lithuanian SDP 1903, becoming member of Central Committee; participant in 1905 revolution; in contact with Lenin in exile during WWI; joined Bolsheviks in Russia June 1917; chairman of Lithuanian soviet republic 1918–19; a founder of Lithuanian CP; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; worked for ECCI 1923–35; probable victim of Stalinist repression.

**Millerand, Alexandre** [1859–1943] – initially a leader of French SP; took ministerial post in bourgeois cabinet 1899 and then moved to right wing of bourgeois political spectrum; French premier 1920; president 1920–4.

**Mirbach, Wilhelm von** [1871–1918] – member of German delegation to Brest-Litovsk Treaty negotiations 1917–18; appointed German ambassador to Russia April 1918; assassinated in July by Left Socialist-Revolutionaries seeking to incite renewed war between Russia and Germany.

**Misiano, Francesco** [1884–1936] – joined Italian SP 1907; active in railway union; internationalist during WWI; jailed in Berlin for work with Spartacists 1919; worked with Bordiga to create Italian CP; member of CP executive 1921; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; forced into exile November 1921; leader of International Workers' Aid 1922–36; accused of Trotskyism 1935–6; died in Moscow.

**Mitin, F.A.** [b. 1882] – joined RSDLP 1902; Menshevik until 1920; a leader of Metalworkers' Union; signed Letter of the 22 of Workers' Opposition; expelled by RCP 11th Congress 1922.

**Modigliani, Giuseppe** [1872–1947] – joined Italian SP 1894; organised national federation of Italian glass workers; parliamentary deputy 1913–26; attended Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences 1915–16; opposed formation of CP 1921; joined reformist Unitary Socialist Party [PSU] 1922; a leader of social democrats until his death.

**Monatte, Pierre** [1881–1960] – French revolutionary syndicalist; member of CGT leadership committee 1904; founded *La Vie ouvrière* 1909; worked with Trotsky in internationalist opposition to WWI; won to communism 1919 and became a secretary of Committee for the Third International; imprisoned nine months 1920; joined CP spring 1923; expelled for opposing anti-Trotsky campaign 1924; founder and editor of *La Révolution prolétarienne* 1925–39 and 1945–7; active in resistance to Nazi occupation.

**Monmousseau, Gaston** [1883–1960] – French revolutionary syndicalist; general secretary CGTU 1922–32; joined CP 1925; jailed five times; active in resistance to Nazi occupation; supported Stalinist course until his death.

**Morizet, André** [1876–1942] – French socialist elected mayor of Boulogne 1919; became

- founding member of CP December 1920; expelled January 1923, becoming member of Socialist-Communist Union until 1927; rejoined SP 1928.
- Mot Dag/Mot Dag** [Toward Dawn] – journal and political organisation of Norwegian Labour Party members that raised criticisms of party and Comintern policies; founded 1921; later affiliated to CP; existed until 1936.
- Muna, Alois** [1886–1943] – 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; arrested for Communist activities 1921; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; alternate member ECCI 1922; full member 1924; expelled as ‘rightist’ 1929; subsequently led ‘Leninist Opposition’ current.
- Münzenberg, Willi** [1889–1940] – joined Socialist Youth of Germany 1906 and (from 1910) Switzerland; secretary of left-wing Socialist Youth International 1915–19; member of Zimmerwald Left during WWI; founding member German CP 1918; secretary of Communist Youth International 1919–21; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; leader of International Workers’ Aid from 1921; opposed Stalin 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, with probable Stalinist involvement.
- Mussolini, Benito** [1883–1945] – former leader of Italian SP left wing and editor of *Avanti*; took chauvinist, pro-war position and was expelled from PSI 1915; founded fascist movement 1919; dictator of Italy 1922–43; executed by Resistance forces.
- Negri**. See Scoccimarro, Mauro.
- Nenni, Pietro** [1891–1980] – active in Italian republican movement from 1908; supported Italian war effort in WWI; joined Italian SP 1921, opposing its fusion with CP; PSI secretary 1930–9 and from 1944; fought in Spanish Civil War; imprisoned by Vichy regime; Italy’s deputy prime minister 1945–6 and 1963–8.
- Nerman, Ture** [1886–1969] – joined Swedish Social-Democratic Youth League 1906; supported Zimmerwald Left; supported left wing in 1917 split; joined CP 1921; expelled 1929 with Kilbom wing of CP, which became Socialist Party in 1934; member of parliament 1931–7; 1946–53.
- Neurath, Alois** [1886–1952] – joined Austrian SP 1909; active in Sudetenland; member Czechoslovak CP 1921; Central Committee secretary 1922–6; member ECCI 1922–6; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; removed from leading posts as supporter of Trotsky-Zinoviev Joint Opposition 1926; expelled from CP as Trotskyist 1929; joined Left Opposition movement 1932; emigrated to Sweden 1948.
- New Economic Policy** [NEP] – 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.
- Newbold, Walton** [1888–1943] – joined British Independent Labour Party 1910; paci-

fist during WWI; joined British CP and its Central Committee 1921; first Communist elected to parliament 1922; elected alternate member ECCI 1922; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; quit CP and rejoined Labour Party 1924; split from Labour with Ramsay MacDonald and cut ties with socialist movement 1931.

**Nielsen, Marie-Sophie** [1875–1951] – member of Danish SDP party executive 1916–18; founding member of Danish Socialist Workers' Party 1918 and CP 1920; attended Second World Congress; expelled from CP 1928 for not supporting anti-Trotsky campaign; readmitted 1932, but expelled again 1936.

**Nin, Andreu** [Andrés] [1892–1937] – joined Catalan nationalist federation 1911; member Catalan Socialist Federation 1913–19; joined CNT 1919, becoming its general secretary 1921; attended founding congress of RILU, becoming its deputy secretary; lived in Russia from 1921; attended I and II ECCI plenums 1922; expelled from CP 1927 as supporter of Trotsky, and from Soviet Union 1930; helped organise Trotskyist opposition in Spain; founding leader of POUM 1935; kidnapped and murdered by GPU during Spanish Civil War.

**Nitti, Francesco** [1868–1953] – Italian Radical Party deputy in parliament from 1904; prime minister 1919–20; opponent of fascists; lived many years in emigration; returned to Italy and political activity after fall of fascism; senator 1948–53.

**NLP.** See Norwegian Labour Party.

**Nobili, Tito Oro** [1882–1967] – joined Italian SP 1902; supported Maximalist wing under Lazzari; remained in PSI after 1921 split; supported expulsion of reformists 1922, but opposed fusion with CP; PSI secretary 1923–5; arrested and imprisoned by fascist regime 1926; thereafter kept under close surveillance; from 1947 a leading member of national legislature; senator 1948–53; supported left-wing split from PSI 1964 that became PSIUP (Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity).

**Norwegian Labour Party** – founded 1887; left wing won majority 1918; affiliated to Comintern 1919; 60,000 members end of 1922, including union and individual affiliation; majority split from Comintern in 1923, with minority founding CP of Norway.

**Noske, Gustav** [1868–1946] – a leader of SPD 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** [Stanič] [c. 1886–1939] – joined Serbian Socialist Party 1907; founder of Yugoslav CP 1919; member Central Committee; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922 and to Fourth and Sixth Comintern congresses; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; imprisoned in Yugoslavia 1926; escaped to Soviet Union 1927; arrested 1938 during Stalin purges; shot.

**Olsen, Halvard** [1886–1966] – secretary and then chairman of Norwegian metalworkers' federation from 1918; member of Norwegian Labour Party national executive committee from 1918; expelled from NLP for voting against party's candidate for

- union executive 1922; reinstated by Comintern Fourth World Congress 1922; went with CP in 1923 split from NLP, becoming CP's first deputy chairman; expelled 1924; rejoined NLP 1927; chairman of Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions 1925–34; imprisoned 1946–50 for collaboration with Nazi occupation.
- L'Ordine nuovo** [New order] – Italian Communist newspaper in Turin founded 1919; led by Gramsci, Tasca, Terracini, and Togliatti; published until 1925.
- Osinsky, Nikolai** [Valerian V. Obolensky] [1887–1938] – joined RSDLP 1907; Bolshevik; after 1917 manager of State Bank and presided over Supreme Economic Council; worked in party agitprop section 1918–19; attended First and Second Comintern congresses; deputy commissar of agriculture 1921–3; participated in I ECCI plenum 1922; supported Left Opposition from 1923; later aligned with Bukharin; arrested 1937 during Stalin purges; executed.
- Paasonen, Pekka** [b. 1894] – Finnish Communist; elected to Communist Youth International Executive 1922, representing it at III ECCI plenum 1923.
- 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.
- Piatnitsky, Iosif** [Osip] [1882–1939] – joined RSDLP 1898; Bolshevik; took part in 1905–7 and 1917 revolutions; assigned to Comintern secretariat 1921, in charge of finances; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; chief organiser of Comintern until 1937; opposed Stalin purges 1937; arrested and shot.
- Pilsudski, Józef** [1867–1935] – a leader of Polish Socialist Party [PPS] 1893–1916 and of fight for Polish independence; president of country 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; a founder of CP; delegate to II ECCI plenum and Fourth World Congress 1922; parliamentary deputy 1924; CP presidential candidate 1958; remained active in CP until his death.
- Pioch, Georges** [1873–1953] – a leader of French Antimilitary Association founded 1904; joined French SP 1915; supporter of Russian Revolution 1917; a founder of *Journal du peuple*; supported SP affiliation to Comintern; general secretary of Seine Federation in SP and CP 1920–2; elected alternate member of CP leadership committee 1921; expelled from party January 1923; elected general secretary of Socialist-Communist Union at its founding that month, but organisation soon declined; a leader of League for the Rights of Man 1930–7; active in pacifist causes.
- Platten, Fritz** [1883–1942] – Swiss Socialist and trade-union militant as youth; joined SDP 1911; represented party at 1915 Zimmerwald Conference, where he became part of Zimmerwald Left; participated in First Congress of Comintern 1919; member of

Swiss CP Central Committee 1921; moved to Soviet Russia 1923; arrested 1937 during Stalin purges; shot.

**Plekhanov, Georgy V.** [1856–1918] – pioneer of Marxism in Russia; founder of Emancipation of Labour group 1883; influential Marxist theorist; supported Mensheviks after 1903; took chauvinist position during WWI; opposed October Revolution 1917.

**Pogány, József** [1886–1937] – joined Hungarian SDP 1905; joined CP in March 1919 merger; president of Soldiers Council in Budapest during Hungarian soviet regime 1919; emigrated 1919 to Vienna, then Moscow; became ECCI functionary; part of ECCI mission to Germany that helped instigate March Action 1921; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; became de facto leader of US party as John Pepper 1922; held high posts in ECCI 1925–9; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.

**Pögelman, Hans** [1875–1938] – active in Estonian socialist movement during 1905 and 1917 revolutions; member of short-lived Estonian soviet republic and founding member of Estonian CP 1918; delegate to first four Comintern congresses; alternate member of ECCI 1921–2; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; member of Comintern control commission 1924–8; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.

**Poincaré, Raymond** [1860–1934] – president of France 1913–20; three times premier, including 1922–4; ordered army to seize Ruhr district to punish Germany for default in war reparations payments January 1923.

**Pokrovsky, Mikhail N.** [1868–1932] – Russian Marxist historian; joined Bolshevik Party 1905; left party 1909 as supporter of ultraleft *Vperyod* group; rejoined Bolsheviks 1917 in Moscow; helped draft first Soviet constitution; deputy commissar of education 1918; supporter of Left Communists 1919; delegate to Second Comintern Congress 1920 and II ECCI plenum 1922; head of Institute of Red Professors 1921–31; his ideas were posthumously attacked under Stalin as anti-Marxist and pseudoscientific.

**Polish Socialist Party** [PPS] – founded 1892–3; nationalist in orientation; right-wing faction adopted chauvinist position during WWI and supported Pilsudski dictatorship in 1926; left-wing faction split in 1906, joining in creating CP in 1918.

**Pollitt, Harry** [1890–1960] – joined British ILP around 1909; leader of shop stewards' movement during WWI; founding member of CP; a leader of Hands Off Russia campaign; an organiser for RILU 1921–3; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; became CP national organiser 1923; general secretary 1929–56.

**Popov, Dimitri** [1878–1924] – active in socialist student movement; became leader of Bulgarian Tesniaki Party, which became CP in 1919; delegate to Third World Congress and was elected to ECCI 1921; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; participated in September 1923 Bulgaria insurrection, escaping to Vienna.

**Le Populaire** [The People] – Paris daily newspaper published 1918–37; became organ of French Dissident SP following December 1920 Tours Congress split; edited by Jean Longuet and Léon Blum in 1922–3.

- Potresov, Alexander N.** [1869–1934] – joined Russian Marxist movement early 1890s; a founder of RSDLP; Menshevik after 1903; opponent of October Revolution; left Soviet Russia 1925.
- Pravda** [Truth] – central daily organ of Russian CP, published in Moscow; began publication as Bolshevik newspaper 1912.
- Pravdin, Alexander G.** [1879–1938] – joined RSDLP 1899; participant in 1905 revolution; member *Pravda* editorial board 1912–14; assistant people's commissar of internal affairs after October Revolution; later Central Control Commission member, assistant people's commissar of transportation, and chairman of Board of Northern Railways; signer of Letter of the 22 of Workers' Opposition; later worked in NKVD.
- Preobrazhensky, Yevgeny A.** [1886–1937] – 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 1923–8; expelled 1927 and exiled to Siberia 1928; readmitted 1930; expelled again and arrested during Stalin purges 1933 and 1936; refused to confess and was shot.
- Próchniak, Eduard** [1888–1937] – joined SDKPiL 1903; participant in October Revolution; a member of Polish section of Bolsheviks; member of provisional Polish soviet government during Polish-Soviet War; representative of Polish CP on ECCI 1921–4; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; member of ECCI 1922–37 and of its Presidium 1926–30; arrested during Stalin purges; shot.
- Profintern.** See Red International of Labour Unions.
- Proost, Jan** [I. Jansen] [1882–1942] – Dutch artist; helped smuggle Marxist literature into Germany during WWI; founding member of CP 1918; party's representative in Moscow 1920–3; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums 1922–3; left CP with Wijnkoop/Van Ravesteijn group 1926; shot by Nazi troops during occupation in WWII.
- Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph** [1809–65] – French revolutionary theorist and anarchist; founder of mutualist philosophy; friend, later opponent, of Karl Marx; jailed under Louis Napoléon 1849–52.
- PSI** [Italian Socialist Party] – founded 1892; participated in Zimmerwald movement during WWI; affiliated to Comintern 1919; refused to expel reformist right wing; left wing split off at January 1921 Livorno Congress to form CP; 200,000 members before Livorno Congress, dropping to 112,000 by October 1921 and 65,000 a year later; sent representatives to Third World Congress; expelled Turati and right wing 1922; 32,000 members October 1922; pro-Comintern minority joined CP 1924.
- Pyatakov, Georgy L.** [1890–1937] – joined RSDLP 1910, becoming Bolshevik 1912; chairman of Soviet Ukraine 1918; held leading economic posts from 1921; elected to Russian CP Central Committee 1921; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; supporter of Trotskyist opposition from 1923; renounced views 1928; defendant in Moscow Trials; executed.

**Quinton, Augustin** [b. 1890] – French syndicalist; general secretary of French metal-workers' union from 1919; secretary of Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees (CSR) 1921; member of CGTU 1921–7, when he was part of anarchist split-off; left political activity by 1929.

**Radek, Karl** [1885–1939] – joined revolutionary movement in Austrian Poland before 1905; a leader of left wing of Polish and German workers' movement; internationalist during WWI, collaborator of Lenin and supporter of Zimmerwald Left; joined Bolsheviks 1917; member of Bolshevik Central Committee 1917–24; vice-commissar for foreign affairs 1918; Bolshevik and Soviet emissary to Germany 1918–19; member ECCI 1920–4 and its Presidium 1921–4; attended first five Comintern congresses; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; with Trotsky, a leader of Left Opposition in Russian CP and Comintern from 1923; expelled and exiled 1927; capitulated 1929; prominent Soviet journalist 1930–6; arrested 1936; convicted in Moscow trial 1937; killed by police agent in prison.

**Radical Socialist Party** [France] – major left bourgeois party of France, formed 1901.

**Rákosi, Mátyás** [Giacomo] [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; member of ECCI secretariat 1921–4; ECCI representative at Livorno Congress of Italian SP 1921; attended Second through Fifth Comintern congresses; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; ECCI representative in Italy 1923; captured during mission in Hungary and jailed 1925–40; lived in Russia 1940–4; a central leader of Hungarian government 1945–56; expelled from CP 1962 for his association with Stalinism; died in USSR.

**Rakovsky, Christian** [1873–1941] – born in Bulgaria; driven into exile 1890; co-founder of Romanian SP; took part in Zimmerwald Conference 1915; joined Bolsheviks in Russia 1917; leader of Ukrainian soviet government 1919–23; attended first four Comintern congresses; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; 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.

**Ramsay, David** [1883–1948] – originally member of British Social-Democratic Federation and then Socialist Labour Party; as an organiser of shop stewards' movement during WWI, he was imprisoned for sedition; in 1919 became National Treasurer and Organiser of National Conference of Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committees, representing it at Second Comintern Congress 1920; a leader of Hands Off Russia campaign; joined British CP; became Comintern functionary; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; Scottish organiser of CP after 1926.

**Rappoport, Charles** [1865–1941] – born in Lithuania; joined Russian populist movement 1883; in exile from 1887; joined French socialist movement 1897; supported Zimmerwald Left during WWI; favoured SP affiliation to Comintern; member French

- CP executive 1921–2; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; opposed ‘bolshevisation’ of Party 1925–6; continued limited activity in CP until 1938, when he denounced Moscow frame-up trials and broke with Stalinism.
- Red International of Labour Unions** [RILU, Profintern] – founded at 1921 congress attended by Communist and syndicalist forces; estimated 12.5 million members end of 1922; formally dissolved 1937.
- Red Sport International** [International Association of Red Sports and Gymnastics Association] – established July 1921 as competitor to Olympic Games organised by capitalist governments and to social-democratic Socialist Workers’ Sport International; functioned until 1937.
- Reinstein, Boris** [1866–1947] – born in Russia; emigrated to US; joined Socialist Labor Party, heading its relations with Second International; sent to represent SLP at Stockholm international conference in 1917, he returned to Russia and joined CP, working in World Revolutionary Propaganda Department; attended First Comintern Congress as SLP delegate; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; in later years worked in Comintern apparatus.
- Renaudel, Pierre** [1871–1935] – leader of right wing of French SP; social patriot during WWI; parliamentary deputy 1914–19, 1924–35; opposed SP affiliation to Comintern; led ‘neosocialist’ split from SP 1933.
- René.** See Salles, Camille.
- Renner, Karl** [1870–1950] – right-wing leader of Austrian SDP; Austrian chancellor 1918–20, 1945; president 1945–50.
- Renoult, Daniel** [1880–1958] – joined French SP 1906, member party leadership committee 1920–2; editor *L’Internationale* 1921–2; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; led independent ‘Centre-Right’ current in party 1922; imprisoned by republican government February 1940 and held in jail by Vichy regime until freed by anti-Nazi Resistance July 1944; active in CP until his death.
- Reuter, Ernst** [Friesland] [1889–1953] – joined German 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 Zentrale 1919; became CP general secretary 1921 after Levi’s expulsion; Third World Congress delegate; during late 1921 moved toward Levi’s position; expelled January 1922; rejoined SPD; jailed by Nazis 1933, in emigration 1935–46; mayor of West Berlin 1948–53.
- Reventlow, Count Ernst Graf zu** [1869–1943] – German naval officer in WWI; prominent journalist for *Der Reichsward*; joined Nazi Party 1927.
- RILU.** See Red International of Labour Unions.
- Rivelli, Ange** [1873–1938] – leader of French seamen’s union 1908–25; remained in CGT following 1921 split; member of Dissident SP from 1921.
- Roberto, Riccardo** [1879–1958] – joined Italian SP around 1902; elected to parliament 1919; went with CP after Livorno split; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; arrested sev-

eral times under fascist regime; active in Resistance movement during WWII; PCI elected official in Alba 1946–56.

**Rodríguez González, César** [1894–1962] – leader of Spanish SP after WWI; favoured affiliation to Comintern; founding leader of Communist Workers' Party (PCOE); general secretary of united CP 1923; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; Third and Fourth World Congress delegate; imprisoned 1923–5; resigned from CP after his release; rejoined SP; in exile after Spanish Civil War.

**Rosmer, Alfred** [1877–1964] – French revolutionary syndicalist; leader in France of internationalist opposition to WWI; represented Committee for the Third International at Second World Congress; member ECCI in Moscow 1920–1; played leading role in founding of RILU; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; Comintern delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; expelled from French CP for opposition to anti-Trotsky campaign 1924; organiser of Left Opposition in France 1929–31; broke with Trotsky 1931 but collaborated with his movement after 1936.

**Rossi.** See Tasca, Angelo.

**Die Rote Fahne** [The Red Flag, Austria] – newspaper of Austrian CP from 1919; suppressed 1933; published in exile 1933–9.

**Die Rote Fahne** [The Red Flag, Germany] – daily newspaper of German CP; began publication 9 November 1918; founded by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

**Roy, Manabendra Nath** [1887–1954] – active in Indian independence movement from 1910; went abroad 1915 on mission for independence movement; won to Marxism in US 1917; participated in founding Mexican CP 1919; worked in Comintern Far Eastern Bureau and founded CP of India in exile in Tashkent 1920; delegate to Second through Sixth World Congresses; member ECCI 1922–7; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; 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.

**RSDLP** [Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party] – founded 1898; split into Bolshevik and Menshevik wings 1903.

**Rudas, László** [1885–1950] – joined Hungarian SP around 1905; journalist; co-founder Hungarian CP and member of its Central Committee 1918; in exile from 1919; teacher and writer in Moscow from 1922; elected to Programme Commission for Fourth Comintern Congress; active in ECCI apparatus 1922; briefly arrested 1938 and 1941; headed party school in Hungary from 1945.

**Rudzutaks, Jānis** [1887–1938] – joined Latvian Social-Democratic Party 1905; imprisoned by tsarist regime 1907–17; chairman of Central Asian Bureau of Soviet CP 1922–3; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; a secretary of Central Committee 1923–4; deputy commissar of transportation 1924–34; deputy chairman of people's commissars 1926–37; Central Committee member 1920–37; Politburo member 1923–37; arrested 1937 during Stalin purges; shot.

- Rul** [The Rudder] – anti-Soviet Russian-language daily published in Berlin by a wing of Cadet Party, edited by I.V. Gessen, A.I. Kaminka, and V.D. Nabokov.
- Ruthenberg, Charles E.** [1882–1927] – joined US SP 1909; editor of *Cleveland Socialist*; jailed for a year for anti-war statements 1918; national secretary of US CP from 1919; jailed again 1920–2; Fourth World Congress delegate; alternate member ECCI 1922; full member 1924.
- Sacco, Nicola** [1891–1927] – Italian immigrant in US; shoemaker and anarchist; framed up for 1920 armed robbery and murder together with Bartolomeo Vanzetti; convicted and sentenced to death 1921; executed 1927 despite international defence campaign.
- Sadoul, Jacques** [1881–1956] – French infantry captain; sent to Russia as part of military mission; won to Bolshevism, he helped found French Communist group in Russia; took part in first two congresses of Comintern; in Moscow for leadership meetings with ECCI 1922; returned to France and joined French CP 1924; remaining a member until his death.
- Safarov, Georgy I.** [1891–1942] – Bolshevik from 1908; exiled; returned to Russia with Lenin 1917; leader of Soviet and Comintern work among peoples of the East; defender of rights of national minorities; member ECCI 1922; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; supporter of Leningrad opposition led by Zinoviev 1925 and United Opposition led by Zinoviev and Trotsky 1926; expelled from CP 1927; readmitted 1928; expelled again and arrested 1934; executed.
- Saint-Étienne Congress** – first formal congress of Unitary CGTU in France, held 25 June–1 July 1922.
- Saitta.** See Maffi, Fabrizio
- Sakai Toshihiko** [1871–1933] – joined Japanese SDP 1901; helped found Japan Socialist Party 1906, becoming its secretary; imprisoned a number of times; helped found Japanese Communist movement 1922; expelled from party 1929; subsequently member of National Worker-Peasant People's Party.
- Salles, Camille** [René] [1885–1955] – metalworker in Paris region; active in CP in Paris region and supporter of its left current; alternate member of CP executive 1922–3; attended III ECCI plenum 1923; member party Control Commission 1924.
- Scharnhorst, Gerhard von** [1755–1813] – Prussian general during Napoleonic Wars.
- Scheflo, Olav** [1883–1943] – joined Norwegian Labour Party 1905; a leader of left opposition in unions 1911; became editor-in-chief of central party organ *Social Democrat* 1918; supported Labour Party affiliation to Comintern; head of NLP parliamentary fraction; delegate to Third through Fifth Comintern congresses; member ECCI 1921–7; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; stayed with Comintern when NLP split from it 1923; criticised CP's stance toward Labour Party and quit CP 1928; rejoined NLP 1929; defended Trotsky during his stay in Norway 1935–6.
- Scheidemann, Philipp** [1865–1939] – joined German Social Democracy 1883; member

SPD executive 1911; co-chair of Reichstag fraction 1913; social chauvinist during WWI; led in suppressing workers' revolution 1918–19; German prime minister February–June 1919; forced by Nazis into emigration 1933.

**Schlageter, Albert Leo** [1894–1923] – member of German Freikorps involved in sabotage activities against French occupation of Ruhr 1923; captured and executed by French; martyr for Nazis and other nationalists.

**Schneider, Friedrich** [1886–1966] – joined Swiss trade-union movement 1905; a member of SDP, he became part of CP after party split, but returned to SDP by end of 1921; editor of Basel *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and SDP secretary 1923–37; public health insurance administrator 1937–53.

**Schönhaar, Eugen** [1898–1934] – joined German socialist youth 1912; supporter of Spartacus current during WWI; jailed in 1916; drafted 1917; member of KPD 1919; from 1921 editor of Communist youth organ, *Die junge Garde*; member of CYI Executive Committee from 1921, representing it at II ECCI plenum 1922; worked in International Workers' Aid 1924–7; worked clandestinely for KPD Zentrale under Nazis; arrested and shot by Gestapo.

**Schüller, Richard** [1901–57] – joined Austrian Communist Youth and Party 1918; leader of Communist Youth International 1919–28; member ECCI organisational bureau 1922; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; member ECCI 1924; returned to Austria 1928–34; frequently arrested; in Soviet Union 1934–45; elected to Central Committee of Austrian CP 1948.

**Scoccimarro, Mauro** [Negri] [1895–1972] – joined Italian SP 1917; went with CP in 1921 Livorno split; collaborator of Gramsci; delegate to Fourth Comintern Congress 1922 and III ECCI plenum 1923; coopted to Central Committee March 1923; elected alternate member of ECCI 1924; jailed and internally exiled by fascists 1926–43; participated in Resistance after 1943; Italian minister of finance 1945–7; remained member of CP until his death.

**Scott, Charles** [Johnson] [1882–1938] – born Karlis Jansons in Latvia, emigrated to US following 1905 revolution; member of SP and Latvian federation of CP; went to Canada to help organise US Workers Party there; represented Canadian CP at III ECCI plenum 1923; US delegate to RILU Executive 1923–5; secretary of RILU Pacific Bureau from 1930; died in Stalin purges.

**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.

**Second International** – founded 1889 as international association of workers' parties; collapsed at outbreak of WWI; pro-capitalist right wing reconstituted as Bern International 1919; merged with centrist Two-and-a-Half International 1923 to become known formally as Labour and Socialist International.

**SED** [Socialist Unity Party of Germany] – formed by fusion of KPD and SPD in Soviet-

- occupied East Germany 1946; governing party of German Democratic Republic 1949–89.
- Seipel, Ignaz** [1876–1932] – Roman Catholic priest; leader of Christian Social Party; chancellor of Austria 1922–4 and 1926–9; utilised fascist paramilitary forces in struggle against Social Democracy.
- Sellier, Louis** [1885–1978] – joined French SP 1909; a founder of CP; member of its executive 1921; supported Centre current; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; CP general secretary 1923–4; expelled as ‘rightist’ 1929; led dissident communist current 1930–7, which merged with SP in 1937; voted powers to Pétain 1940; served in municipal offices during German occupation; expelled from SP 1944; later joined Democratic Socialist Party.
- Semenov, Grigorii I.** [1891–1937] – joined Socialist-Revolutionary Party 1917, becoming member of its Military Commission; organised terrorist actions against Bolshevik-led regime; arrested autumn 1918; became Soviet supporter in prison; amnestied June 1919; joined CP January 1921; defendant in 1922 trial; exposed SR activities; sentenced to death but pardoned; arrested during Stalin purges and died in prison.
- Serra.** See Tasca, Angelo.
- Serrati, Giacinto Menotti** [1872–1926] – joined Italian socialist movement 1892; leader of Maximalist left wing of PSI; internationalist during WWI; led PSI in affiliation to Comintern 1919; opposed break with reformists and remained head of PSI after CP formation 1921; attended Berlin Conference of Three Internationals 1922; led PSI’s pro-Comintern current into fusion with CP 1924.
- Severing, Carl** [1875–1952] – joined SPD 1893; Prussian SPD member of Reichstag 1907–11; supported German war effort 1914–18; Prussian minister of interior 1920–6, 1930–2.
- Shadurskaia, Zoia L.** [1873–1939] – became active in Russian revolutionary movement in 1890s; active in feminist movement; lifelong friend of Kollontai; collaborator of Bolsheviks; supporter of Zimmerwald Movement in France during WWI; returned to Russia 1917 and joined Bolsheviks; member of Workers’ Opposition and signer of Letter of the 22; later served on Soviet trade delegations; escaped Stalin purges and died in Leningrad.
- Shatskin, Lazar A.** [1902–1937] – joined Bolshevik Party 1917; first secretary of Young Communist League (Komsomol) 1918–22; first secretary of Young Communist International 1919–21; member of ECCI from 1920; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums 1922–3; member of Komsomol Central Committee 1926–8; accused of opposition activities 1931; expelled from party and arrested during Stalin purges 1935; shot.
- Shlyapnikov, Aleksandr G.** [1885–1937] – joined RSDLP 1901; Bolshevik from 1903; during 1917 member of Petrograd Soviet executive committee and chairman of Petrograd metalworkers’ union; first commissar of labour after October Revolution; leader of Caspian-Caucasian Front during Civil War; leader of Workers’ Opposition

1921–2; signed Letter of the 22; expelled from CP 1933; imprisoned 1935 during Stalin purges; executed.

**Shop Stewards** [Britain] – movement originated in Scotland 1915; grew during wartime strike wave; advanced revolutionary demands opposed to official trade union leadership's no-strike policy; declined after 1918, with many militants joining CP.

**Sidebotham, Herbert** [1872–1940] – military correspondent for *Manchester Guardian* and *London Times*.

**Sierra, Santiago** [b. 1891] – Spanish Communist; attended II ECCI plenum 1922.

**Sirola, Yrjö E.** [1876–1936] – joined Finnish SDP 1903; party general secretary 1905–6; parliamentary deputy 1907–9, 1917; in charge of foreign affairs for soviet Finnish government 1918; fled to Russia after its fall; helped found Finnish CP 1918; elected to ECCI 1921; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; Comintern representative in US 1925–7; commissar for education in Karelian SSR 1928–31; member of nationalities committee of Comintern 1931–6.

**Skalák, Josef** [1874–1968] – socialist from 1890s; founding member of Czechoslovak CP 1921; editor of *Rudé právo* from 1920; member of CP executive committee 1921–5; Third World Congress delegate; elected by II ECCI plenum to Fourth Congress Programme Commission; expelled from CP 1929.

**Šmeral, Bohumír** [1880–1941] – member of Czech Social Democracy from 1897; elected to its Central Executive Committee 1909; held chauvinist positions during WWI; SDP chairman 1914–17; leader of Marxist Left from 1919; head of Czechoslovak CP 1921; delegate to II and III ECCI plenums; Comintern delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; member ECCI 1921–35; member International Control Commission 1935–41.

**Smidovich, Sofia Nikolaevna** [1872–1934] – joined RSDLP 1898, becoming Bolshevik leader in Moscow; secretary of Moscow Soviet presidium in 1917; head of women's division of Moscow oblast committee of Bolsheviks 1919–22; headed division of working and peasant women of RCP Central Committee (Zhenotdel) 1922–4; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923.

**Snowden, Philip** [1864–1937] – joined British ILP around 1893, serving as its chair 1903–6, 1917–20; member of parliament 1906–24; chancellor of the exchequer in Labour Party governments, 1924, 1929–31; expelled from Labour Party 1931 when he became chancellor in National Government of 1931.

**Social-Democratic Party of Germany** [SPD] – founded 1875 from fusion of Marxists and Lassalleans; central party of Second International; 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 revolution; USPD rump reunited with it at Hamburg Congress in September 1922; 1.3 million members March 1923.

**Social-Democratic Party of Sweden** – constituted 1889; chauvinist position during

wwi; left wing expelled 1917; member of coalition governments 1917–20, 1921–3, 1924–6.

**Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Austria** – founded 1888–9 as federation of national parties within Austro-Hungarian Empire; broke apart along national lines by 1912; chauvinist position during wwi; led governmental coalition 1918–20; leading party in Two-and-a-Half International; 514,000 members in June 1923.

**Social-Demokraten** – daily newspaper of Norwegian Labour Party, founded 1884 and known by this name from 1886; changed name to *Arbeiderbladet* April 1923.

**Socialist Party** [French Section of the Workers' International, SFIO] – formed 1905 as fusion of parties led by Guesde and Jaurès; took chauvinist position during War; centrists won majority 1918; 180,000 members at time of December 1920 Tours Congress, which voted to join Comintern and change name to CP; minority ('Dissidents') split off and retained old name; 50,000 members in February 1923.

**Socialist Party of America** – founded 1901; communist left wing expelled 1919; membership referendum voted for conditional Comintern affiliation 1920, which was rejected; joined centrist Two-and-a-Half International 1922; 12,000 members 1923.

**Socialist Party of Italy.** See PSI.

**Socialist-Revolutionary Party [SRs]** – Russian party formed 1901, coming out of populist Narodnik tradition; member of Second International; during wwi contained chauvinist and internationalist wings; split in 1917, majority supported Provisional Government and opposed October Revolution; Left SRs briefly joined Soviet government but took up arms against it in 1918; Left SR minority joined CP; 47 members tried in Soviet Russia June–August 1922 for acts of terrorism.

**Sokolnikov, Grigori Y.** [1888–1939] – joined Bolsheviks 1905; lived abroad 1909–17; Bolshevik leader in Moscow during 1917; member Central Committee 1917–19, 1922–30; commissar of finance 1922–6; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; supported Trotsky-Zinoviev United Opposition 1926; Soviet ambassador to London 1929–32; expelled 1936 and arrested; killed in prison by inmates orchestrated by Stalin's secret police.

**Sosnovsky, Lev S.** [1886–1937] – joined RSDLP 1904; Bolshevik; chairman of Urals Regional Committee in 1917; member of Soviet delegation to Genoa Conference 1922; member of Left Opposition 1923; deported to Siberia 1928; capitulated to Stalin 1934; executed during purges.

**Soutif, Edmond** [1887–1967] – freemason; joined French SP 1909; joined CP 1920; responsible for propaganda in Seine Federation 1921; elected to CP executive 1921; supported Centre current; expelled from party December 1922.

**Souvarine, Boris** [1895–1984] – French internationalist during wwi; leader of Committee for the Third International; leader of left wing of SP and then of CP; member ECCI 1921; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums 1922–3; 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.

*Sozialistische Monatshefte* – journal published semi-monthly and monthly by supporters of SPD right wing 1897–1933.

**SP** – Socialist Party.

**Spartacus** – revolutionary socialist current in Germany headed by Luxemburg and Liebknecht 1914–18; functioned as public faction within USPD 1917–18; Spartacus League founded November 1918; helped found German CP December 1918.

**SPD**. See Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

**SRS**. See Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

**Stalin, Joseph** [1879–1953] – joined RSDLP 1898; Bolshevik from 1903; Central Committee member 1912; people's commissar of nationalities after October Revolution; attended I and II ECCI plenums; became general secretary of Russian CP 1922; presided over degeneration of CP and Comintern; organised purges in 1930s that liquidated majority of Bolshevik leading cadre.

**Stamboliyski, Aleksandar** [1879–1923] – leader of Bulgarian Agrarian Union; prime minister 1919–23; overthrown and killed in right-wing coup.

**Stanič**. See Novakovič, Kosta.

**Stauning, Thorvald** [1873–1942] – chair of Danish SDP 1910–39; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922 from Second International; prime minister of Denmark 1924–6, 1929–40; led all-party government under German occupation 1940–2.

**Stewart, Bob** [1877–1971] – joined British trade-union movement 1890s; a leader of Socialist Prohibition Party which participated in founding CP 1920; first Scottish Organiser of CP 1922; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; British representative to Comintern from 1923; member of CP until his death.

**Stinnes, Hugo** [1870–1924] – German industrialist; built vast economic empire after WWI, starting from coal and steel industry, moving to media, public utilities, banks, and other areas; 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.

**Strasser, Joseph** [1871–1933] – member of left wing of Austrian SDP before and during WWI; joined CP 1919 and was elected to Central Committee; editor of Austrian *Rote Fahne*; attended II and III ECCI plenums 1922–3; elected to Programme Commission for Fourth Comintern Congress; taught at Comintern school 1924–6; left CP 1930.

**Ström, Otto Fredrik** [1880–1948] – joined Swedish SDP 1904–5; secretary of Swedish SDP 1911–6; helped lead party left wing into Comintern; founding secretary of Swedish CP 1921–4; head of Stockholm Comintern liaison with Western Europe 1919–20; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; disagreed with 'bolshevisation' policy and resigned from party 1924; rejoined SDP 1926; parliamentary deputy 1916–21, 1930–48.

- Struve, Pyotr** [1870–1944] – a founder of Russian Social Democracy 1893; later leader of Legal Marxism current; joined Cadets; opposed October Revolution; joined Whites and emigrated.
- Stuchka, Peter** [1865–1932] – joined Latvian social-democratic movement 1890s; Bolshevik from 1903; member of Petrograd Bolshevik committee 1917; people's commissar of justice in Soviet Russia 1917; head of short-lived Latvian soviet republic 1918–19; ECCI member from 1920; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums; president of Soviet supreme court 1923–32.
- Šturm, Václav** [1858–1936] – edited first Social-Democratic newspaper in Czech language 1890; first chairman of the Czechoslovak CP; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; expelled 1922 but reinstated by Fourth World Congress; expelled again as 'rightist' 1929; rejoined SDP 1932.
- Stürgkh, Karl von** [1859–1916] – Austro-Hungarian prime minister 1911–6; assassinated by Friedrich Adler as protest against WWI.
- Sultanzade, Ahmed** [Avetis Mikailian] [1889–1938] – born in Maraghah, Iran; moved to tsarist Russia 1907 and joined RSDLP; joined Bolsheviks by 1912, working in Caucasus and then Central Asia; organised founding of Iranian CP 1920; Central Committee member 1920–3, 1927–32; elected to ECCI 1920 and 1928; delegate to Second, Third, Fourth, and Sixth World Congresses; delegate to I, II, III ECCI plenums; worked for Soviet government 1923–7 and after 1932; expelled from Iranian CP 1932, accused of 'leftist deviation'; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.
- Sun Yat-sen** [1866–1925] – leader of Chinese national revolution that overthrew Qing dynasty in 1911; founder and leader of Guomindang Party from 1912; headed government in Guangdong 1921–2 and from 1923; signed agreement with Soviet Russia 1923.
- Taguchi Unzo** [1892–1933] – lived in US 1914–21; helped organise Socialist Circle for Japanese in US 1919 together with Sen Katayama; member of US CP; attended Third World Congress and RILU congress as representative of Japan Communist movement; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; lived in Soviet Union 1921–3; moved to Japan 1923 as secretary for Soviet diplomat Adolf Joffe.
- 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; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; represented Comintern in South-east 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** [Rossi, Serra] [1892–1960] – joined Italian SP youth 1909; *Ordine nuovo* collaborator 1919–20; a founder of CP 1921; favoured united action with SP; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; member ECCI 1924; arrested by fascists 1923, 1926; emigrated to France 1927; expelled from CP for anti-Stalinist positions 1929; rejoined PSI 1935;

made broadcasts for Vichy radio while working with Resistance group; after 1945, wrote works of political history.

**Tashkin, A.** [1892–1942] – joined Bolsheviks 1917; worked for central committee of Union of Metalworkers; later worked for People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry in Urals and Leningrad; supporter of Workers' Opposition in 1921–2, signing Declaration of the 22; expelled from party 1937.

**Terracini, Umberto** [Urbani] [1895–1983] – joined Italian SP 1916; internationalist during WWI; a leader of *Ordine nuovo* current; member of Italian CP and its executive 1921; a leader of leftist current at Third Comintern Congress; member ECCI 1921–2; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; parliamentary deputy 1922–4; jailed by fascists 1926–43; opposed Stalinist policy in WWII and was expelled from CP 1943; active in anti-fascist Resistance 1943–5; rejoined CP and its leadership after war.

**Tesniaki** – originated as left wing majority of Bulgarian SDP; split from opportunist wing 1903; won mass support during WWI; became Bulgarian CP May 1919.

**Thalheimer, August** [1884–1948] – joined SPD 1904; member of Spartacus group during WWI; conscripted into army 1916–18; played prominent role in 1918 revolution in Stuttgart; member of Central Committee of German CP 1919–24; defended 'theory of the offensive' at Third World Congress 1921, but subsequently opposed ultraleft Fischer-Maslow wing in German CP; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; held responsible, with Brandler, for workers' defeat in October 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.

**Thibaut.** See Crémet, Jean.

**Thiers, Adolphe** [1797–1877] – French journalist, historian, and politician; president of Third Republic 1871–3; presided over suppression of Paris Commune.

**Thomas, James Henry** [1874–1949] – British railway union president 1905–6; its general secretary 1916–31; Labour Party member of parliament from 1910; social chauvinist during WWI; elected treasurer of Second International 1920; head of Amsterdam International 1920–4; withdrew rail union's support for 1921 miners' strike, leading to its defeat; cabinet minister 1924 and 1929–36; broke with Labour Party 1931.

**Tolokontsev, Alexander F.** [1889–1937] – joined Bolshevik Party 1914; leader of factory committee movement during 1917; a leader of Metalworkers' Union; member of Workers' Opposition; signed Letter of the 22; later held senior position in military industry; member of Central Committee 1924–34; victim of Stalin purges.

**Tolstoy, Leo** [1828–1910] – Russian novelist; developed religious doctrine based on Christian anarchism and pacifism.

**Tomann, Karl** [1887–1945] – Austrian trade-union militant; prisoner of war in Russia; rallied to Bolsheviks in 1917 and became head of German section of Federation of Foreign Groups of Russian CP; joined Austrian CP December 1918, becoming general

secretary February 1919; delegate to Comintern Second Congress 1920; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922; expelled from CP 1931 and led independent socialist grouping that fused with SDP 1934; mayor of town during Nazi rule; captured and executed by Soviet troops.

**Tomsky, Mikhail P.** [1880–1936] – joined RSDLP 1904, becoming Bolshevik; in tsarist prison 1909–17; in Moscow during October Revolution; elected to RCP Central Committee 1919; chairman of central council of Soviet trade unions 1919–29; a leader of RILU; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922; accused of terrorism during Moscow trials; committed suicide prior to arrest.

**Toti, Pierre** [Totti] [1882–1955] – French revolutionary syndicalist; railroad workers' leader from 1903; a leader of CGTU following 1921 split, supporting 'pure syndicalist' wing that called for union autonomy; joined CP around 1921; expelled January 1923 following public rejection of Comintern Fourth Congress decisions; became member of Socialist-Communist Union; participated in Resistance movement during WWII.

**Tours Congress** [1920] – French Socialist Party gathering held 25–30 December 1920; voted by a 75 per cent majority to accept Twenty-One Conditions and affiliate to Comintern, giving birth to the CP of France. The minority ('Dissidents') split away, preserving SP's name.

**Trachtenberg, Alexander** [1884–1966] – born in Odessa; active in Russian revolutionary movement during 1905 revolution; emigrated to US 1906, member of SP 1906–20; member Workers' Council 1920–1; joined Workers Party 1921, serving on its Central Executive Committee until 1923; secretary American Labor Alliance for Russian Recognition 1921–2; delegate to Fourth Comintern Congress 1922 and III ECCI plenum 1923; founder and manager of International Publishers from 1924; member of CP until his death.

**Trade Union Educational League** [TUEL] – founded by William Z. Foster in November 1920 to unite revolutionary forces working in American Federation of Labor; after Foster joined CP in 1921, RILU adopted TUEL as its US section.

**Tranmael, Martin** [1879–1967] – joined Norwegian Labour Party in 1890s; lived in US 1900–5, attending founding convention of IWW; leader of NLP's left wing; internationalist during WWI; supported affiliation to Comintern; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; led NLP out of Comintern 1923; in Swedish exile during 1940–5 Nazi occupation; supported Norway's joining NATO 1949.

**Treint, Albert** [1889–1971] – joined French SP 1912; wounded in WWI; member Committee for the Third International 1919; member of leadership committee of French CP from 1920; delegate to I ECCI plenum 1922 representing party Left; general secretary of party 1923; jailed January–May 1923 for participation in Essen Conference; expelled as supporter of Left Opposition led by Trotsky 1928; led a pro-Trotsky current 1929–34; rejoined SP 1934.

**Trotsky, Leon** [1879–1940] – born in Ukraine; joined socialist movement 1897; supported Mensheviks at RSDLP congress 1903; internationalist and supporter of Zimmerwald movement during WWI; joined Bolsheviks and elected to Central Committee 1917; people's commissar of foreign affairs 1917–18 and of war 1918–25; a leader of Comintern; attended I, II, and III ECCI plenums; 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; founding leader of Fourth International 1938; murdered by agent of Stalin.

**Tsankov, Aleksandar** [1879–1959] – Bulgarian politician; a leader of June 1923 coup against Stamboliyski; prime minister 1923–6; during 1930s a leader of Bulgarian fascist movement; fled Bulgaria September 1944, becoming head of pro-Nazi exile regime.

**Tsereteli, Irakli G.** [1881–1959] – born in Georgia; joined RSDLP 1902; sided with Mensheviks 1903; headed Petrograd Soviet after February Revolution, minister in Provisional Government; opponent of October Revolution; member of Menshevik-led government in Georgia 1918–21; emigrated to France after its fall, becoming Menshevik representative to Second International; delegate to Conference of Three Internationals 1922.

**Tskhakaia, Mikhail G.** [1865–1950] – native of Georgia; joined RSDLP 1898; member of Bolshevik faction from 1903; lived in Switzerland 1907–17; headed Bolshevik committee in Tiflis 1917–20; elected to ECCI 1920; after 1921 chairman of central executive committee of soviet republic of Georgia and member of Georgian CP Central Committee; delegate to Second through Seventh World Congresses; delegate to II ECCI plenum 1922.

**Turati, Filippo** [1857–1932] – founding member Italian SP 1892; leader of its reformist right wing; founder and editor of *Critica Sociale* 1891–1926; parliamentary deputy 1896–1926; opposed Italy's entry into World War I but supported national defence as war went on; opponent of October Revolution and Comintern; expelled from PSI 1922, forming reformist Unitary Socialist Party [PSU]; emigrated to France 1926.

**Turner, John Kenneth** [1879–1948] – US writer and eyewitness to Mexican Revolution; opponent of US military operations in Mexico.

**Two-and-a-Half International** – term used by Communists for International Working Union of Socialist Parties, or Vienna Union, an alliance of centrist social-democratic parties formed February 1921; merged with Second International to become Labour and Socialist International 1923.

**UGT** [General Union of Labour, Spain] – union federation formed 1888; close relationship with SP; 240,000 members end of 1922.

**Unione Syndicale Italiana** [USI] – Italian anarcho-syndicalist union federation; founded 1912 out of split in CGL; sent representatives to RILU congress 1921, but did not affiliate; contained both anarchist and syndicalist wings; 300,000 members 1920, declining to 150,000 members in 1921 and 100,000 in 1922.

**Urbani.** See Terracini, Umberto.

**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.

**Usov, Konstantin A.** [1895–1937] – member of Socialist-Revolutionary action group carrying out anti-Soviet terrorist actions; became supporter of Soviet regime; defendant in 1922 trial; sentenced to five years' imprisonment, but was pardoned.

**USPD** [Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany] – formed 1917 by left opponents of SPD majority leadership; 800,000 members end of 1920; majority fused with CP December 1920; minority retained name until merger with SPD November 1922; 210,000 members at time of merger.

**Vakmann, Rudolf** [1894–1937] – joined Estonian Bolsheviks 1913; fought in Estonia during 1918 civil war; member of CP Central Committee 1920; attended Second Comintern Congress; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums 1922–3; Leningrad CP leader after 1924; arrested and shot during Stalin purges.

**Vandervelde, Émile** [1866–1938] – leader of Belgian Workers' Party; chairman of Brussels office of Second International 1900–14; named Belgium's minister of state August 1914; member of Belgian council of ministers 1916–21, 1925–7, 1936–7; delegate from Second International to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; defence counsel for SRS during 1922 trial in Moscow; chairman of Belgian Workers' Party 1933–8; president of Labour and Socialist International 1929–36.

**Vanzetti, Bartolomeo** [1888–1927] – Italian immigrant in US; fishmonger and anarchist; framed up for 1920 armed robbery and murder together with Nicola Sacco; convicted and sentenced to death 1921; executed 1927 despite international defence campaign.

**Varga, Eugen** [Jenő] [1879–1964] – economist; joined Hungarian Social Democracy 1906, CP 1919; people's commissar for finance in Hungarian soviet government 1919; emigrated to Soviet Russia after its fall; worked for ECCI; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; prominent Soviet economist until criticised by Stalin 1947; later partially rehabilitated; died in USSR.

**Vecchi, Nicola** [b. 1883] – Italian revolutionary syndicalist, active in union movement from 1909; member of executive committee of Italian Workers' Union (USI); supporter of USI affiliation to RILU and collaboration with Italian CP; participated in first and second RILU congresses 1921, 1922 and was elected to its executive body; left active participation in workers' movement by mid-1920s; emigrated from Italy 1931.

**Vella, Arturo** [1886–1943] – Italian socialist from 1902; assistant secretary of PSI 1912; supporter of its Maximalist wing; jailed for agitation within army 1918–19; stayed in PSI after formation of CP 1921; opposed unity with CP 1922–3; withdrew from political activity in late 1920s.

- Venizelos, Eleftherios** [1864–1936] – prime minister of Greece a number of times between 1910 and 1933.
- Verdier, Guillaume** – French revolutionary syndicalist; CGT leader in Decazeville (Aveyron) 1919–21; member Central Committee of Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees; advocated affiliation to Comintern; signed pact with anarchist syndicalists 1921; supported ‘pure syndicalist’ wing in CGTU; left CP, probably in 1922.
- Verfeuil, Raoul** [1887–1927] – joined French SP around 1905; centrist during WWI; member 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.
- Versailles Treaty** – peace treaty signed 28 June 1919 between Allied powers and Germany.
- Vienna Union.** See Two-and-a-Half International.
- La Vie ouvrière** [Workers’ Life] – French syndicalist weekly published by CGT 1909–14 and from 1919; affiliated to CGTU in 1922–3.
- Viviani, René** [1863–1925] – French socialist deputy from Paris 1893–1902; helped found *L’Humanité* 1904; became minister of labour 1906 as ‘independent’ socialist; supporter of WWI; French premier 1914–15; minister of justice 1915–17; represented France at League of Nations (1920) and Washington Conference (1921).
- VKPD.** United Communist Party of Germany, name briefly used following October 1920 fusion of KPD and USPD left wing.
- Vladetić.** See Cvijić, Djuro.
- Volodarsky, V.** [1891–1918] – joined Russian social-democratic movement 1905; active in Russian Socialist Federation in US SP 1916–17; returning to Russia, he joined Mezhrayontsi, which fused with Bolsheviks in August 1917; elected to All Russian Central Executive Committee of soviets following October Revolution; assassinated by member of Socialist-Revolutionary Party.
- Vorovsky, Vatslav V.** [1871–1923] – joined Russian socialist movement 1894; Bolshevik from 1903; worked in Bolshevik underground in St. Petersburg 1905–7, and Odessa 1907–12; Soviet diplomatic representative to Scandinavia 1917–19; secretary of First World Congress 1919; Soviet representative in Italy 1921–3; assassinated in Lausanne by White émigré.
- Vorwärts** [Forward, Berlin] – central daily organ of German SPD founded in Leipzig 1876; moved to Berlin 1891; published in exile during Nazi regime.
- Vorwärts** [Forward, Reichenberg] – daily newspaper published by social democrats in Reichenberg (Liberec) beginning 1911; in 1921 became organ of Czechoslovak Communist Party (German section); remained organ of Czechoslovak CP until 1934.
- Vota, Giuseppe** [1886–1935] – general secretary of Italian woodworkers’ federation; founding member of CP 1921; delegate to Fourth Comintern Congress 1922; fought for PCI-PSI fusion; member of CP Executive Committee June 1923–August 1924.
- Vujić, Voja** [1895–1936] – joined Serbian SP 1912; leader of French SP youth during

- wwi; co-founder of Communist Youth International 1919; secretary of CYI Executive 1921–6; attended Conference of Three Internationals 1922; 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.
- Walcher, Jakob** [1887–1970] – joined SPD 1906; opposed SPD pro-war policy 1914 and joined Spartacus group in Stuttgart; arrested 1915 and conscripted into army; CP founding member 1918; member Zentrale 1919–24; delegate to I and III ECCI plenums; secretary to CC, responsible for trade-union work; worked for RILU 1924–6; expelled from CP 1928 as rightist; moved to Paris after 1933; a leader of German Socialist Workers' Party [SAP]; moved to East Germany 1946 and joined CP; demoted from all positions 1949; expelled 1951; readmitted 1956.
- Walecki, Henryk** [1877–1937] – member Polish SP from 1899; internationalist during wwi; took part in Zimmerwald Conference 1915; founding member of Polish CP 1919; delegate to Third through Fifth World Congresses; member ECCI 1921–4; delegate to I ECCI plenum; attacked as 'opportunist' 1924; moved to USSR 1925; assistant secretary to Comintern Balkan Secretariat 1928–35; editor-in-chief of *Communist International* 1935–7; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- Wallenius, Allan** [1890–1942] – took part in Finnish Revolution 1918; then emigrated to Sweden and Soviet Russia; spent time in Iceland after being expelled from Sweden 1921; delegate to I and II ECCI plenums 1922; Comintern librarian; carried out Comintern assignments in US, Scandinavia; arrested during Stalin purges; died in concentration camp.
- Warski.** See Warszawski, Adolf.
- Warszawski, Adolf** [Warski, Michalak, Maciejewski] [1868–1937] – pioneer of early Polish socialist movement; co-founder of SDKPiL; a leader of RSDLP after 1905 revolution; attended Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences during wwi; a founding leader of Polish CP 1918; delegate to Third through Sixth World Congresses; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; attended Berlin Conference of Three Internationals 1922; ousted from Polish CP leadership for opposition to Stalin course 1929; lived in USSR from 1929; arrested and executed during Stalin purges.
- Washington Conference** [1921–2] – meeting of four powers (Britain, US, Japan, and France) known officially as International Conference on Naval Limitations; held 12 November 1921–6 February 1922 to discuss naval disarmament and conflicting great-power interests in the Pacific; Soviet Russia was excluded.
- Watter, Oskar von** [1861–1939] – German general during wwi; a leader of military unit sent to suppress workers' uprising in Ruhr 1920, responsible for over a thousand extrajudicial executions.
- Wels, Otto** [1873–1939] – joined German SPD 1891; Reichstag deputy 1912; joined party executive 1913; leader of its right wing; party chairman 1919; delegate from Second

International to Conference of Three Internationals 1922; led SPD deputies in voting against emergency powers for Hitler 1933; was deprived of citizenship and emigrated.

**Wertheim, Johannes** [1888–1942] – a leader of Austrian Red Guard 1918; which merged with CP May 1919; elected to CP national leadership 1919, heading its press and propaganda until 1922; attended I ECCI plenum 1922; worked on *Inprekorr* 1924–5; left Austria 1933; later a Comintern representative involved in publishing activities; arrested in France 1941; died in Auschwitz.

**Wieser, Fritz** [1890–1952] – became editor-in-chief of Swiss SDP *Basler Vorwärts* 1917; joined CP after 1920 split in SDP, becoming a member of its Central Committee 1921 and editor of its newspaper; parliamentary deputy 1920–30; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; member of Political Bureau 1925, becoming party chairman 1927; ousted from party leadership 1929–30 following fall of Bukharin; left CP 1931.

**Williams, Robert** [1881–1936] – secretary of National Transport Workers' Federation 1912–22; member of British Labour Party Executive; part of union delegation to Moscow 1920 to discuss founding new trade-union International; joined CP 1920; expelled 1921, accused of having betrayed miners strike after Black Friday.

**Wilson, Woodrow** [1856–1924] – Democratic Party president of US 1913–21; led US into WWI 1917; issued Fourteen Points 1918, which promised liberal non-punitive peace and a League of Nations.

**Winnig, August** [1878–1956] – joined SPD 1896; chairman of German construction workers' union from 1912; supported party right wing during WWI; Reich minister under Kaiser 1918 as plenipotentiary for occupied Baltic countries; governor of East Prussia 1919; expelled from SPD for supporting Kapp Putsch 1920; a founder of Christian Democratic Union 1945.

**Wirth, Joseph** [1879–1956] – German politician; a leader of Catholic Centre Party; German minister of finance 1920–1; chancellor in government that encompassed SPD May 1921–November 1922; in exile as an opponent of Nazi rule 1933–49; subsequently favoured reunited, neutral Germany.

**Witos, Wicenty** [1874–1945] – leader of Peasant Party and Polish prime minister 1920–1, 1923, 1926; overthrown by Pilsudski.

**Woog, Edgar** [Stirner] [1898–1973] – born in Switzerland; joined Swiss Socialist youth 1916; a founder of 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; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; member ECCI 1922–4; active in Comintern through 1930s; active in Swiss pro-Soviet socialist party in 1940s and 1950s.

**Workers' Opposition** [Russia] – faction in Russian CP formed September 1920 that called for trade-union control of industrial production and greater autonomy for CP fractions in the unions; subsequently raised criticisms of measures adopted intro-

- ducing the NEP; ceased organised activity after censure by March–April 1922 party congress.
- Workers Party of America** – legal political party founded December 1921 by US CP, which was then functioning underground.
- Wrangel, Pyotr Nikolaevich** [1878–1928] – Russian general; commander of White forces in southern Russia 1919–20; emigrated to Yugoslavia 1920; subsequently led White exile army.
- Wyss, Konrad** – Swiss trade-union leader; member of secretariat of Workers' Union of Zurich (Arbeiterunion Zürich) 1918–41.
- Yamakawa Hitoshi** [1880–1958] – imprisoned 1901–4 for article on Japanese royalty; joined Japanese SP 1906 and helped edit its journal; imprisoned 1919 and 1923; founding member CP 1922; called for creation of broad party 1924; criticised by Comintern 1927; helped found Japanese People's Party 1928; arrested and internally deported 1937–45; later active in Japanese SP.
- Yordanov, Yordan** [1876–1942] – joined Bulgarian socialist movement 1903, aligning with Tesniaki wing; founding member of CP 1919; elected to ECCI at II ECCI plenum 1922; left CP 1925; later editor of National Liberal Party newspaper.
- Young, Alban** [1865–1944] – British ambassador to Central America 1913–19; ambassador to Serbia and Yugoslavia 1919–25.
- Zaghlul Pasha, Saad** [1857–1927] – leader of Egyptian nationalist movement and Wafd Party; Britain's deportation of him in March 1919 helped spark revolutionary upsurge; prime minister of Egypt 1924.
- Zápotocký, Antonín** [1884–1957] – member of Czech SP 1902 and of its left wing 1919; an organiser of December 1920 political strikes and chairman of revolutionary committee in Kladno; arrested along with 3,000 other participants in the strike and imprisoned for nine months; delegate to III ECCI plenum 1923; Central Committee 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.
- Zasulich, Vera** [1849–1919] – joined Russian revolutionary movement 1870s; arrested for attempted assassination of tsarist minister 1877; acquitted and escaped to exile before rearrest; became Marxist and joined in forming Emancipation of Labour Group 1883; active in RSDLP; Menshevik from 1903; opponent of October Revolution.
- Zentrale** – Central Bureau of German Communist Party; subcommittee of party Central Committee.
- Zetkin, Clara** [1857–1933] – joined German socialist movement 1878; driven into exile by Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Laws 1882–90; co-founder of Second International 1889; a leader of its Marxist wing; campaigner for women's emancipation; close associate of Rosa Luxemburg in SPD left wing; organised internationalist conference of social-

ist women 1915; joined German CP 1919; opposed ultraleftism in CP during March Action 1921 and thereafter; member ECCI from 1922; attended Second through Sixth World Congresses; attended I, II, III ECCI plenums; attended Berlin Conference of Three Internationals 1922; headed Communist Women's Movement 1921–6; opposed 'bolshevisation' campaign 1924–5 and Stalin's ultraleft turn from 1928; remained prominent figure in German CP and Comintern, without recanting, until her death in Moscow.

**Ziegler.** See Kurella, Alfred.

**Zimmerwald Left** – formed September 1915 by Lenin and left-wing forces at socialist conference in Zimmerwald, Switzerland; a forerunner of Third International.

**Zinoviev, Grigorii** [1883–1936] – joined RSDLP 1901; Bolshevik; elected to Central Committee 1907; internationalist and collaborator of Lenin during WWI; chair of Petrograd soviet 1917–26; chairman of Comintern 1919–26; attended I, II, III ECCI plenums; on death of Lenin, formed troika with Stalin and Kamenev to isolate Trotsky from central leadership 1923–4; broke with Stalin 1925; together with Trotsky and Kamenev, led United Opposition to Stalinist course 1926–7; expelled 1927; recanted and was readmitted 1928; re-expelled 1932 and 1934; convicted in Moscow frame-up trial and shot.

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